

SynthesAizu

July 2025
Volume 5 Issue 7

Association News

New Open Hours

**Office now open from 9:30-17:30
(old hours: 9:00-17:45)**

We are changing our office hours to better serve you. Our office will now open from 9:30am and close at 17:30. But don't worry!! If you cannot make it to our open hours, please contact us through email or telephone ahead of time, and we will do our best to help you.

New Email Address

NEW EMAIL : aizukokusai@awia.jp

Our original email address, mail@awia.jp has been in use since AWIA transitioned to email. Due to this, we get an enormous amount of SPAM. In an attempt to reduce time spent sorting through to find real correspondence, we are transitioning to a new address. Please update your address books, safe lists, and records to stay in touch!

ChAT (ChAT-ba) Chinese Convo. Club.

Have a fun time using Chinese. Anyone welcome, no matter your level. Write a tanzaku (wish sheet) in Chinese!

For those who want to do a 1 minute speech, the theme will be: Tanabata! Talk about the legend, or a touching memory or important person in your life!

When	Saturday, July 5th 10:00-11:30
Place	AWIA Office (Sakaemachi 2-14)
Sign Up	Contact aizukokusai@awia.jp by Friday, July 4th



'Little Trip' Series Vietnam

Come see a presentation by the JICA Youth Leaders from Vietnam, hear about their wonderful country, and learn some Vietnamese as well! It will be a fun time. (In Japanese and Vietnamese only)

Date: July 23rd (Wed) 18:00~19:30

Place: Aizu Keikodo 3F Rm 3

Cost: FREE

Sign-up: By July 22nd (Tue)

Contact AWIA at aizukokusai@awia.jp



AtsuHana Japanese Convo. Club.

Speak Japanese in a casual way with many people and have fun with Japanese culture. This time, let's explore Aizu-ben and other dialects. It will be volunteer Murota Ayaka's last AtsuHana before she goes on exchange overseas. Come and wish her well on her travels! Here is a message from her:

*Thank you so much for the last two years.
Through AtsuHana, I had so much fun and met
so many people. Please continue to support it!*



When	Saturday, July 12th 10:00-11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign Up	Contact aizukokusai@awia.jp by Friday, July 11th



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!

When	Saturday, July 19th 10:00~11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign Up	Contact aizukokusai@awia.jp by Friday, July 18th



会津若松市国際交流協会

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

TEL (0242) 27-3703 EMAIL(NEW): aizukokusai@awia.jp

This Month in Aizu

Aizuwakamatsu Summer Festivals

There are quite a few temples and shrines throughout Aizuwakamatsu, and in the summer, they hold small festivals to pray for the health and safety of their neighbourhood. Some of these festivals have been bringing summer fun since the time of Aizu Lord, GAMO Ujisato in the 1500s. We can't write about all of them, but keep an eye out for ones happening in your area!



◆Onbasen/Chofukuji Temple Festival

7/1 (Tue) **Time:** 14:00-21:00
Location: Nisshinmachi (Near Nisshin Elem.)
Other: The first festival of the season!!

◆Tanaka Inari-jinja Lantern Flower Fest.**

7/10 (Thu) **Time:** 12:00-20:00
Location: Omachi Doori St. and Noguchi Hideyo Street (near Shinmei Doori)
Other: Enjoy different stalls, and small performances. Why not buy a lantern flower?



◆Yanagihara Shrine Festival

7/25 (Fri) **Time:** ~noon-19:00
Location: Sugawara Shrine (Yanagihara-machi 6)
Other: There is a (small) portable shrine carrying event on the 24th from 18:30

◆Suwa Shrine Festival

7/27 (Sun) **Time:** (depends on each stall)
Location: Honmachi (near Xaverio and Aoi Schools)



◆Sumiyoshi Shrine Festival

7/31 (Thu) **Time:** 9:00-21:00
Location: Zaimokumachi (near Donki Mall)

◆Kogaikuni Shrine Festival

8/1 (Fri) **Time:** 8:00-20:00
Location: Kogaimachi
Other: A beautiful shrine dedicated to silk moths tucked in a small forest.



◆Shinmei Festival*** (Larger festival)

8/4 (Mon) **Time:** ~noon-21:00
Location: Under the arcade on Shinmei doori, outside of the AWIA Office building

◆Rokujizo Temple Festival

8/23
8/24 (Sat-Sun) **Time:** 9:00-21:00
Location: Ichinoseki, Mondenmachi
Other: A larger festival with a bon-dance on both nights!! (19:00-21:00)

Shinto Rice Planting Festival

7/11 (Fri) - 7/13 (Sun)
(Main event 7/12 (Sat))

One of the top 3 rice planting festivals in the country, this is the largest festival at the Isasumi Jinja Shrine. This ceremony has been designated as a National Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property! The events include a traditional dance by farmer's eldest sons, and the highlight: a Shinto rice planting ceremony. This is definitely one to see!

Place: Around Misato Town
 • Isasumi Jinja Shrine
 • Oda Jinja Shrine (Near Takada Station), and others



Details: July 12th (Sat)
 (see website for more)
 9:30 - Child Procession Start (Isasumi Jinja)
 10:30 - Saotome Dance (eldest son's dance)
 12:30 - Mikoshi Parade
 15:00 - Rice Planting Ceremony (Oda Jinja)
 Saotome Dance etc.

More Info:
<https://isasumi.or.jp/otau.html>



Aizu Morning Market

7/13 (Sun) 8:00~12:00

Held once a month; buy locally grown fruit and vegetables, handmade crafts, and delicious coffee! From 12:00, enjoy a smaller market (part 2) at the SHARE BASE Aizu on Shinmei Doori St.

Place: Noguchi Hideyo Seishun Hiroba Park (1-23 Nakamachi)

Access: Free Parking available at Tiger Parking on Noguchi Hideyo Doori St.

More Info: <https://aizu-machiiku.jp/737/>
 Instagram: @asaichi_hiroba

Next Month: August 3rd (16:00-20:00) In the evening.



Kitakata Retro Fest

7/19 (Sat) 12:00-21:00
7/20 (Sun) 9:00-16:00



Enjoy showcases such as:
 Tanabata decorations, different retro museums, retro fashion show, retro machines, haunted house, and more!
 Also enjoy local sake and the retro vibes of the area.

See the website for flier, and more information.
<https://www.kitakata-retro.jp/news/2131/>

This Month in Aizu

Urabandai Fire Mountain Fest

7/21 (Mon) (Holiday) 16:00~21:30
(Fireworks from 19:30)

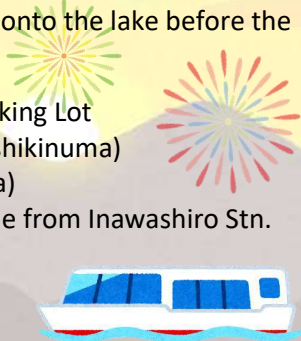
Enjoy a festival celebrating our local Volcano, Bandai-san with fireworks over Lake Hibara! Enjoy food stalls and see lanterns be released onto the lake before the amazing fireworks show!

Place: Lake Hibara-ko 1st Parking Lot
 (Near the north end of Goshikinuma)
 (Ōbudairahara-1172 Hibara)

Access: Public transit available from Inawashiro Stn.
 Parking available in area.
 Shuttles from parking lots.

More Info:

<https://www.urabandai-inf.com/?p=42778>



Tajima Gionsai

The largest festival in Minamiaizu! At night, local children perform kabuki on moving yatai floats, but the highlight is the Nanahokai Procession (Bride 'parade.') The Tajima Gionsai is one of the top Gionsai in Japan and attracts visitors and photographers from all over the country. Women dress up in traditional bride clothing and walk in a parade down the main street of Tajima, carrying offerings to the shrine. All together, more than 100 people participate.

Date: July 22-24th (Tue-Thu)

Place: Tajima, Minamiaizu

Details:

Nanahokai (bride) Procession:

07:50am July 23rd

Kabuki Performances: 16:00-late

Access: Aizu Tetsudo Railway to Tajima

More info: (details from 2023, but general info useful)

<https://www.kanko-aizu.com/miru/26278/>



Higashiyama Onsen Bon-odori

8/1 (Fri) - 8/4 (Mon) 19:00~21:15

Come see the Higashiyama Geigi sing the traditional 'Aizu Bandai-san' song, and do the bon-dance together. Traditionally held in mid-August during Obon, it's been moved up to early August so more locals can enjoy it.

Place: Aizu Higashiyama Onsen

Access: Shuttle busses from Bukeyashiki and the Higashiyama Tourism Parking lot.

More Info: <https://www.aizukanko.com/event/79>



Seto-ichi: Hongo-yaki Market

8/3 (Sun) 04:00am-10:00am

Buy directly from the artisan! Potters come together and sell their wares (at a discount!!) at this early morning market every year. It's very popular, so get there extra early for the good stuff. This year, they will be holding a Seto-ichi Market

Week, where you can get discounts at Kiln Stores.

Runs from **8/4 (Mon) - 8/17 (Sun)!**

Place: Old Hongo 1st Elementary School Grounds
 (2765 Hongo, Aizumisato, Onuma-gun)

Parking available in area.

More info: <https://aizuhongouyaki.jp/> (official website)



NIWA-san's Story

On June 8th, the new Office Manager NIWA Emi was the special speaker for our General Members' Meeting. Her speech was titled 'America, Africa, and now Aizu.' She talked about her experience going on exchange to Maine, USA, doing JICA in Senegal, and her time in Aizu. Here is an extremely abridged version: For a longer version, check the July edition of FINE (Japanese Newsletter)

When NIWA-san was a young child, her mother instilled within her the love of English. In her 3rd year at university, she decided to take the leap and go on exchange to America. While studying journalism, she made a lot of friends, increasing her communication skills immensely. She even had the opportunity to meet famous author, Stephen King!

After returning to Japan and working in various jobs, NIWA-san saw a JICA recruit poster. Interested, she decided to take another leap. Signing up as a Youth Volunteer, she spent time in Senegal and then as a staff all around Africa such as Niger, Djibouti, and Cameroon for over 10 years. Each place had different people, local languages, food and culture. While helping out with the local Girl/Boy Scouts, she introduced









Japanese crafts and games to school children, and also shared Japanese ways of thinking such as the importance of the 5S, ('sort', 'set in order', 'shine', 'standardize', and 'sustain', a workplace organization method that can be applied to life.)

In Senegal, she was hosted by the 'CISSE' family, earning her Senegalese name: Sophie CISSE. She came to love the food and fashion of the different places she lived. There is a saying in Africa that 'Once you drink African water, you will definitely return there', and for NIWA-san that holds true. Her second home is in Senegal.

Last year, she moved to Aizu for a job opportunity. While here, she's discovered a passion for bird-watching and Aizu's local products like lacquerware and Aizu cotton. She is touched by the warmth and kindness of the people of Aizu and is looking forward to more adventures here.



Events in July

1	TU	
2	WE	
3	TH	
4	FR	
5	SA	10:00 ChaT-ba Chinese Convo. Circle 15:00 Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba
6	SU	Closed
7	MO	Closed
8	TU	
9	WE	
10	TH	
11	FR	
12	SA	10:00 AtsuHana Japanese Convo. Circle 13:00 Head Volunteers Meeting (Kanji-kai)
13	SU	Closed
14	MO	Closed
15	TU	
16	WE	
17	TH	
18	FR	
19	SA	10:00 MEET English Convo. Circle 10:00 Satellite JICA Desk 12:00 JICA Desk Farewell Lunch 15:00 Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba
20	SU	Closed
21	MO	Closed (Sea Day)
22	TU	
23	WE	18:00 Little Trip: Vietnam (JICA) 
24	TH	
25	FR	
26	SA	13:30 Newsletter Preparation
27	SU	Closed
28	MO	Closed
29	TU	
30	WE	
31	TH	

Other Information

JICA Desk: Farewell Lunch

MATSUYAMA Satomi has been in charge of the JICA Satellite Desk at the AizuWakamatsu International Association since 2022. It's now time for her to move on to other things, so come say goodbye at her last JICA Desk on July 19th. We'll have a small lunch get-together with her that day. Bring your own lunch and let's eat together!



When: July 19th 12:00-13:30

Place: AWIA Office (2-14 Sakaemachi)

Cost: FREE (Lunch not provided. Bring your own lunch.)

Deadline: contact AWIA (aizukokusai@awia.jp) by July 18th

Please contact us ahead of time for set-up purposes.

Write your own Tanabata Wish!



Stop by the AizuWakamatsu International Association Office from July 5th(Sat) and write a wish for tanabata! Participants of ChAT-ba will be writing their own wishes in Chinese, and we will display the bamboo branch in our office. You can stop by any time and add your own to the branch. Why not join in on this summer tradition?

Available from July 5th to whenever the leaves die.

Stop by early to enjoy the fresh bamboo!

CIR Erika Out of Office

This year, Lake Inawashiro will be placed on the Ramsar List and recognized as a 'Wetland of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat.' Part of the UNESCO umbrella, the Ramsar List is maintained by the 'Convention on Wetlands' Contracting Parties,' made up of about 172 countries committed to protecting wetlands around the world.



CIR Erika will be out of office from July 24th to July 31st as she is attending the 'Conference of Contracting Parties' (COP15) held this year in Zimbabwe as an interpreter for representatives from AizuWakamatsu City Office. She's both excited and nervous to be responsible for interpreting at such an international conference.

More Info about the Ramsar List: <https://www.ramsar.org/our-work/wetlands-international-importance/ramsar-list>



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: July 26th, 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

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

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