

# SynthesAizu

September 2024  
Volume 4 Issue 9

## Association News

### 2024 International Festival

Oct 5 (Sat)

10:00-15:00

Tsuruga-jo Castle Gym

The World Adventure  
~into the future beyond!~

Come see Stage Performances, and Food Stalls from people from all over the world! Residents from a variety of countries will be introducing their culture/countries, and groups related to international exchange and international cooperation will be showcasing their activities! Come experience the world in Aizu!

Final details next month! Check out our flier too!

#### Food Stall pre-view:

Turkish kebab, Bangladesh-style kebab, American sweets, Canadian Hamburger, Thai food, and more!

#### Stage pre-view:

Kokusai Karaoke, Latin, Indonesian, and Chinese Dance and more!



#### Booth pre-view:

Illustrators from France and America, JICA, Australia, Sri Lanka, Philippines, a Rwanda Education NPO and more!

We'll have a **Stamp Rally** to enhance your enjoyment of the event! Come wearing cosplay or a costume for an early Halloween experience as well!



#### Looking for Volunteers!

We need your help! Stop by and help when you can!

★**Event Pre-Prep:** Planning, flier send out, poster hanging, making decorations etc. (Contact us for details, dates/times)

★**Day Before:** Oct 4th (Fri) 13:00-19:00  
Equipment purchase, Venue Set-up, Hanging Decorations, Booth Set-up etc.

★**Event Day:** Oct 5th (Sat) 8:00-16:30  
Venue Prep, Helping with Booths, Info desk, clean up, etc. -All day volunteers will get lunch!  
\*\*SIGN-UP DEADLINE: Sept 21st (Sat)\*\*



Volunteer Sign-up

### ChAT吧 (ChAT-ba) Chinese Convo. Club.

ChAT-ba stands for:

'Ch': Chinese, 'A': Aizu, 'T': Together, and  
'吧/-ba': 'Let's!' in Chinese.

Interested in speaking Chinese with other learners, and Chinese people? Join the new Chinese Conversation Circle ChAT-ba!

**SEPT 12th (Thu)**  
**13:30-15:00 at the AWIA Office.**

Sign-up by email - [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)



Speak Chinese and interact with Chinese residents! We had our first ChAT-ba on July 18th, and it was a great time. There was a great mix of native Chinese speakers and learners! Join us!

### AtsuHana Japanese Convo. Club.

Speak Japanese in a casual way with many people and have fun with Japanese culture.

It's Sports Day season! Join us for some games like 玉入れ (tama-ire, ball-in) and a fun table tennis ball relay!

When	Saturday, <b>September 14th</b> 10:00-11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign-up	Contact <a href="mailto:mail@awia.jp">mail@awia.jp</a> by <b>Friday, September 13th</b>

※Autumn Japanese Classes have started!  
Sign up is open until Sept 21st! Check inside for more info.

### Volunteer After-Party 10/5 17:30

After the International Festival, we're getting together with all of the volunteers that helped make our event a success. Let's unwind with Chinese food! Enjoy all you can eat and drink at this local restaurant.

**Place:** Saikaro Chinese Restaurant (Hanaharu 2-34)  
**Cost:** General: ¥4000 Student: ¥3000  
**Sign-up:** Contact AWIA ([mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)) by Sept 27th (Fri)



## This Month in Aizu

### Autumn Japanese Classes

#### Give your Japanese skills a boost!

The Autumn session of Japanese language courses is here! With the aid of our experienced volunteer teachers, we offer courses from beginner level to advanced. Our classes strike a balance between reading, writing, and conversational skills. Class sizes are small, and some students may even have 1 on 1 lessons! Online lessons are also available on request.

**Deadline: Sept 21st (Sat)**

<b>Day</b>	Friday Morning <i>(12 classes)</i>	Thursday Evening <i>(12 classes)</i>
<b>Time</b>	10:00-11:30	18:30-20:00
<b>Course Duration</b>	Sep 6-Nov 22	Sep 5-Nov 21
<b>Fee (for all 12 classes)</b>	AWIA members ¥4,000 Non-members ¥6,000	
<b>Place</b>	Aizu City Learning Centre (Keikodo)	
<b>Apply</b>	Contact AWIA at <a href="mailto:mail@awia.jp">mail@awia.jp</a>	

### International Special Concert

**9/20 (Fri) 17:30-20:30**

Doors open: 17:00

A concert with two parts! Part 1: Enjoy music played by talented artists with disabilities from all over the world. Their beautiful music will move you!

Part 2: See the traditions of Aizu: Performances include; koto and shakuhachi flute, Saotome Dance (from Misato/Bange Towns), Tajima Drum Troupe, Geigi from Higashiyama, and even the Aizu Bandai-san Dance.

**Place:** Aizu Fugado Performance Hall (Jotomachi 12-1)

**Tickets:** General: ¥2000

High School and under: Free!

**Buy:** Aizu Fugado, Kitakata Plaza Culture Centre, or contact us at AWIA (mail@awia.jp)

*(Advance tickets available for ¥1500 at AWIA. Stop by our office!)*



# Aizu Matsuri The Biggest Festival in Aizu!

### Aizu Matsuri Main Events

Check out these fun things all weekend!

- Sept 21:** Children's Lantern Parade 18:00-19:00  
(Tsuruga-jo Castle → Shinmei Dori)  
Aizu Bandaisan Dance 19:00-20:30
- Sept 22:** Aizu Clan Parade 9:30~15:30  
Aizu Bandaisan Dance 19:00-20:30
- Sept 23:** Nisshinkan Children's Parade and  
Marching Band Parade 9:30~11:30  
(Dai-ichi JHS → Tsuruga-jo Castle)

Don't miss the largest festival in Aizu!  
<https://www.aizukanko.com/kk/festival/aizu-matsuri>

### Aizu Clan Parade

**9/22 (Sun) 9:30~**

Come watch the highlight of the festival! Consisting of around 500 people, participants include local Junior High and High School students, as well as representatives and decedents of famous players in Aizu's history.

While the parade is going around the city, you can enjoy various stage performances at the Castle! Please look out for the English Pamphlet!



### Aizu Bandaisan Dance

**9/21 + 9/22 19:00-20:30**

Want to experience the bon-dance vibes in September? Join the Aizu Bandaisan Dance on Shimei-doori St. on the Saturday and Sunday nights of the festival weekend. The Japan-China Friendship Association will be getting together on Sept 21 and dancing in the Bandaisan Dance procession. Anyone is welcome to dance in their group! Join in the fun!

**Dance with the Japan-China Friendship Assoc.!**

**Date:** Sept 21st (Sat) ~ 19:10-20:30

**Place:** Shinmei-dori

Join the group with the placard: 日中友好協会  
Join anytime! Hop-in, hop-out as you like!  
No sign-up necessary!



### Multilingual Information Desk

**9/22 9:30-15:00**

For the Aizu Matsuri, the International Association runs a Multilingual Information Desk on the Tsuruga-jo Castle grounds on the main day of festival. We provide Festival Pamphlets in multiple languages, and FREE English tours all day. There will also be information and tours in Chinese!

Come get a tour!!

**Cost:** FREE

**Place:** Tsuruga-jo Castle Grounds  
(near the teahouse.)



## Member Spotlight

### Lauren Zasucha

Lauren came to Aizuwakamatsu in the fall of 2021, and worked as an ALT at a local school. She was an active member of AWIA, and helped out with a variety of events. She moved back to Georgia, USA at the end of July. She had many adventures in Japan and took the time to tell us about some of them!



2024 Tajima Gionsai: One of her final memories in Aizu.

### ‘Fearlessness is key to creating unforgettable memories.’

#### Did you have any problems in your life in Japan?

The concept of *tatemae* and *honne* doesn't exist in America, so I often found myself wondering whether people were being genuine or simply polite. I pride myself on being direct yet kind, which can be rude in Japanese. I found that a more passive approach was often preferred in Japan, which can be considered rude in America! I'm grateful for the opportunity to be challenged by new perspectives and ways of thinking!

#### Your makeup is so beautiful. Is there any difference between Japanese and American makeup?

I love doing my makeup! In the U.S., people often use bronzer to create a tanned look, contour and highlighter to define their features, eyeshadow and eyeliner to elongate their eyes, and overline their lips to make them appear fuller. In Japan makeup tends to focus on lightening the skin, using blush and highlighter to create a youthful appearance, eyeliner to create a rounder eye, and applying lipstick in a more blended manner. The differences are fascinating to observe.

#### Did you try to learn Japanese? Do you find it difficult?

One of my goals in moving to Japan was to learn enough to navigate daily life and better understand the culture, since language and culture are so deeply intertwined. I found Japanese relatively easy to speak but, it's challenging due to its complex writing systems, structure, and contextual nuances. Although I don't plan to become fluent, I'd love to continue casually studying Japanese for the rest of my life.

#### I heard that you can be adventurous, tell us about that.

I enjoy traveling solo, joining in on events, and trying new things. I planned spontaneous solo trips to Kyoto and Okinawa just a week in advance, and ended up dining and spending evenings with strangers I met along the way, while trying to fit in as many experiences as possible. A bit of fearlessness is key to creating unforgettable memories.



#### How was your life in Aizu?

Living in a place with such rich history and a distinct local culture was amazing. I found comfort in the sense of community I felt. I grew to cherish the warmth and familiarity that come with truly getting to know a place. I made many close friendships, discovered favorite spots, and felt a genuine sense of belonging. No place is perfect, but Aizu was the perfect place for me to spend three years of my life.

#### Is there anything you want Japanese people to understand?

One of the first phrases I learned when I arrived in Japan was "The nail that sticks out gets hammered down." But for most foreigners, standing out is inevitable, and many have experienced varying levels of discrimination or discomfort in Japan. However, diversity enriches our lives. While Japan has its own unique and deeply rooted traditions, there's so much to gain from embracing different cultures and ideas. Embracing diversity doesn't mean losing one's identity; rather, it can enhance it, creating a more vibrant and inclusive society.

#### How did you feel participating in Tajima Gion Festival?

We stayed overnight at the salon and woke up at 1:30 AM to start preparing. It was fascinating to wear the intricate bridal kimono. People started photographing us at 5 AM while we were still at the salon! The parade was long and hot, but carrying the offerings and watching the ceremony inside the temple felt like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of such a historic and revered festival.

#### Do you have memories of other festivals?

One of my favorite festivals was the Hakata Dontaku Festival (Fukoka), which had the longest parade I've ever seen. And of course, the Aizu Festival was so exciting. I loved dancing in the parade. At the International Festival in 2022 I was in charge of some games and the Kid's Corner, which I themed around county fairs. It was so fun to share one of the biggest annual events in many American communities. The international festival might be one of my favorite Aizu memories.



#### What are your plans for the future?



My biggest dream is to continue traveling and learning about cultures around the world. Living in Japan and being involved with AWIA taught me that you don't necessarily need to travel to learn about other cultures; you can start by engaging with those in your own community.

#### Is there anything you would like to tell the members of AWIA (our association)?

I'd really just like to say thank you! In my first week in Japan, I went to AWIA and volunteered at my first event. That experience allowed me to get involved in the community and meet so many wonderful people. Aizu is fortunate to have a group of people who want to learn about the world, and offer support that can shift the entire dynamic of someone's experience working, studying, or living in Aizu, whether they're from Japan or other parts of the world.

# Events in September

## Other Information

1	SU	Closed
2	MO	Closed
3	TU	
4	WE	
5	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
6	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
7	SA	10:00 Intl. Fest. Booth Info. Session 15:00 Children's Nihongo Hiroba
8	SU	Closed
9	MO	Closed
10	TU	
11	WE	
12	TH	13:30 ChAT-ba: Chinese Convo. Circle 18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
13	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
14	SA	10:00 AtsuHana: Japanese Convo. Circle
15	SU	Closed
16	MO	Closed
17	TU	
18	WE	
19	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
20	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
21	SA	10:00 FIND: English Convo. Circle 10:00 JICA Desk 15:00 Children's Nihongo Hiroba
22	SU	(Office Closed) 9:30 Multilingual Desk at Tsuruga-jo Castle
23	MO	Closed
24	TU	
25	WE	
26	TH	18:30 Japanese Conversation Class (PM)
27	FR	10:00 Japanese Conversation Class (AM)
28	SA	13:30 Newsletter Preparation
29	SU	Closed
30	MO	Closed

## FIND English Convo. Club

Why not come and speak English with people from all walks of life? Everyone is welcome, no matter your English level.

<b>When</b>	Saturday, <b>September 21st</b> 10:00~11:30
<b>Place</b>	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
<b>Sign Up</b>	Contact <a href="mailto:mail@awia.jp">mail@awia.jp</a> by <u>Friday, Sept 20th</u>

**Digital Newsletter:** Mail postage cost will be increasing from Oct 1st 2024. Want to help us cut costs and save on paper? Sign up to receive your newsletter by email only!  
Contact us at [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)

## Japanese Speech Contest

Show off your skills, and talk about a topic that's near and dear to your heart about your life in Fukushima. Prizes available for winners!!

**Topic:** 福島県で「言いたいこと」「驚いたこと」「思うこと」  
A message you want to express, something that surprised you, or what you think about your life in Fukushima.



**Aizu Contest:** Oct 27th (Sun) 11:00~

**Place:** Lion D'or Building 3F Free Space  
(same bld. as AWIA, Sakaemachi 2-14)

**Participants:** People with Japanese as a second language.

**Prefectural Contest:** Dec 1st (Sun)

**Place:** College of Engineering, Nihon Daigaku

**Winners of the Prefectural Contest:**

- Top Award: 30,000yen (1person)
- Award: 20,000yen (1person)
- Participation: Commemorative Prize

**Sign-up:** By October 7th (Mon)

through email or by QR code

**Contact:** [fukutet@yahoo.co.jp](mailto:fukutet@yahoo.co.jp)

**Run by:** The Public Interest Incorporated Foundation For International Peace



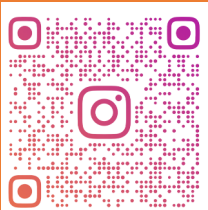
## Call for Newsletter Volunteers!

Come help us fold, stamp, and pack our monthly publications for mailing! No need to sign up, just drop by if you can!

**Date:** September 28th, Saturday

**Time:** 13:30~

**Place:** Aizu Wakamatsu International Association Office



### We're on Instagram!

Follow us for photos and news about our upcoming events!



**AWIA\_PHOTO**

<https://facebook.com/awiajp>



Visit our Facebook page for updates in multiple languages!



Use this QR Code to access our email form to sign-up for events