

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION MONTHLY ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

SynthesAizu

January 2026
Volume 6 Issue 1

Association News

Thank you to all our members and those who participated in events last year. It's thanks to the welcoming community you create that we can do what we do. We look forward to seeing you all in the new year!
New Year's Holiday: The AWIA office is **closed Dec 28 (Sun) - Jan 5 (Mon)**. We open as usual from **Jan 6th (Tue), 9:30-17:30**.

New Year's Potluck Party

Welcome the
New Year!

Bring a dish to share and enjoy the casual atmosphere with other members! We will have some New Year's activities like Fuku-warai (face making), and kakizome (new year's calligraphy). Come have fun with us!

Date: January 18th (Sun) - 12:00-14:00

Place: AWIA Office (Sakaemachi 2-14)

Cost: Members: ¥100 / Non-members: ¥300
(Children under 15: free) (drink fee)

Limit: 50 people

Sign-up: Contact AWIA (aizukokusai@awia.jp)
before Jan 17th (Sat)

※(Bring a dish or something to share! (around 2-3 servings))



Newsletter Schedule Change

We will now send out our newsletters on the 4th Saturday of every month. Typically, we sent them out on the LAST Saturday. However, 2024/2025 brought changes to the postal service, as well as many months with 5 weeks. We've heard from several members that they want our event info earlier. We hope this change allows you plan your schedule easier!

AtsuHana Japanese Convo. Club.



Speak Japanese in a casual way with many people and have fun with Japanese culture. This time, come do some New Years activities!

Kakizome (New Year's Calligraphy), Yasashi Nihongo Karuta, Kendama etc.!

Date	Saturday, <u>January 10th</u> 10:00-11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign-up	Contact aizukokusai@awia.jp by January 9th (Fri)



MEET English Convo. Club



Come MEET and speak English with people from all walks of life! Everyone is welcome, no matter your English level. Join us for activities and free talk!

Date	Saturday, <u>January 17th</u> 10:00-11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign-up	Contact aizukokusai@awia.jp by January 16th (Fri)

ChAT吧 (ChAT-ba) Chinese Convo. Club. Season 2

Have fun using Chinese. Let's talk about Travel!
****Conversational level Chinese is recommended****
(No ChAT-ba in January)

Date	Saturday, <u>Feb 7th</u> 10:00-11:30
Place	AWIA Office (Sakaemachi 2-14)
Sign Up	Contact aizukokusai@awia.jp by <u>Feb 6th (Fri)</u>



会津若松市国際交流協会

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: aizukokusai@awia.jp

Yanaizu Enzoji

Jan 7th (Wed)

Time: 20:30 (climbing starts)

Ring in the New Year at the Temple from the Akabeko legend. The Yanaizu Nanokado Hadakamairi happens every year on Jan. 7th at the Enzoji Temple.

It is said by showing off their strength and muscles, the climbing men scare off the Dragon-god who lives in the Tadami River that plagued the town. Watch men participate in this old tradition of warding off bad luck and illness by climbing up the Temple bell rope wearing only a loincloth!

Place: Yanaizu's Enzoji Temple
(Jikemachiko-176 Yanaizu)

Access: Free Shuttle Bus

(55 seats, first come first served)

18:00 - Departs AizuWakamatsu Station

22:00 - Departs Yanaizu Tourist Centre



More info:

<https://aizu-yanaizu.com/infomation/infomation-3028/>

Tokaichi Market

Jan 10th (Sat) 8:00-20:00

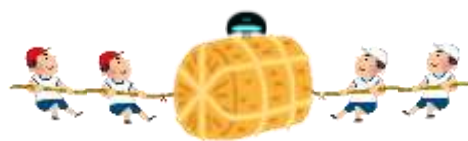
Check out AizuWakamatsu's New Year's Market on Shinmei Dori St.! Pick up your new year's items like daruma, okiagari-koboshi and more! There are also food stalls! Brave the cold and enjoy a traditional Aizu market.



Place: Shinmei Dori St. (in front of the AWIA building, with the covered arcade.)

Bange Barrel Tug-o'-War

Jan 14th (Wed) 12:50 - ~15:30



See 400 years of history continuing to this day in the traditional New Year's Tug-o'-War to predict the harvest for the year. East vs. West! Will the price of rice increase or will we see a bumper crop?

Schedule:

12:50 - Taiko performance

13:20 - Children's Tug-o'-War

14:00 - MAIN EVENT: Big Tug-o'-War

14:45 - Barrel Breaking + Mochi

15:00 - Lucky Beans

Place: In front of Bange Town Hall (3662 Ichinaka3-banko Aizubange-machi)

More info:

<https://aizubange-kanbutsu.jp/event/pg6071290.html>

Higashiyama Onsen 'Sai no Kami'

Jan 14th (Wed) 17:00-19:30

Bring in the new year at the Higashiyama Onsen *Sai-no-Kami*. More commonly known as *Dondo-Yaki*, *Sai-no-Kami* are new year's festivals with bonfires of bamboo, wood, and old good luck talismans. People pray for good harvest, luck and health over the flames. It's said if you feel the warmth, you'll be healthy all year. If you roast some mochi rice cakes, or dried squid, they'll bring health and safety to your family. Bring your old omamori etc. to burn and experience this traditional event!



Bring: New Year's Wreaths/Decorations, omamori, sacred arrows, kakizome new year's calligraphy, daruma, luck items (zodiac figures, okiagari-koboshi, pinwheels) etc.

(Please remove all plastic, vinyl, and metal pieces before submitting for burning)

Place: Innai-418 Higashiyamamachi (big parking lot in the Higashiyama area)

Access: Haikara-san/Local Bus '院内 Innai' stop

More Info: <https://www.aizukanko.com/kk/festival/sainokami>



Gokujo-no Aizu: Certified Tour Guides

Want to learn more about Aizu from an Aizu Expert? Do you have family coming to visit and want to give them an in-depth look into this wonderful area? Hire one of the Certified 'Gokujo-no Aizu' (Ultimate Aizu) English Tour Guides!

▼ **Usage Area:** Aizu Area, Fukushima Pref.

▼ **Cost:** ¥3500/hr (plus extra costs during tour (entrance fees, transportation costs etc.))

▼ **Official website:**

<https://gokujo-aizu.com/certified-tourguide/>

▼ **How to Book:**

- Access the website and check out the guides!
- Find one you want to book, and fill in the email form.
- You should receive a response within 2 days.

Check the website for more information!

(If you have trouble with the website, etc. contact AWIA.)



Hello World Club

Fall 2025 - Review

Every year, AWIA holds an event series for Elementary School children to learn about cultures from around the world. Every two weeks from Oct 18th to Dec 13th 2025, kids learned about Kazakhstan, the Philippines, India, America, and Canada! This year, events focused on fun children's games from the different countries.

①Kazakhstan:

We learned about the traditional nomadic lifestyle in Kazakhstan, made a paper Yurt (Ger) house, and played Asyk atu. (A game like 'marbles,' but was played with sheep bones.) The kids did a great job!



Asyk atu

②The Philippines:

Outdoor games from the Philippines. We played Piko and Patintero. *Piko* is like hopscotch! *Patintero* is a game with two teams where one has to run across the square and back while the other team tries to tag them out. Both the children and volunteers went all out!



Piko



Patintero

③India:

India has a diverse culture! Different regions have different clothes, foods, dances, languages and more! We learned a lot about Southern India's Telugu region. We played *Lagori*. Teams tried to knock down a tower of boxes without being tagged out with a ball. The children wanted to play this game all day.



Lagori

④America:

Howdy! We learned about Arizona and Cowboys! With a hat, bandana, chaps, boots, and a horse, you too could become like a cowboy. Don't forget fun cowboy words like 'howdy', 'yeehaw', and 'y'all.' After making paper horses, the children did a rodeo relay, running around a course. Yee-haw!



⑤Canada:

Christmas Cooking! We made marshmallow cereal treats and decorated them with a Christmas theme. The green food-colouring and red and white chocolate pens made the treats look very festive. Everyone worked hard to make this simple treat, and then we learned about Christmas in Canada.



Important Information

Triophone: 3-way
Interpretation System
024-524-1316

If you have questions regarding daily life in Japan, you can always reach out to AWIA, but if you need help on a phone-call to a government office, try out this Trio-phone service run by Fukushima Prefecture! Using 3-way calling, they can directly interpret calls to places like the Immigration Bureau and more. It's free! (regular phone service charges will apply. LINE app calls available!)

They can interpret for the following 13 languages:

Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Thai, Indonesian, Nepalese, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Russian.

(available Tue-Sat 9:00-17:15.)

(Korean, Portuguese, Tagalog, Vietnamese available Thu 10:00-14:00, 4th and 5th Thu reservation required.)



Fukushima
International
Association



LINE ID:
@901wdqzt

They do NOT provide medical interpretation, nor with police.

More Info:

<https://www.worldvillage.org/life/consultation.html>

Driver's License: Oct Change

From Oct 2025, the procedures and documents to convert your license to a Japanese one have changed. These changes reflect a need to make the process stricter, and to prioritize residents over short-term visas and tourists.





Check the Fukushima Pref. Police Website for the updated info: https://www.police.pref.fukushima.jp/04_07gaikokumenkyo.html

October 2025 Changes		
Section	Old	New
Proof of Residence	Submit any address	Copy of your Residence Record
Residence Status	Temporary OK	Temporary/Tourist Visas no longer accepted
Written Test	7 out of 10 questions correct to pass	45 out of 50 questions to pass And more!

Table created in part from info from NHK:

https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20251001_01/

Events in January

1	TH	Closed
2	FR	Closed
3	SA	 Closed
4	SU	Closed
5	MO	Closed
6	TU	Back to work!
7	WE	
8	TH	
9	FR	
10	SA	10:00 AtsuHana: Japanese Convo. Circle
11	SU	Closed
12	MO	Closed (Coming of Age Day)
13	TU	
14	WE	
15	TH	
16	FR	
17	SA	10:00 MEET: English Convo. Club 15:00 Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba 
18	SU	12:00 New Year's Potluck Party (Office closed outside of event time)
19	MO	Closed
20	TU	
21	WE	
22	TH	
23	FR	
24	SA	13:30 Newsletter Preparation
25	SU	Closed
26	MO	Closed
27	TU	
28	WE	
29	TH	
30	FR	
31	SA	

Other Information

Japan-China Friendship Association

Feb 1st (Sun) 10:00 - 15:30

Get together in the new year with the Japan-China Friendship Association! They'll be holding their annual new year's party. Join them for table tennis, 'curoling' (non-ice curling) and a good time! End the day with a 'Bandai-san odori' dance.



Place: Josai Community Centre
(Zaimokumachi, 1 chome-3-38 (Beside Nishiwakamatsu Station))

Limit: 40 people

Cost: Adult - ¥1200, Students (children incl.) - ¥600, Toddlers - free!

Bring: Wear loose clothes, bring indoor shoes

Sign-up: by January 20th (Tue) Sanpei-san (090-5833-5821)

'This is Fukushima' Calendar

In order to help show off to the world what Fukushima is really like another the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake, some residents have been making a calendar to show off the beauty of this prefecture. Stop by our office and pick one up! (We may run out, so contact us to check) (0242-27-3703 or aizukokusai@awia.jp)



Be a Guest on the Radio!

Want a chance to be on the radio? AWIA collaborates with FM Aizu (76.2) with a segment once a week: Chikyuu Marutto Tele-report (World-wide Tele-report). Guests can share their experience of living in Aizu or abroad. Each segment is about 5-10mins, so no pressure! Guests can join live, or come and pre-record their interview. Interested? Contact us!

When: Wednesday Nights ~17:40 (5-10min segment)
(interview is in Japanese only)



If you have time, why not listen in?

Want to be a guest? Contact us: aizukokusai@awia.jp

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!
(from Jan 2026, the newsletter will be sent out on the 4th Saturday instead of the LAST Saturday.)

Date: January 24th, 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