



# Jan **JTF** 19

## Association News

Happy New Year from all of us at the AWIA! May your year be filled with health and happiness.

### Language Volunteers Meeting

*Date:* Sunday, January 27, 10am-11:30am

*Location:* Aizu Keikodo, Floor 3 Room 4

Come share knowledge about Iimoriyama and exchange tips about leading tours of this famous site in Aizu for English-speaking visitors.

Our language volunteer meetings are held in a mixture of English and Japanese and are a great way for foreigners to learn more about Aizu and take an active role in the community!

This time we will be talking about Mt. Iimoriyama and the story of the Byakkotai, as well as the history of Sazaedo Temple.

### New Year's Potluck Party

*Date:* Sunday, January 27, 12:30pm-2:30pm

*Place:* at the International Association

*Fee:* 100 yen for members, 200 for non-members

Bring a dish to share and come mingle with members of the community at our annual potluck party. Take some time out of your weekend to relax, make connections, play games, share new year's resolutions, and eat a variety of world cuisines. Family and friends welcome.



\*We are also looking for a small number of volunteers (for whom participation is free) to help with decorating, party preparation and cleaning.

## ASSOCIATION EVENT REPORT:



### Little Trip Around the World: Mongolia

Contrary to our image of Mongolia, we learned that most Mongolians live in the huge capital city of Ulaanbaatar, rather than yurts. We also learned about the culture and traditions of Mongolia and got to try some sea buckthorn juice and Mongolian donuts made by Onon!

### Nihongo De Hanasou

The room was filled with listeners who enjoyed the speeches given by our nine presenters. Afterwards, we played ice-breaking games with everyone!



**New Year's Closings:** Our office will be closed from **Saturday, December 29th to Thursday, January 3rd.**

## Aizu Events

### First Tea Ceremony of the New Year (*Oyakuen*)

*Date: Thursday, January 3, 10am-3pm*

*Place: Oyakuen Garden*

Take part in a *hatsugama* (first tea ceremony of the new year) at Oyakuen! Anyone can join for 800 yen, which includes the price of admission to the garden.



### Nanokado Hadaka Mairi (*Yanaizu*)

*Date: Monday, January 7, from 8:30pm*

*Place: Enzōji Temple in Yanaizu*

Better known as the “Naked Man Festival,” every year on January 7th at 8:30pm, at the strike of a bell, men dressed in loincloths dash up 113 stone stairs into the main hall of Enzōji Temple, where they scramble to climb a rope to the ceiling. This is a lively winter tradition that dates back over 1,000 years.

### Tokaichi Market

*Date: Thursday, January 10 from 9am to 9pm*

*Location: City center around Sakaemachi (Shinmei-dori, etc.)*

The biggest *hatsuichi* (first market of the year) in the Aizu Area takes place on January 10th and has over 400 years of history. About 400 shops will be in attendance, with shopfronts selling food and drinks, lacquerware, and lucky new year items like *okiagari-koboshi*, windmills, and candy. The tradition is to buy one *okiagari-koboshi* for every member of your family, plus one.



### Otawara Hiki Festival & New Year's Market (*Bange*)

*Date: Monday, January 14. 9:30am-7:30pm*

*Location: Aizubange, in front of city hall*

On the main street of Aizubange Town, men dressed in loincloths play tug of war with a huge hay bale weighing 5 tons. It is said that if the eastern team wins, the price of rice will increase that year, and if the western team wins, the harvest will be abundant that year. It's also said that people that pull on the rope will be blessed with sound health throughout the year, so people come from all over the country to participate.