

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION MONTHLY ENGLISH NEWSLETTER

# SynthesAizu

January 2022  
Volume 2 Issue 1

## Association News

### Gyoza-Making Workshop: Come celebrate the Chinese New Year with us!

Come ring in the New Year with a hands-on cooking event! In this tasty workshop, members of the Chinese community in Aizu will guide participants in making not one, but TWO classic Chinese dishes. Guests will learn how to make gyoza from scratch, starting with the dough! After gyoza, we will also be making Chinese-style scallion pancakes, which can be enjoyed for breakfast or a snack at any time of day. Participants will work in pairs at each cooking station, so signing up with a buddy is encouraged! Children are also welcome to join with a parent or guardian.



Image: Hiroko Liston

#### Menu

- ① Gyoza (pot stickers) made with meat, leek, carrot, cabbage, and shiitake mushroom filling
- ② Chinese-style Scallion Pancakes

Time	Sunday, January 23rd 10:00 - 13:00
Cost	AWIA Members: 800円, Non-Members: 1000円
What to Bring	Apron and bandana are recommended (Please bring a rolling pin if you have one)
Capacity	16 participants (8 groups of 2 people)
Sign-Up	Contact the AWIA by <u>Thursday, January 20th!</u>

### AWIA Caption Contest - Caption this photo for a chance to win!

The author of the winning caption will receive a special prize!

#### How to Enter

Submit your caption by commenting on our "Caption Contest" post on Facebook or Instagram, or by sending us an email at [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp) titled "Caption Contest."

#### Selection Process

At the end of the submission period, the AWIA staff will review all the captions and vote on our favorites to select the winner. Please submit captions in English, Japanese, or Chinese.

#### Submission Deadline

Please submit your caption by January 21st (Fri). The winner will be announced in the February newsletter and on our social media!



会津若松市国際交流協会

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp)



## This Month in Aizu Wakamatsu

### Aizu Momen Craft Workshop at Akabeko Salon



Come join our friends at the Akabeko Salon for this unique Aizu Cotton craft workshop! Guests will learn how to make a traditional 'omamori' charm as well as a floral brooch!

Date	Saturday, January 15th
Schedule	Session A: 13:30 - 14:30 Session B: 14:30 - 15:30
Cost	Just <b>500JPY!</b> (1,000 yen value)
Capacity	6 participants per session *Registration will be closed once seats are full.
Sign-up	Contact Emilie by <u>January 11th!</u> <a href="mailto:salon-akabeko@bekonon.com">salon-akabeko@bekonon.com</a>

### "This is Fukushima" 2022 Calendars at the AWIA!

Come pick up a FREE 2022 calendar at the AWIA! "This is Fukushima" is a non-profit calendar project led by foreign residents of Fukushima with the aim of re-introducing the beauty of Fukushima after the 2011 disaster.



### New Year's Postcard Lottery

Those who've lived in Japan for at least a year are probably familiar with the Japanese custom of sending New Year's cards, or "Nengajyo." The practice is similar to the western tradition of sending Christmas cards, and is a good way to keep in touch with friends, family, coworkers, acquaintances, classmates, your local konbini cashier...you get the idea.



If you received Nengajyo this year, you may have noticed the little 6-digit code on the bottom corner. Did you know that number is actually a ticket for a huge, nation-wide lottery? Since 1949, New Year's cards in Japan have been connected to the lottery, with prizes becoming more and more lavish as Japan's economy grew after the second world war. Today, the Japan Post hosts the lottery with a lineup of fantastic prizes every year.

#### 2022 Nengajyo Lottery Prizes Include:

- Online Retail gift cards
- 3 Million Yen in Cash
- Popular specialty food products
- Kitchenware and household goods
- Special commemorative postage stamps

For winning postcard numbers and more details about this year's prizes, visit the Japan Post Website. (URL below)

<https://www.post.japanpost.jp/event/otoshidama2022/>

**Good Luck!**

### "Aizu Tokaichi" New Year's Market

**8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

**Monday, January 10th (Coming of Age Day)**

Shinmei-dori, Shiyakushomae-dori, Chuo-dori, Omachi-dori

After two years of cancellations and downsizing due to Covid-19, the Aizu "Tokaichi" New Year's market will finally be making a grand return this month! Head over to the Shinmei shopping district for rows of food stalls and merchants selling goods for the New Year! It is an Aizu tradition for families to buy an "okiagari koboshi" doll at Tokaichi for each member of the family, plus one extra. The extra doll is said to bring prosperity to the family in the new year.



### Sports Club "Uniship" Now Recruiting!

Are you a young adult looking to make new friends?

Come join us for the very first session of "Sports Club 'Uniship,'" a newly-founded group created by active young members of the AWIA!

"Uniship" (**unity + relationship**) was designed to provide a place where young adults of all backgrounds can enjoy making friends through sports. If you find yourself saying, "but I'm bad at sports," or "I don't speak enough Japanese," don't worry! Uniship is open to everyone ages 18-39, regardless of fitness level or language ability. Whether you are looking to interact with a diverse group of people, practice your language skills, or just enjoy some casual sports, Uniship is for you!

Come join us for some **ping pong** at the very first session of Uniship!

Date	January 15 <sup>th</sup> , (Sat) 1:30pm - 4:30pm
Place	Kakujo Community Center Aizuwakamatsu City, Jotoumachi, 1-47
Capacity	15 Players
Cost	Free!
Bring	Indoor shoes, drinks, towel, comfortable clothes
Sign-up	Send your name, age, and phone number to <a href="mailto:mail@awia.jp">mail@awia.jp</a> by <u>January 12th (Wed)!</u>

## Member Spotlight: Hitesh Toor

Born in London to an Indian family, brought up in Ghana, and now living in Aizu as an ALT for almost 3 years, Hitesh Toor might be a familiar sight to some on his purple road bike, which he rides all over town. When he's not working or cycling, he does photography, makes music, vlogs, and volunteers at AWIA. In this interview, he shares a bit about what growing with multiple cultures can be like, as well as some of the sweet serendipities he discovered while living in Aizu.



### Q: Where are you from?

I was born in London, but just a month or two after being born I was taken to India, where my parents are from. Soon after, my father found a job in Ghana, so my mom and I also moved there and that's where I grew up. I did nursery school through college in Ghana, although I did return to India from time to time. So, I grew up with both Ghanaian and Indian cultures. Legally, nationally, my passport is Indian, but I grew up in Ghana. Where I consider home, I don't really know. It's one of those things can't really be put into words. On the inside I'm part Indian part Ghanaian, but on the outside I'm purely Indian. So, I can't really fit in fully with the Indian crowd, and I can't fit in fully with the Ghanaian crowd.

### Q: What is the primary language in Ghana?

As a commonwealth nation, the main language of communication is English, and we follow the British system. We also have two main local languages called Twi and Ga. Ga is more used in the coastal areas, and it has a bit "rougher" intonation. Twi is more widely spoken, however. I can understand and speak a bit of both Twi and Ga. Pidgin is also very commonly spoken, and it's what I used a lot of in my school life. Growing up with a mish-mash of cultures, my accent is also an amalgamation of Indian, Ghanaian, British, and American, etc. Although, because of my work here (as an ALT), my accent is starting to lean more into the American side out of necessity for following the Japanese English curriculum. Having grown up with so many cultures, it's easy for me to assimilate quickly to whatever's around me.

### Q: What did you study at university?

I studied Business Administration with a focus in Marketing. It's not what I'm passionate about, however. I mainly did it to have a degree. What I really want to do is be a commercial pilot, and aviation is something I'm very passionate about. But it costs a lot of money to get started, and with Covid, things are much more complicated for pilots now.

### Q: What brought you to Japan?

I wanted to do something on my own. Indian families tend to have a tight-knit culture, and because I've always had this mentality of "am I Indian, am I Ghanaian, what am I?" I wanted to do my own thing and see where it led me. [Coming to Japan] was something I started thinking about in Junior High school. One day, I was just looking online researching what kinds of jobs you can get with just a Junior High School degree, and I found out about teaching English in Japan. I thought, "huh, maybe I will." These days you need a college degree to come, but at that time I just kept it at the back of my mind. I thought I

might want to be an English teacher once I retired from my "main career," whatever that may be, but it ended up happening much quicker than I thought!

### Q: We've relied on you quite a bit as a volunteer at the AWIA. What got you started with volunteer work?

The volunteer thing just started; it was a complete domino effect. One day I got a message from a friend, and they asked if I could join FIND as a volunteer. I thought "well, it is a new thing...eh, let's just try it." That led me to meeting the AWIA staff and getting to see the faces behind the organization. Almost immediately after, I was invited on the Iwaki bus tours with Akabeko salon, and the leader of FIND just said "hey you're coming, right?," so I ended up making a promotional vlog for that. I met even more people through that experience, including the leader of the Uniship project, which I also ended up joining as a co-manager. I suppose it's a benefit of living in a place like Aizu, where, as you meet more people, your network starts to grow and grow exponentially.



### Q: What is your favorite part of Aizu?

The number one thing is just how close nature is. Sure, we have all the city amenities, but we also have mountains all around us. If you go climb Higashiyama and travel up past the dam, you're suddenly in this completely different environment and it's hard to believe you're still in Aizu. You can also ride through the mountains on a bike and visit Lake Inawashiro. Within Aizu we have the Aga river splitting Wakamatsu and Misato, sprawling rice fields, and Mt. Bandai. It's country, city, mountains, we have everything...(except a movie theatre)! I'm personally very lucky and glad to have landed here in Aizu.



## Events in January

1	SA	Closed
2	SU	Closed
3	MO	Closed
4	TU	
5	WE	
6	TH	
7	FR	
8	SA	
9	SU	
10	MO	Closed
11	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
12	WE	
13	TH	
14	FR	
15	SA	
16	SU	Closed
17	MO	Closed
18	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
19	WE	
20	TH	
21	FR	18:00 Caption Contest Deadline
22	SA	
23	SU	10:00 Gyoza-Making Workshop
24	MO	Closed
25	TU	13:30 Nihongo Salon
26	WE	
27	TH	
28	FR	
29	SA	13:30 Newsletter Release Preparation
30	SU	

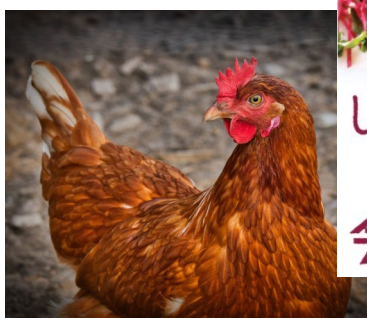
## Other Information

### Aizu's "Shoku no Jin" : Winter Theme

Aizu's "Shoku no Jin" is a year-round food festival that challenges restaurants and businesses to highlight local products by following a menu "theme" for each season. The theme for winter is "Aizu Chicken."

Starting January 1st and running through the end of March, 74 local restaurants, shops, and hotels will be offering limited-time menu items that feature locally-raised Chicken.

あいつ  
食の陣



Visit the Shoku no Jin homepage (Japanese) for details about participating shops and menu offerings:  
<https://aizu-shokuno-jin.jp/>

### Call for Newsletter Volunteers!

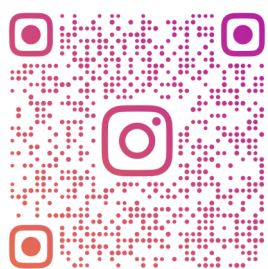
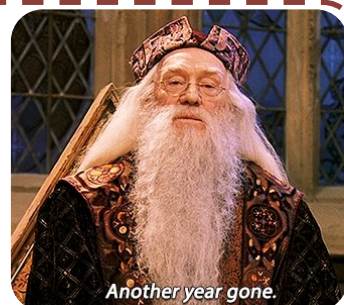
Come hang out with us while we fold, stamp, and pack our monthly publications for mailing! Chat with other AWIA members and enjoy this casual volunteer activity. No need to sign up, just come by if you can!

**Date:** January 29th, Saturday **Time:** 13:30~

**Place:** Aizu Wakamatsu International Association Office

### Message from the Editor

Happy New Year everyone! It's hard to believe another year is gone. As always, thank you very much for your continued support and for reading SynthesAizu. I'll do my best to keep bringing helpful articles to you in 2022!



### We're on Instagram!

Follow us for photos and news about our upcoming events!



AWIA\_PHOTO

<http://facebook.com/awiajp>



Visit our Facebook page for the latest updates in multiple languages!

965-0871 Fukushima-ken, Aizu Wakamatsu-shi, Sakae-machi 2-14, Lion D'or Garden 5th Floor

TEL: (0242) 27-3703 | FAX: (0242) 27-3704 | EMAIL: [mail@awia.jp](mailto:mail@awia.jp) | SITE: <http://awia.jp>