

awa life

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July 2025

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鳴門市、島田島の古代ハス



TOPIA

Awa Life is a Monthly Publication of the Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association

Welcome to July! Summer in Tokushima is filled with plenty of excitement and fun, but it's also HOT! As we exit the rainy season and enter into the real heat of summer, make sure to get yourself prepared both mentally and physically for the high temperatures. If you haven't already, maybe think about check your air conditioner to make sure it's in working order for the season!

July is also the month in which Tanabata is celebrated in Japan. Tanabata is a country-wide festival held on July 7th to celebrate the legend of the two stars Altair and Vega. These two lovers are usually separated from each other by the Milky Way, but are able to meet for one day out of each year. On this day (Tanabata), people write their wishes on slips of paper and hang them on bamboo tree branches, praying for them to come true.

For all of those who like writing, please feel free to submit an article to us at any point in time about basically anything. There are a few limitations though, such as you can't write about religion, politics, commercial activities or businesses, or anything that we deem inappropriate. But, other than that, we would be more than happy to receive articles about anything and everything including but not limited to concerts, lectures, other events, culture, sports, community group information or anything cool that's happening in your local community. Additionally, please keep articles around ~300-500 words (if writing in English), or ~1000 characters (if writing in Japanese). If you have any questions or want to check if your topic will work, feel free to reach out to us before you start writing.

We highly appreciate all of your articles and we love reading them. So if that writing bug of yours is buzzing about, grab a pen or a computer and write and send away! Please send all submissions to our email:

awalife@gmail.com

Your editors,
Riley and Lisa

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Download a PDF file of awa life or view the online version by going to TOPIA's website!



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Tokushima at Expo 2025

By: Rishmita Siyal

With more than 150 countries participating, showcasing their culture in some of the most creative ways, the Osaka Expo 2025 has been the talk of the year. But did you know that Tokushima has its own area at the Expo, too?

Being a part of the Kansai Pavilion, the Tokushima zone is a beautiful blue area, displaying various things Tokushima is known for, such as our pride—the Awa Odori—as well as indigo dyeing, sudachi, and woodworking, to name a few. When I went with my parents, they tried indigo dyeing for the first time, and we were also taught the Awa Odori dance.



To get there, you need to make a prior reservation to the Kansai pavilion (free of cost) either online or at the Information center. Once you get your ticket and enter the pavilion, you can also



visit other prefecture's zones alongside Tokushima such as Hyogo, Mie, Fukui and so on! There are nine prefectures total in the pavilion.

If you do decide to go to the Expo, here are some things I wish I knew before going:

- Try to download the app or go through the website map prior to visiting to save time.
- Make a list of the pavilions you wish to visit so that you don't waste time on deciding which ones you want to go to, especially considering that you need to line up for most of them.
- Not all pavilions require registration, but if they do, you can only register for one at a time. My advice would be to try and register for the ones that are the closest to you on the map to save time.

Tokushima at Expo 2025

- There are quite a lot of food options (including some vegan options!), so even if you don't carry your own food, you should be good to go!

The expo is definitely worth it, even if you only go for a day like me!

Tokushima Tales Book Club

By: Adrienne Frazier



I won't lie—I'm not a huge reader. And when I do read, it's usually something boring, like *Dermatology 101* (yawn) or a comfort book like *Eat, Pray, Love* for the 26th time, so I can keep pretending I'm Elizabeth Gilbert. Only instead of Italy and gelato, it's Japan and parfait!

But lately, my lack of new book adventures has me wondering... when was the last time I braved the depths of Moria, gazed upon a portrait that held my darkest secrets, or fell madly in love, only to realize they weren't who they seemed? Okay, maybe we've all experienced that last one a time or two, but imagine it happening within the pages of a thrilling novel instead!

If you're like me (and several other JETs* who've reached out because they're also stuck in a reading rut) and want to pair your real-life adventures in Japan with some literary ones, let me introduce you to the much-anticipated new

addition to the JET Recreational Committee: Tokushima Tales Book Club!

Tokushima Tales is a casual book club hosted on Discord. Each session, a chosen host will share 3 book options, each with a short synopsis. Everyone will vote, and the book with the most votes will be our read for that round!

There's no strict timeline—how fast we read depends on the book and the group's pace. We'll meet every two weeks on Discord to chat about the chapters we've read, share our thoughts, and wonder together what might happen next!

Just a heads-up: everyone will need to find their way to access the book, but we'll provide helpful links for places to buy, borrow, or rent.

So, no matter your reading style, if you're craving adventure, community, or just a break from your usual nonfiction 101 reads like mine, this club is for you!

Keep an eye on the JET LINE chat for the official announcement soon! In the meantime, get cozy and check out its Discord via this QR code.

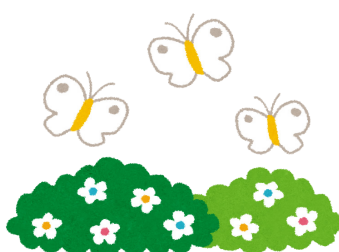


**The JET Program facilitates the hiring of ALTs/ CIRs from foreign countries throughout Japan, including over 100 participants here in Tokushima.*

Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

By: Kazue Inoue (Center for Early Childhood Education and Care SUKETO NAKAYOSHI)

While watering the summer vegetables we had planted in May, the children were delighted to discover butterfly larvae. We decided to raise them in the nursery, and since then the kids have been enjoying watching over



their growth, taking care of them daily. They're always happy to discover various critters, finding things in the past such as snails and dung beetles... Perhaps this is an experience best enjoyed during childhood.

Letter from SUKETO NAKAYOSHI

Children learn many lessons through their interactions with living things. For example:

- They learn to have a sense of responsibility by taking care of something every day.
- By treating them with love and affection, they develop a sense of caring for others.
- When children become attached to living things, they feel the joy of watching them grow. However, they may also be confronted with the concept of death, which teaches them the importance of life.
- As they gain confidence in their relationships with living creatures, they may develop an interest in other living creatures, or they may look them up in picture books on their own, further broadening their interests.

The rainy season in Japan is full of nature, such as flowers, vegetables, and insects. I hope you are able to get out and enjoy making various exciting discoveries of your own this rainy season!

Sunrise Cake (Serves 4)

- ① Sift together 80 g flour, 1.6 g baking powder, and 28 g sugar, and mix with a spatula.
- ② Grate 40 g of carrot with a grater and mix in 60 g of fresh cream.
- ③ Combine mixtures from steps ② and ①, and finally add 52 g of eggs.
- ④ Pour the mixture into a pan lined with a baking sheet and bake in the oven at 180°C for about 30 minutes. When the inside is baked through (if the dough does not stick to a skewer), the cake is done.



A Golden Week Trip to Bunka no Mori

By: Chen Sizhe

When Golden Week came around this year, I was still new to Tokushima, only having arrived one month earlier. I wanted to take advantage of the break and explore, but was struggling to decide where to go. That was when I received an unexpected message from a friend—“Can I come meet you in Tokushima?”

This message surprised me as much as it excited me, as I had never actually met this friend in real life. We “met” virtually and became close through WeChat—China’s most popular messaging app—nearly seven years ago. However, the physical distance between us meant that we never had met in person before now. Seven years after we first spoke, she is now in a doctoral student at Kyoto University, and I am settling into my role as a Coordinator for International Relations here in Tokushima. The years have flown by, but our connection remained unbroken—and now we were finally going to get to meet in person!



When she arrived, stepping off the highway bus at Tokushima station, I was waiting there to welcome her. The first thing that struck me was that it didn’t feel like it was our first time meeting. Our interactions felt so natural, one looking on might assume we were simply old friends meeting up for the first time in a while. That night, as we caught up on the last seven years, we made our plans for where to go the next day.

Our destination set, we headed towards the Bunka no Mori complex here in Tokushima City.

A Golden Week Trip to Bunka no Mori

Boarding the bus at Tokushima station, we rode to our stop, “*Bunka no Mori Sougou Kouen Mae.*” Next, we walked a short distance from the bus stop to our first destination— Oji shrine. This shrine, also known affectionately as “*Nekogami-san*” or the “cat god shrine,” has what is believed to be a history stretching back more than 500 years. While it is known as a power spot for academic, career, and relationship luck, as the nickname suggests it is also famous for the cats— both living and ceramic—that inhabit the grounds.

After climbing the stairs to the main shrine, we were greeted with the sight of a calico cat lounging in front of the entrance, almost as if to welcome us in. Not budging an inch as we approached, the cat’s calm demeanor and gentle yet mysterious eyes stuck with me.

After purifying our hands and mouth at the hand-watering basin, it was finally time to meet the rest of the cats! There were several friendly cats leisurely basking in the sun, not running away even as we approached them. Some of them even let us pet them for a while, purifying our souls just as the water had our hands. My only regret is that I didn’t bring cat treats.

In the main shrine building, you can see an impressive collection of *manekineko* figurines, beckoning good luck for visitors. At the shrine shop, they offer various cat-themed *goshuin* stamps which change monthly, as well as plenty of cute *omamori* charms and other goods. The staff were all very kind, and as we relaxed and played with the cats, I thought that I would be happy just to stay there forever.



After about 2 hours at the shrine, we decided to check out the rest of the Bunka no Mori complex, choosing to visit the Prefectural Modern Art Museum. As soon as we entered, I was captivated by the man-made waterfall that I could see outside. Through the large glass window, the waterfall cascaded down with such force that it almost looked like a curtain of water. Later I found out that this is the museum’s “Cascade Fountain,” and that it is only in operation from 1:30 to 2:30 pm. We just happened to be visiting at the right time to see it in action—lucky us! Climbing the stone steps next to the waterfall, you can see the whole of Tokushima City. The view of the city, greenery, and mountains is like a tranquil painting. On a nice day, it makes for a gorgeous picture no matter where you point your camera, so I recommend it for those who enjoy photography.



Unfortunately, our trip ended there as we had to catch the bus back to the city. Bunka no Mori is very large, and in addition to the Museum of Modern Art, there are a variety of other facilities, including the Prefectural Museum, library, archives, 21st Century Museum, and service center, each with its own unique architectural design. If I could offer one piece of advice, I would recommend staying at least 5 hours to fully enjoy all of them.

Although our trip was short, it was fulfilling and heartwarming. I was able to meet with a precious friend, enjoy beautiful weather, spend healing time with cats, and experience new culture. To me, these memories were as bright, warm, and unforgettable as the bright sunshine of Tokushima. Surely, this is what traveling is all about.

Tokushima Culture and Reading Corner: 榑原の棚田

By: Yukari Nagata

田植えの時期を過ぎ、緑の若い苗が 植えられた水田が いたるところに 広がっています。山の傾斜地に、棚のように 敷き詰められている 水田を 『棚田』 といいます。

上勝町の、山道を さらに登り 杉林を抜けた 先には、『日本の棚田百選』、『国の重要文化的景観』に指定された 榑原の棚田を 目にすることが できます。その風景は、江戸時代から ほとんど変わっていないと 言われています。

榑原は、棚田の保全を 目的とした 『棚田オーナー制度』に 参加しており、都市部に 住む人々などが「オーナー」になる 機会を 提供しています。オーナーは、田植えを したり、収穫を手伝ったりと、稲作の 体験を することができます。

オーナーに なったり、このステキな 棚田の景観を 目にしたりすることで、日本農村の 棚田の保全に 加わってみませんか？



Vocabulary List

水田 paddy field	棚田百選 top hundred terraced rice fields	都市部 urban area
棚田 terraced rice fields	国の重要文化的景観 National Important Cultural Landscape	
傾斜地 slope	風景 scenery, view	稲作 rice cultivation
杉林 cedar forest	保全 preservation	機会 opportunity

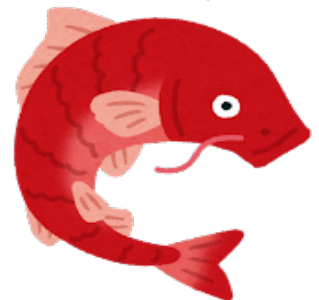
Much Ado About 「魚」

By: Riley Henke

Nihongo Know-it-all

Being an island nation, Japan has long had a close relationship with the waters that surround it. The effects of this relationship can be seen on both Japanese culture and language. For example, not only are there hundreds of names for different types of fish—from both river and ocean—in Japanese, there are also different counters for fish depending on their size and shape. Not to mention the varying counters for different cuts of fish to eat (nigiri uses 貫, sashimi uses 切れ, whole sushi rolls use 本)!

Similarly, we need only look to the numerous proverbs and sayings involving fish to see how these creatures are inextricably linked to Japan's culture. One example of this is the phrase “まな板の鯉” (manaita no koi), which means a “fish (koi) on the chopping board.” This phrase is somewhat similar to English's “like a sitting duck,” or “like a lamb to slaughter,” and is used to describe someone who is doomed to their fate, at the mercy of someone/something else. Or the phrase “水を得た魚” (mizu wo eta uo), which means “like a fish in water,” and means that one is in one's element. Or perhaps you've heard the phrase “腐っても鯛” (kusattemo tai), literally meaning “Even if it's gone rotten, it's still sea bream.” Since sea bream is considered very high quality in Japan, the phrase is used to mean “something that is not what it once was, but it is still high class.” It's clear to see that Japan's geographical position as an island nation has had a deep impact on life in Japan.



「コ・ソ・ア②」

Last month, we studied 「コ・ソ・ア」 words used in conversation when one is discussing things that are in front of them. This month, we will study 「コ・ソ・ア」 words when they are used to discuss something not directly in front of one's eyes, such as when telling a story or in writing.

Now, consider which word in the parenthesis below best fits in this conversation.

A: 先月、温泉に行ったのですが、(この・その・あの) 温泉がとてもよかったんですよ。

B: へえ、(この・その・あの) 温泉、どこにあるんですか？

A: 去年いっしょに行った海部の海を覚えてますか？(この・その・あの) 海の近くですよ。



• Used when something is the topic of conversation and the speaker feels that the listener would not know about it.

A: 先月、温泉に行ったのですが、この温泉がとてもよかったんですよ。

A さん(speaker) thinks B さん(listener) doesn't know about the onsen he's talking about.



• Used when something is the topic of conversation and the speaker doesn't know much about it but the listener knows a lot about it, or when the same topic is repeated immediately after it's brought up.

B: へえ、その温泉、どこにあるんですか？

B さん(speaker) doesn't know about the onsen A さん(listener) is talking about.

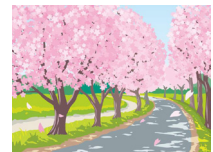


• Used when the speaker and listener both understand/are aware of what is being discussed.

A: 去年いっしょに行った海部の海を覚えてますか？ あの海の近くですよ。

As the topic is somewhere they went to together, both A さん and B さん are aware of it.

* 「コ」 words include 「これ、この+N、ここ(place)」, 「ソ」 words include 「それ、その+N、そこ(place)」, and 「ア」 words include 「あれ、あの+N、あそこ(place)」.



Let's practice! Select the correct 「コ・ソ・ア」 word to fit in the following sentences.

1. 電話の会話 (友だちと)

A: ねえ、さっき LINE で写真を送ったんだけど見てくれた？ 今度の休みに (ここ・そこ・あそこ) に行ってみたいんだけどいっしょに行かない？

B: ごめん、まだ見てない。 (ここ・そこ・あそこ) って、前にテレビで紹介されていた場所？

A: うん、 (ここ・そこ・あそこ) は今、桜がすごくきれいらしいよ。

2. 電話の会話 (仕事で)

A: お世話になっております。来週の打ち合わせの資料ですが、先ほど作成しました。

今、 (これ・それ・あれ) をメールでお送りしましたので、ご確認いただけますか？

B: はい、今見ますね。……あつ、 (これ・それ・あれ) 、届いてます。

A: よかったです。それと以前ご相談させていただいた内容の資料ですが、 (これ・それ・あれ) も打ち合わせで使用したいと思っていますので、よろしく願いいたします。

Events & Memoranda

Summer School Japanese Lessons 夏休み子供日本語教室

Why not enroll your child in the Summer School Japanese Lessons held at TOPIA? Teachers are on hand to help your child out with their homework, and they can learn Japanese through lots of fun activities, like games and quizzes! Let's do our best together! Free of charge! Check TOPIA's website for more details. Applications must be received by Monday, July 14th.

Date and Time: July 22, 24, 25, 26, 29, 31, and August 1, 2 each day from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Location: TOPIA, JR Tokushima Station, Clement 6F

Application and Inquiries: TOPIA (Nomizu)

Website: <https://www.topia.ne.jp/english/>

Mail: coordinator2@topia.ne.jp

TEL: 088-656-3303



Retra! Water City Festival 2025 Retra! 水都祭 2025

Experience the charm of the "Water City Tokushima" in this 3-day long event! The festival also features the Tokushima Food Market, where you can try plenty of local favorites, a water park that is very popular among children every year, a karaoke battle on the main stage, dance contests, live performances, fireworks that light up the night sky, and lots of other fun! ♪ We hope for this festival to show the whole country the fun and excitement of the Tokushima we're proud of!

「水都祭」とは、水都徳島をテーマにしたお祭りで、とにかく子供たちに楽しんでもらうことをメインに、水と共に発展してきた徳島市の素晴らしい水辺の魅力を全国に発信するとともに、街の活性化、市民に街への誇りと愛着を感じてもらえるイベントです。人気フードが集結する『とくしま食楽市』や、毎年子どもたちに大好評のウォーターパーク、さらにメインステージではカラオケバトルやダンスコンテスト、ライブ、夜空を彩る花火など、お楽しみ盛りだくさん♪

Time and Date: July 18th - July 20th

18th from 17:00-21:00

19th & 20th from 10:00-21:00

開催期間：7月18日（金）から7月20日（日）

18日 17:00～21:00

19日、20日 10:00～21:00

Location: Aibahama Park, Tokushima City

開催場所：徳島市 藍場浜公園

Inquiries: Water City Festival Committee

Mail: info@suitosai-tokushima.com

TEL: 090-1673-9538

お問い合わせ：水都祭実行委員会事務局

メール：info@suitosai-tokushima.com

TEL: 090-1673-9538



Events & Memoranda

2025 Tokushima Prefecture Japanese Speech Contest 2025 年度外国人による徳島県日本語弁論大会

True internationalization cannot be achieved without first coming in touch with other cultures and ways of life, fostering a sense of international awareness and gaining mutual understanding with people of the world to create a society in which we can all work and live together in harmony. This speech contest seeks to give a voice to the international residents of Tokushima Prefecture and engage them in a dialogue to further discourse on cross-cultural understanding and fostering multiculturalism. This year, we have participants from 7 countries and 1 region, so please, come and give them your support!

真の国際化とは、まず他の文化や生活様式に触れ、国際感覚を養い、世界の人々と相互理解を深め、共に働き、共に生きる社会を実現することなしには達成できません。

このスピーチコンテストは、徳島県に在住する外国人県民の声を代弁し、異文化理解や多文化共生のための対話を促進することを目的としています。今回は7カ国1地域の方たちが出場いたします。ぜひ、応援に来てください！

Date and Time: July 20th (Sunday) 13:00-16:30

日時 7月20日(日) 13:00 ~ 16:30

Location: Awagin Hall, Small Hall (5F)

場所 あわぎんホール (5階)

Inquiries: TOPIA
TEL: 088-656-3303

お問い合わせ TOPIA
TEL: 088-656-3303

Hiwasa Sea Turtle Museum Grand Reopening 日和佐うみがめ博物館カレッタグランドオープン

After nearly two years of being closed for renovations, the Hiwasa Sea Turtle Museum "Caretta" is having a grand-reopening! After a reopening ceremony, the museum will be open for regular business hours.

約2年間リニューアル工事を実施していたカレッタがいよいよグランドオープン！グランドオープンイベントの後、通常営業を開始いたします。

Date and Time: Saturday, July 19
Grand re-opening event 10:00-11:00
Regular business hours 11:00-17:00

開催日時: 2025年7月19日(土)
グランドオープンイベント 10:00 ~ 11:00
通常営業 11:00 ~ 17:00

Location: Hiwasa Chelonian Museum Caretta

開催場所: 日和佐うみがめ博物館カレッタ

Consultation Service at TOPIA・トピアの相談窓口

TOPIA provides consultation on everyday life, education, labor, medical institutions, and disaster prevention as well as information on sightseeing spots to overseas residents and visitors. When necessary, we will refer you to the appropriate organization that can assist with your needs. Consultation is available in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese. Please note that although every effort will be made, we may not be able to deal with all cases.

Japanese, English, Chinese: Everyday, 10:00 - 18:00 (closed during the New Year's holidays)

Vietnamese: Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, 10:00 - 14:00

Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, 10:00 - 18:00 (closed during the New Year's holidays)

Tel: 088-656-3312 or 088-656-3313 (allows for three-way conversations with an interpreter)