

SynthesAizu

March 2026
Volume 6 Issue 3

Association News

Spring Japanese Classes

Give your Japanese skills a boost!

The Spring session of Japanese language courses is here! With our experienced volunteer teachers, we offer courses from beginner to advanced. Our classes strike a balance between reading, writing, and conversational skills. Class sizes are small, and teachers do their best to tailor lessons to your needs. Depending on how many students sign-up, you may even have 1 on 1 lessons!

If you are signing up for lessons for the first time, you will need to take a placement test. **Please contact us well before the deadline.**

Deadline to sign-up: **March 25th (Wed)**

Online lessons are also available on request.

Day	Friday Morning (12 classes)	Thursday Evening (12 classes)
Time	10:00 - 11:30	18:30 - 20:00
Course Duration	Apr 3 - June 26 (No classes: May 1st)	Apr 2 - July 2 (No classes: April 30, May 28)
Fee (for all 12 classes)	AWIA members ¥4,000 Non-members ¥6,000	
Place	City Learning Centre etc.	
Apply	Contact us at aizukokusai@awia.jp	
Deadline	Sign-up by March 25th (Wed)	

AtsuHana Japanese Convo. Club.



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



Date	Saturday, March 14th 10:00-11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign-up	Contact aizukokusai@awia.jp by March 13th (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, March 21st 10:00-11:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 1
Sign-up	Contact aizukokusai@awia.jp by March 19th (Thu) (Fri. is a holiday)

University of North Carolina at Charlotte: Welcome!

Members Only Event!

18 students from North Carolina will visit and do homestay with families from March 13-15. This event is a way for them to meet their families and residents of AizuWakamatsu. Learn about the University of North Carolina and their study program! Some students might be interested in hearing about your experience living in Japan. Come speak English with the visiting students!

Date	Thursday, March 12th 18:00-19:30
Place	City Learning Centre (Keikodo) 3F Rm 5, 6
Limit	10 people (AWIA Members only. First come, first served)
Sign-up	Contact aizukokusai@awia.jp by March 11 (Wed) (sign-up closed once full)



会津若松市国際交流協会

AIZU WAKAMATSU INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

TEL (0242) 27-3703

EMAIL: aizukokusai@awia.jp

Important Information

New Household Garbage Disposal Fee System

From April 2026, AizuWakamatsu will be transitioning to a new Household Garbage Disposal Fee System. One goal of this new system is for residents to lessen their garbage output through recycling.

Let's work towards creating a cleaner environment!

New Changes:

Use the **designated garbage bags** to throw away your trash. Food waste/burnable items in the orange bag, and non-burnable/non-recyclable items in the blue! Items that won't fit into a bag will need a **Garbage Sticker**. Schedule a pick-up with the Environmental Policy Division for **Oversized** items. (From April, designated bags/stickers will be required for collection.)

Designated Garbage Bags	 Orange (milky)	 Blue (clear)	Cost size (1 roll/10 bags)								
Orange: Burnable Blue: Non-burnable Buy from supermarkets, convenience stores, home centres etc.			<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>ミニ袋 (5ℓ相当)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100円</td> </tr> <tr> <td>小袋 (10ℓ相当)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">200円</td> </tr> <tr> <td>中袋 (20ℓ相当)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">400円</td> </tr> <tr> <td>大袋 (40ℓ相当)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">800円</td> </tr> </table>	ミニ袋 (5ℓ相当)	100円	小袋 (10ℓ相当)	200円	中袋 (20ℓ相当)	400円	大袋 (40ℓ相当)	800円
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Garbage Stickers	 Regular (within size/weight limit) ¥500 for 5	 Oversized (over 15kg, over 2m in length etc.) ¥1000 per sticker
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Still Free:

Recyclable Items:

Put out in a transparent, or semi-transparent bag (same as before.)

- Plastic
- Glass
- Cans (aluminum, steel)
- Plastic Bottles (PET)
- Paper (newspaper, milk cartons etc.)

Newly Recyclable:

Will be collected at recycling stations:

- old clothes/fabrics (Clear bag, separated into wearable and non-wearable items)

Diapers:

Place diapers, incontinence pads/diapers, gloves etc. in a transparent/semi-transparent bag labelled 'おむつ'(diapers). Put out with your burnable garbage.

Community Clean-up:

Disposal of trash picked up during volunteer clean-up initiatives will remain free. Contact the Environmental Policy Division!

*Place stickers carefully. Cannot be removed or reused.**

Why now? In 2022, our city put out 1.25x more garbage than average, and had the 4th highest garbage output. Since then, the city made plans to reduce garbage. By being more aware of what we throw away, we can lessen the burden on our garbage facilities and create a cleaner city.

Why are the bags so small? The bag size is calculated to be easily carried one-handed without ripping. If your garbage will not fit into the 40L bag, try reconsidering what you're throwing away. Could it be recycled? If not, the city provides subsidies for people investing in composting alternatives.

Let's Recycle!

Recycle and Save!



Did you know? It's recyclable!!

Recyclable Items:

- Clean Plastic
- Rinsed containers (soap, food containers, etc.)
- Plastic with paper stickers
- Difficult to empty tubes/containers (toothpaste, lotion, sunscreen etc.)

Not Recyclable:

- Paper items with plastic/metal-like lining
- Dirty items (dried or stuck-on food, oil)
- Oily items (salad dressing/sauce bottles)
- Smelly items

Wipe food wrappers with a tissue or rinse with water! Stubborn dirt can be removed with soap, but water is usually enough.

Grocery items covered in plastic with paper stickers can be recycled as plastic. No need to fight to remove the stickers!

Toothpaste, lotion, sunscreen, eyedrop containers etc. can be recycled once the contents are empty! No need to open up and clean it, just toss into your recycling.

Items with a persistent smell or oil:

If a smell or oil cannot be removed with water or soap, that means the item is saturated and cannot be recycled in AizuWakamatsu.

Disposal Method:

- Soft plastic: burnable
- Hard plastic: non-burnable



More questions? Reach out to AWIA, or the Environmental Policy Division directly.

AWIA: aizukokusai@awia.jp

Environmental Policy: kankyo@tw.city.aizuwakamatsu.fukushima.jp

For info about designated bags, garbage stickers etc., check out the 'Household Garbage Disposal Fee Guidebook'. (New guide uploaded in March/April 2026.)



English Info from the City: ←

These are recyclable! No extra cleaning needed.

リサイクル可



化粧水・乳液などのボトル、歯磨き粉、ハンドクリームなど、ボディケアやヘアケア用品、洗顔フォーム、日焼け止め、目薬

Skincare, toothpaste, haircare, sunscreen, eyedrop etc.

Farewell Messages



At the end of March, Office Manager Ms. Niwa and Office Staff Ms. Nakamura will be leaving their roles at the AizuWakamatsu International Association. We are sorry to see them go, but hope that you will support us through the upcoming changes!
We wish both of them best on their next endeavor!



NIWA Emi **Passing the Baton**

It's been almost one year since I took over the role as Office Manager last April. In the first three months, I was so busy with the annual audit, board of directors meeting and the general members meeting, and swamped with communicating with other organizations and various paperwork, so time went by quickly. After summer, I was able to get my first taste of 'international exchange' as my chances to interact with members slowly increased through my work on the 'Aizu Festival Information Desk' and 'Inbound Guide Training,' as well as events such as our fall Bus Tour.



NIWA-san (centre)
Having fun at our Parents' Salon.



I tried to focus on institutional development, though I believe that there were challenges in areas that differed from previous approaches. This year marks the Association's 30th Anniversary. Having taken up the baton passed down from my predecessor covering 28 years and advanced what could be achieved within this one year, I shall now pass the baton on to my successor. Things will be new from April, and I hope this change will cherish the Association's strengths while embracing change and evolution, constantly incorporating fresh perspectives to move forward. It is my wish that the members will continue to provide support through mid to long-term goals for 5, 10, or even 20 years' time leading to the 50th Anniversary, so that it may become an even more trusted International Association.

I want to continue to cherish the connections I made through the Association, so please feel free to say hello if you happen to see me around!



NAKAMURA Junko **With My Thanks**



In spring 2019, I was hired as an Office Staff/CIR. Everything was so new, from accounting to everything else, so I felt like I was once again working at my first ever job. I came to realise that the office staff are the very foundation supporting the Association's progress, and I have approached each task with this in mind.

As the days went by, I was able to slowly see the significant role the International Association plays. There were times during COVID19, when it felt as though the distance between people had grown, but I was heartened by a member saying to me: 'Coming here broadens my world and I can meet so many different people.' Even now these words remain with me. Whenever I saw moments of unexpected connections, words exchanged, smiles brightened through events, or even just sitting on the AWIA sofa, I felt that this place has not only been somewhere to simply learn about other cultures, but a space where people naturally meet, connect and cultivate a desire to understand one another.

I made my decision to depart from my role for personal reasons. This decision comes from a desire to reconsider my own path forward amidst the turning point of the current circumstances. While I deeply regret parting from the Association at such a crucial period, the time I had and meeting you all is something that will remain invaluable to me.

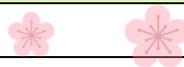
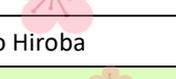
I am eternally grateful to all of those who have supported me. It was through the support of the members, the volunteers, every volunteer organizer, and board member that I was able to learn and progress. The very foundation of our Association's journey is thanks to the presence of each and every one of you who have continued to join us, driven by your shared vision. I offer my deepest respect and thanks for your warmth and sincerity.

Going forward, I want to slow things down a little while cherishing the connections and lessons I gained here. I sincerely hope that the AizuWakamatsu International Association continues to quietly connect Aizu and the world and remains a place where people can meet. Thank you so very much.



NAKAMURA-san (right)
Helping with ChAT-ba

Events in March

1	SU	Closed
2	MO	Closed
3	TU	
4	WE	
5	TH	
6	FR	
7	SA	15:00 Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba
8	SU	Closed
9	MO	Closed
10	TU	
11	WE	
12	TH	18:00 UoNC: Charlotte - Welcome!
13	FR	
14	SA	10:00 AtsuHana: Japanese Convo. Circle 10:00 JICA Desk
15	SU	Closed
16	MO	Closed
17	TU	
18	WE	
19	TH	
20	FR	Closed (Spring Equinox)
21	SA	10:00 MEET: English Convo. Club 15:00 Kodomo Nihongo Hiroba
22	SU	Closed
23	MO	Closed
24	TU	
25	WE	
26	TH	
27	FR	
28	SA	13:30 Newsletter Preparation
29	SU	Closed
30	MO	Closed
31	TU	

Events in Aizu

Aizu Higan-Jishi

March 20 (Fri) + March 21 (Sat)

Time/Place:

- **20th:** Starting at 10:30 at Tsuruga-jo Castle. They dance at various locations around the City throughout the day.
- **21st:** 11:30 Oyakuen Herb Garden North Parking lot

Highlights: This traditional ceremony and dance signifies the start of Spring after the long Aizu winter. Three dancers dress up in traditional costumes of guardian lions, and dance while playing a flute or taiko drum. They dance for hopes of a bountiful harvest, and health and happiness in the home. This is a tradition of Aizu, so I recommend seeing it at least once!



More Details: (including schedule and locations)

<https://www.aizukanko.com/kk/festival/higanjishi>

Funehiki Matsuri and Miko-Mai

March 20 (Fri) 12:00~16:00

Place: Bandai-jinja shrine (Namisugi-5300 Bandai)

Highlights: See a tug-of-war with three barrels of rice to determine the fate of the rice crop of the year. There is also a traditional performance by miko (shrine maidens) of three dances: Sasaki (sacred tree), bow, and sword. These dances are designated as a Fukushima Pref. Important Intangible Folk Property.



- Ceremony start: 12:00
- Miko Dances: 12:40
- Tug-of-war: 14:00 and more!!



(parking available at Enichi-ji Temple Archive)

<https://www.tif.ne.jp/jp/event.html?event=6793>

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: March 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