

awa life

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Autumn

October 2025

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

Happy October! Have you all officially cooled off from the summer heat? It stayed hot throughout most of September, so I'm ready to enjoy some chilly breezes and maybe even bust out a jacket or two. (Or maybe that's a little too optimistic?)

On the second Monday in the month of October, Japan celebrates Sports Day as a national holiday. Many schools hold their annual *undōkai*, or sports festival, in October as well, although recently those opting to hold it in the springtime are increasing due to the rising temperatures lasting into Autumn. And although it isn't a national holiday, we can't forget to mention Halloween, of course! I hope you all get to eat a tasty treat on the 31st.

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 ~400-700 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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Sea Turtle Museum Caretta's Grand Re-opening

By: Yoshiko Bando

The Hiwasa Sea Turtle Museum Caretta, which had been closed for renovations since June 2023, reopened at last on July 19, 2025. The new-and-improved museum consists of a first floor, second floor, and outdoor area.

The first floor features exhibits and explanations about the history and life cycle of sea turtles, Minami Town as a sea turtle hotspot, and environmental issues. Minami is known as the "Town Where Sea Turtles Gather," and visitors can learn about its 70-year history through replicas and actual specimens.



A turtle's life cycle



A model of sea turtles hatching

The second floor of the museum explores the relationship between Japanese people and sea turtles, as well as presents information on sea turtle conservation and research activities. You can also see a spectacular view of Ohama Beach through the large windows found on this floor. Additionally, information on that year's sea turtle nesting status and the sentiments of Minami Town residents are also displayed.

Outside, a large pool is home to the museum's most famous resident, the sea turtle "Hamataro." Born on August 13, 1950, this loggerhead sea turtle is believed to have hatched from an egg cared for by students at the former Hiwasa Junior

Sea Turtle Museum Caretta's Grand Re-opening

High School. Hamataro currently holds the world record for the oldest sea turtle in captivity!

Aside from the exhibits, events like turtle feeding and hands-on encounters are available. Furthermore, many other turtle species besides



Various turtles



The legend himself, Hamataro

sea turtles are present. As the heat gradually subsides in autumn, why not visit with family or friends and meet the turtles? Answering a questionnaire on the museum's website before visiting grants a 10% discount on admission, so be sure to check the homepage before going!

Reflections on My Japanese Learning Journey

By: Guo Yingnan (Grand Prize Winner of the 2025 Tokushima Prefecture Japanese Speech Contest)

From a young age, I've always had a strong interest in language, which led me to major in Japanese at university. When I first started learning, I was incredibly excited, so passionate that I memorized the entire Japanese syllabary in just one week. However, once classes began in earnest, that initial excitement gradually faded. My days became a continuous cycle of memorizing textbooks and vocabulary, and there were times when I felt quite down.

During those times, the simple method I stuck to was to "just grab my textbook and head to the library." Opening the book sometimes made me sigh, thinking, "I've got such a long way to go," but I reminded myself that even big tasks can be tackled step by step if broken down into smaller parts. For instance, if a passage had ten sentences, I'd divide it into three or four chunks to study.



For vocabulary acquisition, I avoided simply memorizing lists of words, as I feel that words only truly come alive within context. Through this method of study, I persisted in studying Japanese at the library every day from my first to second year, rain or shine.

Once you've accumulated enough input, the desire to output naturally arises. The urge to showcase what you've learned in front of others is something everyone shares. In my second year, I entered my first speech contest at school. But when I stepped onto the stage, nerves made my mind go completely blank, and I ended up just reading my script mechanically. Naturally, I placed near the bottom. Nevertheless, holding onto the

belief that "every expert was once a beginner," I challenged myself again in the speech contest during my third year. By then, my daily practice had taken root, and my Japanese flowed naturally.

Reflections on My Japanese Learning Journey

With this newfound ease, I could speak while incorporating facial expressions and gestures, ultimately winning the top prize.

Though this journey may seem like just a few lines when written down, behind them lay a long accumulation of effort. Winning the contest truly made me feel that hard work never goes unrewarded. Even if each day seems the same, the consistent effort you've put in can suddenly manifest as a significant achievement. From this experience, I am convinced that the most important thing in language learning is to continue with it. As long as you don't give up and keep learning, the moment when you can truly demonstrate your abilities will surely come.

After graduating from university, I enrolled at Naruto University of Education as a graduate exchange student and began researching Japanese language education. Upon learning there would be a speech contest shortly after enrollment, I thought, "This might be my last speech contest as a student," and threw myself into preparation. Starting a week before the contest, I practiced four times daily. My faculty advisors joined me in these sessions, repeatedly pointing out areas for improvement.

For me, the purpose of joining the contest wasn't solely about winning first place. I believed that since I was representing my country, I should

give it my all, and if even one person in the audience understood my message, that would be enough. Fortunately, after my speech, a judge firmly grasped my hand and said, "Japan-China exchange needs voices like yours." At that moment, I felt genuine joy and pride, certain that I had succeeded in my goal.



The world's boundaries are drawn by language, and likewise, through language we can open doors to new worlds. Just as I have come to understand Japanese society through the Japanese language, behind every language lies its culture, customs, and the society itself. This entire experience has been incredibly meaningful for me. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who listened to (or read) my speech. Even if our nationalities differ, we can connect through language, and I truly believe my message resonated with many of you.

Inugai Outdoor Stage in Autumn

By: Liu Qing

On the slow trek up the steep slope, my dog as my companion, we found the stage halfway up the mountain leading to the shrine. The 10 a.m. sunlight poured down past the treetops on the open space in front of the stage. Perhaps because of the heavy rain the day before, or perhaps from the morning fog in the mountains, the dirt road still seemed to be damp. Closest to the stage, people were sitting on waterproof sheets or mats spread on the ground. Standing in the back were lines of foldable chairs where women sat with small blankets over their knees, wrapping their legs in warmth. Stopping by the



registration table, I received a playbill and two freshly picked mikan oranges.

Inugai Outdoor Stage in Autumn

The performance started with a common opening using three puppets called "*Sanbasō*", presenting blessings to the villagers. Holding a fan in one hand and waving bells in the other, the puppets prayed for peace under heaven and a good harvest.

The tale "*Keisei Awa no Naruto*" of Japanese puppet theater is widely known in Tokushima. This complex story depicts the tragedy of a father accidentally killing his daughter, who he had not seen in many years, and the mother sinking into a deep sorrow. For the main show, the *gidayū* reciter skillfully performed the roles of both the mother and the young daughter by changing their tone of voice to fit each character. Since the script uses an old form of Japanese from the *Shōwa* era (1926-1989), which even native speakers find hard to understand, the audience seemed to enjoy the play by turning their ears instead to the sounds of the reciter's song and instruments. That day, a story filled with turmoil unfolded on the stage in front of us. Amidst the sounds of the *shamisen*, striking and beautiful, the sorrow-filled voice of the *gidayū* rang out, mixing with the rustling of the wind blowing through the trees.



The sunlight poured down from the shrine's moss-covered stone monuments onto the stage.

The clouds freely controlled light and shadow, at times making shadows dance across the stage, at times illuminating the puppets at just the right moment, adding and taking colors from the stage at will. It was as if nature itself had taken the director's seat, making the show its own.



On this fall morning, I, who had been accustomed to indoor stages with perfect, computer-controlled audio and lighting, witnessed as the rural stage naturally became one with the mountains and water. The villagers still come together every year without fail to see this tale that has been passed on for a hundred years, quietly preserving this tradition. I was deeply touched, although I am not sure whether it was by the old tale, or by the villagers who earnestly looked after the stage with tears in their eyes.

Although many people had brought lunches with them to eat after the show, we climbed up the mountain, purifying our hands and praying at the 150-year-old Inugai Rural Stage Shrine. The shrine's proprietor very kindly offered to drive us down the mountain, and as we sat in the bed of his pick-up truck, he explained to us in a loud voice about the deities protecting the mountains. Hearing these stories, everything felt even more mystical.

Still hungry, we made our way down the mountain, passing other villagers on their way to see the afternoon play. Taking in the views, I thought to myself that the autumn leaves on the distant mountains would soon be at their most beautiful. The clear stream pouring out of the *gotaki* waterfalls nourished the mikan groves at the foot of the mountain. Passing them and the *Joroku-ji* Temple, we soon arrived the city.

(Check out the events section for more information on the upcoming Fall 2025 performance at the Inugai stage.)

Tokushima Culture and Reading Corner: マチ★アソビ

By: Shoko Nomizu

「マチ★アソビ」は、徳島市で春と秋に開催されるアニメやゲームなどを中心としたイベントです。声優の音楽ライブやトークショー、展示や上映、お店の出店などさまざまな企画があります。

このイベントは、2009年に誕生し、県内はもちろん、県外からも、たくさんのアニメファンや、コスプレイヤーが集まります。徳島駅周辺や、しんまちボードウォーク、藍場浜公園、眉山山頂の眉山公園など、いろいろな所が会場になるので、町を歩きながらいろいろなイベントに参加できます。もしかしたら、あなたの気に入りのキャラクターに会えるかもしれません。

今年の秋は、10月18日(土)・19日(日)に開催されます。みなさんも、いつもとは違うアニメー色の「とくしま」を体験してみてもいいかもしれません。



Vocabulary List

開催 to hold (an event)	出店 booth; stall	山頂 mountain summit
声優 voice actor	企画 event; activity	会場 location; venue
展示 exhibition	誕生 origin	気に入る favorite
上映 screening	コスプレイヤー cosplayer	キャラクター character
		一色 one color/mood

Funky Kanji Fun

By: Riley Henke

Nihongo Know-it-all

Have you ever looked up the reading of a *kanji*, only to find that it doesn't match what you expected? There are a few reasons this may be. *Ateji* (当て字) are compounds with *kanji* that were chosen solely for their **readings** (with little or no regard to meaning) to match an existing pronunciation of a word. For example, 滅茶苦茶, and even 寿司 are common *ateji*. What does sushi have to do with longevity (寿) and governing/administration (司)? Nothing, the characters just happen to be read す and し, respectively. We also see this frequently with words of foreign origin, such as コーヒー and クラブ.



Similar to *ateji* are *jukujikun* (熟字訓). *Jukujikun* are words in Japanese written with *kanji* chosen to express the **meaning** of the word, but the pronunciation is an established, unrelated reading. For example, the word 煙草, meaning tobacco/cigarettes. Normally these characters would not be read as タバコ, but they were assigned to express meaning and not pronunciation. In this case, the characters mean smoke and grass respectively. Makes sense to use them for tobacco!

Gikun (義訓) are a literary device used to add an extra layer of meaning or style to a text. The idea behind *gikun* is to write words with *kanji* and then add a reading in *furigana* that differs from how the *kanji* would normally be read. For example, if a character says, “学校から出よう”, what they actually “say” out loud is written in *furigana* (ここからでよう, Let's get out of here), but the author is letting us know additional context to their words with the *kanji* (学校から出よう, Let's leave the school). *Gikun* are often used in fantasy to name spells, weapons, etc. such as “死の支配者” in *Overlord*. You may also see times where a character is speaking English, with the *kanji* written to let the Japanese-speaking audience in on the meaning, like ダンス, or even 問題なし. How 素晴らしい!

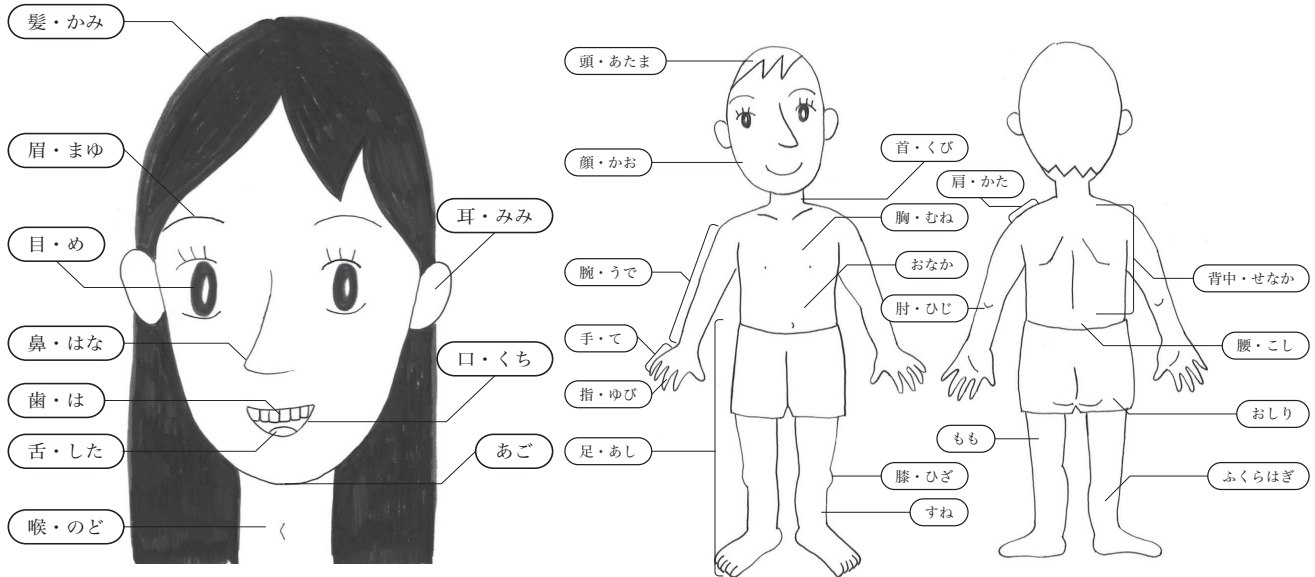
びょうき と き に ほんご
 病気やけがの時の日本語 ①

Getting sick can be a helpless feeling. This month, we're going to study words and phrases you'll need when visiting the doctor's office and the medical terminology used so you can describe your symptoms in Japanese.

しょうじょう い
 症状を言う Describe your symptoms

① 「～がいたいです」 My ____ hurts.

If you don't know how to call something, just point to the part and say, “ここがいたいです”.



いた い かた
 痛みの言い方: Describing pain:

あたま
 頭がガンガンする splitting headache ズキズキする throbbing/pounding おなかがシクシクする gripping
 ギュッと締めつけられる squeezing 刺すように痛い stabbing ヒリヒリする stinging チクチクする pricking

② 「～がです」 せき cough くしゃみ sneeze はなみず have a runny nose

③ 「～がします」 はきけ feel sick (nauseous) さむけ feel chilly めまい feel dizzy

④ 「～がかゆい」 is itchy 「～がはれています」 is swollen

め
 「目があかいです」 my eyes are red 「目がかすみ」 my vision is blurred

⑤ 「～をしました」 けが got injured やけど got burned ねんざ sprained

⑥ 「～をしています」 下痢 have diarrhea 便秘 have constipation

⑦ その他: Other symptoms:

ねつ
 「熱があります」 have a fever 「骨が折れました/骨折しました」 broke/fractured a bone 「血がでています」 is bleeding
 しょくよく
 「食欲がありません」 have no appetite 「風邪をひきました」 caught a cold 「二日酔いです」 have a hangover

Now, let's practice. Imagine you are a patient. Put your symptoms in parentheses like the following example.

いし
 医師: どうしましたか。

Doctor: What seems to be the problem?

かんじゃ あたま いた
 患者: (頭とのが痛いです)

Patient: I have a (headache and sore throat.)

医師: いつからですか。

D: When did it start?

患者: (昨夜) からです。

P: Since (last night.)

医師: (ねつはありますか)。

D: (Do you have fever?)

患者: 今朝、(37.5度) ありました。

P: This morning, (it was 37.5°C)

医師: 風邪ですね。この薬を1日に

D: You have a cold. Please take this medicine three times a day after each meal.

3回、食後に飲んでください。

In next month's issue, we will practice conversation at the reception and pharmacy, as well as introduce vocabulary for examinations and treatments.

Events & Memoranda

Machi ★ Asobi Vol. 29 マチ★アソビ vol. 29

Machi ★ Asobi Vol.29: Autumn Anime Festival 2025 is confirmed for October 18th and 19th!

As we prepare for our largest event yet, we will be announcing participating works and companies sequentially so stay tuned! Please check the homepage for more details. Furthermore, this year's Autumn Machi ★ Asobi will feature the "New Type Anime Awards" and the "Otaku Car Grand Prix"!

Event Dates: October 18 (Sat)
- October 19 (Sun)

Location: Tokushima City,
Tokushima Prefecture (around
JR Tokushima Station)



マチ★アソビ Vol. 29・秋のアニメ祭り 2025 は、10月18日・19日に開催決定です！

過去最大規模の開催に向け、参加作品、企業は順次告知して行きますので楽しみに。詳細はホームページをチェックしてください。さらに、今回のマチ★アソビでは「ニュータイプアニメアワード」や「痛車グランプリ」を開催予定！

開催期間：10月18日（土）～
10月19日（日）

開催地：徳島県徳島市（JR徳島駅周辺）

Inugai Outdoor Stage Annual Autumn Performance 犬飼農村舞台公演

The Inugai Outdoor Stage Performance is held annually on November 3rd in Hata Town. The Inugai Outdoor Stage is designated as a National Tangible Folk Cultural Property. Admission is free.

Program:

- Keisei Awa no Naruto, The Pilgrimage Song
 - Keisei Awa no Naruto, The Jurobei Scene
 - Shōutsushi Asagao Nikki
- (Performed by: Katsuuraza, Tomowaka Kai)
- Fusuma Karakuri, The Thousand-Tatami Room Scene (Performed by: Inugai Rural Stage Preservation Society)

Performance Date & Time: Sunday, November 3,
10:30 AM-2:40 PM

Location: Goō Shrine grounds, 67-3 Hachiya,
Hata Town, Tokushima City (Parking available)

Inquiries: NPO Awa Nōson Butai no Kai
Tel: 088-665-2202

毎年11月3日の文化の日に開催している八多町の犬飼農村舞台公演。犬飼農村舞台は国の有形民俗文化財に指定されています。入場無料。

【演目】

- 傾城阿波の鳴門 順礼歌の段
 - 傾城阿波の鳴門 十郎兵衛内の段
 - 生写朝顔日記
- (以上 出演：勝浦座、友和嘉会)
- 襖からくり 段返し千畳敷
- (出演：犬飼農村舞台保存会)

開催期間：11月3日（日）10:30～14:40頃

開催地：徳島市八多町八屋 67-3 五王神社境内

駐車場：あり（周辺駐車可）

問い合わせ：
NPO 法人阿波農村舞台の会
Tel：088-665-2202

Events & Memoranda

Climbing Mt. Tsurugi 剣山に登りましょう！

T.I.A. will climb Mt. Tsurugi, the highest mountain in Tokushima, and the second highest in western Japan, at 1955 meters above sea level. Beginning climbers and novices alike can join us as there are two levels of courses - elementary and intermediate. Only 40 applicants will be accepted. In the case that there are more than 40 applicants, participants will be chosen by lottery. Results will be announced on the day following the application deadline, so be sure to check the T.I.A. homepage and/or Facebook page.

DATE & TIME:

- October 13, 2025 (Monday/National holiday)
- 6:45 am (meet at T.I.A.) - 6:00pm (arrive back at T.I.A.)

*In the case of inclement weather, this activity will be cancelled.

HOW TO APPLY:

- Application Deadline: 5:00 pm, October 8 (Wed.)
- Contact the T.I.A. office via telephone, e-mail, or fax.
- Provide your name, nationality, address, phone number, and e-mail address.

Tel 088-622-6066 Fax 088-624-3169

E-mail info@tia81.com

3. PARTICIPATION FEE:

- 1,500 yen (T.I.A. members and foreigners)
- 3,000 yen (non-members)

(Only bus and leisure insurance fee included.
Lunch and lift fee not included.)

徳島市国際交流協会（T I A）では、高さ 1,955m、徳島県で 1 番、西日本で 2 番目に高い剣山に登ります。スポーツの秋です！私たちと一緒に運動をして、体も心も元気になりましょう。剣山の紅葉も楽しむことができます。やさしいコースと難しいコースがあります。40 人参加できます。40 人以上の申込みがあった場合は、抽選とします。

1. いつ、どこに集まりますか。

- 2025 年 10 月 13 日（月・祝）
- 午前 6 時 45 分 徳島市国際交流協会に集まります。
- 午後 6 時 徳島市国際交流協会に帰ってきます。

*天気が悪い時は、行きません。

2. 申込みの方法

- 10 月 8 日（水）午後 5 時までに電話、ファックス、電子メールで T I A に申し込んで下さい。
- 参加をしたい人の名前、出身国、住所、電話番号、電子メールアドレスを教えてください。

Tel 088-622-6066 Fax 088-624-3169

E-mail info@tia81.com

3. 参加費

- 外国人と T I A 会員 1500 円
- 非会員 3,000 円

(参加費は見ノ越までの往復バス、レジャー保険のお金だけです。昼ご飯のお金は入っていません。又、リフトに乗る人は自分でお金を払って下さい。)

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)