

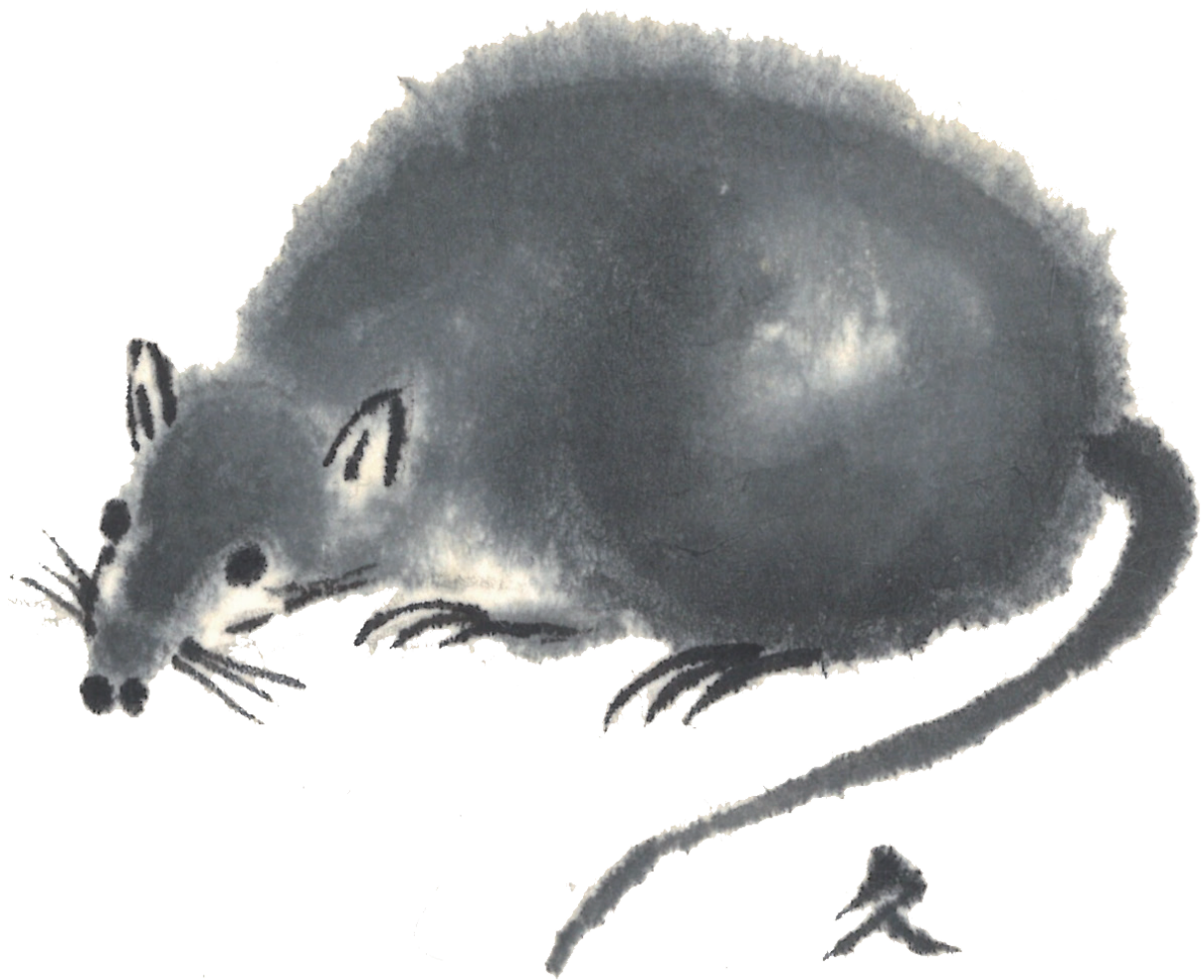
awa life

**The Benefits of
Peer Pressure**

**The Past, Present and
Beyond**

January 2020

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**International
Exchange Forum**

**Awa Shoku: Eating with
Ebessan**

**Gairaigo Galore:
オブラート**



TOPIA

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

あけましておめでとうございます！ Happy New Year!

We, the Awa Life team and TOPIA, wish you a great start to the new decade and the year of the rat in the Chinese zodiac system. It's unbelievable that it's already 2020! Japan is preparing for the Olympics and Paralympics in the summer and Tokushima is holding training camps for national teams from Cambodia, Nepal, Georgia, and Germany. Hopefully you will get warmed up by the sporty vibes as well. What are your plans for the new year? Whatever you do, we hope Awa Life will be your monthly companion in 2020 as well.

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.

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,
Sydney and Nico

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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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The Benefits of Peer Pressure: My Experience White Water Rafting in the Oboke Gorge

By Samantha Harris

Okay, who here is rafting for the first time?

I raised my hand apologetically. Fortunately, I wasn't the only first timer. Wait, was that a good thing? My anxiety floored the gas pedal in my heart. How dangerous were these waters again?

White water rafting in the Oboke region of Kochi seemed like a decent way to spend a Saturday when I'd clicked "going" on the Facebook group page a few weeks prior. I'd always admired the surreal, swimming pool blue rivers of Shikoku, always imagined what it must have felt like to really be in those waters while driving over the narrow bridges of rural Tokushima and Kochi.

Now, fully strapped up, helmet on my head and strange paddle in my hands, threatening to

concuss anyone in my perimeter, I wondered if curiosity was a good enough rationale for signing up for my first white water rafting experience. Didn't I need a license to do this or something? How and why did the owners trust people like me to not kill themselves and possibly everyone else on the raft?



Let's just say, I'm not the kind of person you want on your apocalypse team. I'm not out of shape- I love to exercise. But I'm a panicker. Actually a diagnosed panicker with a genuine, bonafide panic disorder. On a lighter note, I firmly believe that if I were a cat, I'd be one of those cats who's constantly getting

freaked out by her own tail and falling off tables in funny gifs.

I managed to keep the butterflies in my stomach

The Benefits of Peer Pressure

fluttering at a pace I could cope with while the raft guides went over what to do if you fell off the raft, what to do if someone else fell off the raft, what to do if--god forbid--your leg got stuck under a rock and it twisted and... Just look at the water, I told myself. Look at the pretty blue water! Sure is blue. You paid to be here. Don't freak out.

Then it was time to actually get in the raft and start the ride. Suddenly, I was eleven years old again, on my junior high school chorus field trip to Busch Gardens, Williamsburg, waiting in line to ride the Big Bad Wolf, my first real roller coaster. The magic of peer pressure convinced me to sit in one of those death carts, and I ended up having a great time.

They say history repeats itself, and it turns out, the magic of peer pressure works whether you're a preteen or a twenty-something adult. I had a great time. One of the best times I've had since coming to Tokushima over one year ago for the JET Programme.

Our experience wasn't without its little ticks. I was, of course, the first one to hold the paddle incorrectly, inspiring our little rafting group to dub ourselves "Team T-Grip" as a reminder to FIRMLY GRASP the handle. I stayed on constant alert after my first mistake, constantly checking my form, not wanting to be the reason our raft tipped over. I held my breath and gripped the ropes for dear life on the first few rapids. It was like being on a roller coaster without a safety belt.

There were enough calm moments to break up the chaos of the rapids. That is, until our rafting

group--a mix of Tokushima and Hiroshima JETs--decided to declare war on each other's rafts, turning the river into a hazardous battleground. Paddle splashing led to pulling and pushing one another overboard, which eventually led to outright kidnapping and raft mutiny. I felt myself pulled backward by an enemy's paddle more than once. There were winners and losers, but no casualties.

By the end of the day, just about every orifice on my body was full of river water. My knuckles were rubbed raw from hitting the ropes on the raft, but I had no bruises, no wounds. I'd made it out alive. More than alive, I was happy.



Looking back, I couldn't believe how quickly I'd gone from nervous and doubtful to joyful and carefree, talking to strangers as if they were lifelong friends, cursing familiar faces for pulling me overboard and later retaliating with a splash of cold

river water. I even went to an onsen afterward, something my anxiety usually talks me out of.

I can say for certain that this experience made me braver and more relaxed, two unexpected but welcome side effects. If you have the chance to go whitewater rafting in Oboke, I highly recommend it. This river was even used as the location of the 2017 World Rafting Championships! Who knows how long we'll be able to go out and appreciate nature's gifts? Even if you have the temperament of a cat frightened by its own tail, you could have an unforgettable positive experience in one of the most beautiful places on Earth.

The Past, Present and Beyond

By Chelsea Quezergue

Before starting my journey as an ALT in Japan, I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Nicaragua. I wondered about how I would maintain my Spanish proficiency level in a homogenous country like Japan. Realistically, any opportunities to interact with other Spanish speakers would be rare. However, in a serendipitous turn of events, the head of my local board of education asked if I could give him and his wife Spanish language lessons. I was surprised and eager at once. This was a unique opportunity to not only use Spanish, but to also foster a connection centered around cultural and linguistic exchange. I welcomed the chance to fulfill the aspect of the JET experience that calls for us to be cultural ambassadors.

Fast forward to the present, my time with this Japanese couple—the Yamakawas—has been rich and impactful. In exchange for the classes, they take me on excursions around Shikoku. So far, we have visited an indigo dyeing place and the first 20 temples of the Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage, among other places. Our visits to the temples have inspired me to make a goal of undertaking the pilgrimage either on foot or by bike at some point in the future. Moreover, Mrs. Yamakawa has taught me how to make Japanese dishes like shiraoae, tsunomono, agedashi tofu and chawanmushi. Although we haven't met each other's families, we share heartfelt stories that make us feel like we have. I know the houses they spent their childhoods in and which elementary schools they studied at. They now know that Spanish speakers come in all colors and races. During our classes, there's a constant, natural shifting of deference and roles—all three of us are willing learners and teachers when we need to be.

My time in Nicaragua impacted me in profound

ways. I never imagined that profundity would continue to afford me such beautiful experiences and memories such as the ones I have created with the Yamakawas. Our Spanish lessons are a highlight of not just my week, but of my entire time as a JET participant thus far. How have you been able to use your past experiences to create new ones here in Japan? Hopefully, you complete your time as a JET with heartwarming memories to carry with you and draw on in the future.



International Exchange Forum

By Satoko Saito

Aiming for a World Where No One is Left Behind

The International Exchange Forum 2019 was held as a part of the Human Rights Festival

“Tokushima: A Connected Life Festival 2019” on December 15th (Sunday) at Miraizu located in Wakimachi Town in Mima City. During the morning session we invited four foreigners living in Tokushima (from India, China, Portugal, and

Germany) to give a presentation about their country's culture and talk about their experiences in Japan. They talked about things that had surprised them which, although obvious, everyday things for Japanese people, are really interesting to foreigners or difficult to understand (such as Japan having a lot of amusement parks, omotenashi at restaurants, and unique school customs). In addition, participants had the opportunity to experience foreign culture with the presenters, CIRs, and exchange students from JICA in the afternoon session. Many people, including local people from Mima and children and parents, enjoyed wearing traditional clothes and taking pictures, as well as playing with toys from other cultures. It was a wonderful event of international flavor. One person from Mima said, "I was so glad to have this opportunity because there are not many events like this in the western part of Tokushima."

We can't have strong feelings towards a topic without having experienced it ourselves. There were strong and impressive messages

from participants in this forum. For example, in order to realize a multicultural society, we shouldn't differentiate people as "foreigners" and "Japanese", but we need to see everyone as "humans". In addition, you don't have to do something big to change society, just start with something small to support the people around you. Through planning and participating in this forum, I really felt the importance of listening to opinions directly from people from other countries and having face-to-face international cultural exchange. I will definitely continue to try to make opportunities for people living in Tokushima to enjoy experiencing other cultures and think about good approaches to realizing a multicultural society together.



Gairaigo Galore

オブラート (Oblaat)

By Junko Kimura

Have you ever tasted any Japanese candy that was wrapped with a very thin paper, which melts once you put it in your mouth? When I was a child some years ago, I used to buy this citrusy candy wrapped in paper. As a child, I wondered what the paper was made from and worried if it was safe to eat it. One day during lunch, my friend was preparing to take her powdered medicine. She was wrapping it with a thin paper. I asked her what it was, and she said that it's called "Oburaato" and she gave me one piece to try. When I tried it, it was the same paper that my favorite candy was wrapped in.

"Oburaato" is a thin edible paper that is made from starch. It's used for wrapping powdered medicine and other things. Where does the name come from originally? I thought it was English, but I was wrong! The name comes from the Dutch word "oblaat" or "oblade" in German. Does it mean that Dutch or German people also use the paper for taking medicine? The answer is no. "Oblaat" and "oblade" means communion wafer in English and they have it during religious services. How did communion wafers become an edible thin paper for wrapping powdered medicine? Communion wafers came to Japan during the Meiji period. Japanese people soaked the wafer in water to make it soft then wrapped powdered medicine to take. In 1902, Dr. Masataro Kobayashi in Mie Prefecture invented a method for producing edible thin paper from agar and starch. After writing this article I feel like running to the nearest コンビニ (konbini) to get my favorite childhood candy!

* Mini Japanese Lesson! オブラートに包む - To Sugarcoat



Awa Shoku: Eating with Ebessan

By Lance Kita

Happy New Year!! I hope everyone has a delicious and nutritious 2020!!

I'm sure most of you have visited shrines and bought your lucky charms for the year, but for shop owners, their New Year begins on January 10 when they visit their nearby Ebisu shrines to wish for business prosperity (shobai hanjo 商売繁盛).

In Tokushima City, the biggest Ebisu Festival (Ebisu matsuri えびす祭り) happens at the Kotoshironushi Shrine 事代主神社 just a few blocks from JR Tokushima Station. Ebisu is one of the seven lucky gods (Shichifukujin 七福神), and the god of fishermen, often depicted carrying a fishing pole and a giant red sea bream. In Tokushima, he and the festival are affectionately called by the nickname "Ebessan" えべっさん. This one lasts for three days, January 9-11, from morning until 10:00 at night. Owners and employees come here to pray and get blessed by the priest. They also buy a bamboo branch decorated with lucky symbols to display on a prominent pillar in their shop or on the household Shinto altar (kamidana 神棚) for the whole year.

The real symbol of this festival are the surrounding food booths, which attract huge crowds of families and townspeople. Although spring, summer, and fall festivals are very common, there aren't many winter festivals with rows of street food booths except at New Year and this festival.

I personally love the street food here, which tends to fall into three categories: agemono, konamon, and amaimono. Agemono 揚げ物 are the deep-fried foods, which are the universal junk food in almost every country. Who doesn't like something salty and greasy on a cold winter's night? The crowd favorite is karaage 唐揚げ, or fried chicken pieces, served in a cup or on a skewer. TBH, I think karaage is overpriced and not of good quality at these festivals, but it is also one of the surest bets if you're not familiar with Japanese flavors or it's your first time with

street food. This year, I would look for Korean "hotdogs" ハットグ, cheese-filled crunchy sticks of goodness, often with a bumpy potato or corn exterior.

Konamon 粉もん are batter-based snacks that are as filling as they are cheap. The ubiquitous takoyaki たこ焼き (balls of dough with a piece of octopus) are about 50 meters apart from each other at the festival, with the dumplings slathered in a tangy sauce and mayonnaise. You can also get okonomiyaki お好み焼き (savory pancakes mixed with cabbage and topped with strips of pork belly and/or fried egg) in both the denser Kansai/Osaka style and the crepe-like Hiroshima style.

Both are a great dinner on a tight budget. Sometimes the ingredients are poured into smaller round molds for a more compact version often called Namba-yaki なんば焼き in Ishii and other places west of the city. My absolute favorite street food at this festival is the hashi-maki 箸巻き, which is the okonomiyaki batter rolled around a pair of disposable chopsticks like an obese crepe and topped with sauce, mayo, and your choice of meat, a fried egg with oozy yolk, cheese, or spicy cod roe mayo.

Of course, you can't leave without amaimono 甘いもの (sweets). Some of the classic sweet stuff will include candy-dipped fruit like strawberries (ichigo-ame いちご飴), grapes (budo-ame ぶどう飴), and recently mandarin oranges (mikan-ame みかん飴). Bananas tend to be dipped in a wild color array of chocolates and decorated with sprinkles. And there's always a line of families waiting to grab a bag of freshly-made mini-donut cakes (baby castella ベビーカステラ) cooked in molds shaped like classic cartoon characters.

So brave the cold and join the foodie fun of Ebessan on January 9-11. Even if you're not full in spirit, I can guarantee you'll be full in stomach!



Mini-cakes in the shape of Ebisu's head, the patron deity of Ebessan.



My favorite street food in Ebessan...behold the junk foodie hashi-maki!



The shrine for Ebessan is surrounded by much more secular food booths.

「～ています」&「～てあります」

Today we are going to study 「～ています」 and 「～てあります」 which are used to express the remaining, present condition of something due to an action.

(At a Japanese classroom)

Aさん: 先生、後ろのドアが開いていますよ。

先生: はい、まだ来る人がいますから開けてあります。
後5分くらいしたら閉めますね。



Student A: Sensei, the back door is open.

Sensei: I know. There are still some people who are going to come, so I left it open.
I'll close it in about 5 minutes.

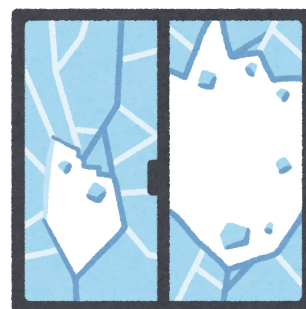
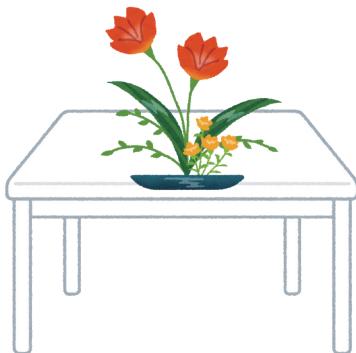
[Verb te-form います] uses an intransitive verb to express a change in an object. It expresses the current state and condition of something due to an action.

[Verb te-form あります] uses a transitive verb to express a person's actions. It is used to express the remaining, present condition of something due to an action that was carried out with an intent or purpose.

The sentences 「ドアが開いています。」 and 「ドアが開けてあります。」 both express that “the door is open”, however, the sentence 「ドアが開けてあります。」 also expresses that someone opened (and left the door open) due to a specific reason.

Practice Questions: Read the following sentences and circle the correct ending.

1. テーブルの上に、花が飾って [a います b あります]
2. 窓ガラスが割れて [a います b あります]
3. 部屋のすみに、ごみ箱がおいて [a います b あります]
4. 部屋の電気が消えて [a います b あります]
5. 車が止まって [a います b あります]
6. カレンダーに、予定が書いて [a います b あります]
7. 公園の周りに、木が植えて [a います b あります]
8. 木の枝が折れて [a います b あります]



Events & Memoranda

Mochi Strength Competition at Taisanji Temple 大山寺の力餅

This event is held every 3rd Sunday of January on the Taisanji Temple grounds as the temple's first event of the new year. It's a competition to see who can carry mochi the furthest. Men carry 169 kg, women 50kg, children 10kg, and young children carry 5 kg of mochi.

Spectators also provide a source of strength in this fun event with their cheers.

When: January 19th (Sun)

Where: Taisanji Temple Grounds (Itano District, Kamiita, Kanyake, 大山 14-2)

Fee: Free

Info: Taisanji Temple

TEL: 088-694-5525

URL: http://taisanji.jp/?page_id=10

正月の初会式の行事として毎年1月第3日曜日に大山寺境内で行われます。

男 169kg・女 50kg・子ども 10kg・幼児 5kg の餅をかつぎ、歩いた距離を競います。

見物する方も力が入り、思わず歓声を上げてしまう程の名物行事です。

日時：1月19日（日）

場所：大山寺境内

板野郡上板町神宅字大山 4

料金：無料

問い合わせ：大山寺

TEL: 088-694-5525

URL: http://taisanji.jp/?page_id=10

Awakoi Nishi Awa Experience Events にし阿波体験プログラムイベント あわこい

“Awakoi” are a series of events which let you come in touch with the stunning nature, history, culture, traditional performance arts, and cuisine of the Nishi Awa region. Please check out the homepage for further information and to make reservations.

Activities include cooking classes with grains from the sloping fields, game meat hot pots, batik indigo dyeing, making cosmetics, making tofu, making Amazake out of rice kouji, geta experiences, casual kimono experiences, Iya road trails, etc.

When: January 11th (Sat) – February 23rd (Sun)

Where: Mima-shi, Miyoshi-shi, Tsurugi-cho, Higashi Miyoshi-cho

Info: Awakoi Bureau

TEL: 090-1573-0051 or 0883-87-8988

URL: <https://nishi-awa.jp/experience/awakoi>

「あわこい」とは、にし阿波が持つ自然、歴史、文化、伝統芸能や食といった地域の魅力に触れる体験イベントです。公式ホームページで予約の開始しておりますので、ぜひチェックしてプログラムの詳細をご確認ください（*’▽’）ノ

【体験プログラム一例】

傾斜畑で採れた雑穀料理教室、ジビエ鍋作り、ろうけつ藍染め、手作りコスメ作り、おいしい豆腐作り、米麴でつくる甘酒、桐下駄体験、カジュアルきもの体験、祖谷街道トレイル…

日時：1月11日（土）～ 2月23日（日）

場所：美馬市、三好市、つるぎ町、東みよし町

問い合わせ：あわこい事務局

TEL: 090-1573-0051 または 0883-87-8988

URL: <https://nishi-awa.jp/experience/awakoi>

Events & Memoranda

13th Shogo Kariyazaki Flower Arrangement Exhibition in Udatsu

【第13回】假屋崎省吾「うだつをいける～華寿絢爛～」

The Udatsu Flower Arrangement Exhibition will be held this year for 13th time. With the historic Udatsu Townscape as a backdrop, ikebana artist Shogo Kariyazaki's beautiful floral arrangements will be on display. In addition, you can enjoy some of Tokushima's other, prized and beautiful items such as cymbidiums and Ōtani ware.

When: January 12th (Sun) – February 24th (Mon)
9:00 – 17:00 (Last entrance is at 16:30)

Where: First Location: Aisho Sanao Yoshida Residence

Second Location: Wakimachi Theater "Odeonza"

Third Location: Anmitsukan

Fee: 1,200 Yen (Access to all locations)

Aisho Sanao Yoshida Residence – 750 Yen
Wakimachi Theater "Odeonza" – 550 Yen
Anmitsukan – Free

Info: Mima sightseeing & tourism bureau
Mima tourism division

TEL: 0883-53-8599 (Mima sightseeing & tourism bureau)

0883-52-5610 (Mima tourism division)

※ A free shuttle bus will be available on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays to and from the Mima Miraizu Exchange Center and the Anmitsukan for the duration of the Flower Exhibition.

「うだつをいける」は、今回で13回目の開催。歴史ある景観が残るうだつの町並みを舞台に、華道家・假屋崎省吾が美を紡ぐ美しく華やかな華道展「うだつをいける」。シンビジウムや大谷焼など、徳島が誇る美の競演をご堪能ください。

日時：1月12日（日）～2月24日（月）

9:00～17:00

（最終入館 16:30）

場所：第1開場 藍商佐直 吉田家住宅

第2開場 脇町劇場オデオン座

第3開場 あんみつ館

料金：1,200円（各会場共通券）

第1開場（750円※期間中）

第2開場（550円※期間中）

第3開場（入場無料）

問い合わせ：美馬観光ビューロー
美馬市観光課

TEL：0883-53-8599（美馬観光ビューロー）

0883-52-5610（美馬市観光課）

※うだつをいける期間中の土・日曜日、祝日は無料ジャンボタクシーが、「あんみつ館⇄ミライズ前」間を運行します。



Hina Matsuri - February 9th (Sun)

- Let's decorate and prepare dolls for Japan's traditional Hina Matsuri!
- For more information, please see TOPIA's homepage.



Counselling Service at TOPIA・トピアの相談窓口

TOPIA provides consultation on everyday life, education, labor, medical institutions, and disaster prevention; and 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. Counselling 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.

Everyday, 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)