

# Fukushima NOW

The Fukushima Prefectural International Association would like to communicate Fukushima in the “now” in multiple languages by recording the voices of the foreign residents of Fukushima and their efforts towards restoration after the disaster, be it through international exchange, or the efforts of various organizations.



※Translated versions of the newspaper can be downloaded from the FIA’s homepage.

## Voices from Fukushima

### Conveying the Beauty of Aizu’s Scenery to my Home Country

**Sonia Naomi Arai**  
(From Brazil, Living in Aizu-Wakamatsu)



I arrived in the spring as the prefecture sponsored exchange student and I currently study at Aizu University. My great-grandparents were originally from Fukushima which led to my participation in many events run by the Fukushima Kenjinkai. I’ve always wanted to visit my roots and study abroad in Japan and now

I am living it. When I arrived, the cherry blossoms in Aizu were in full bloom, and I became enamored with their beauty.

In Brazil we received information on the Great East Japan Earthquake from various sources. I specifically looked for information on the effects of radiation on health, and whether or not it inhibited daily life. I patiently waited for official reports from organizations that specialized in these particular categories of health and radiation. In Sao Paulo, we do not have any natural disasters such as torrential downpours, typhoons, or snow storms, so I have been unable to imagine what to do in times of emergency, but now I’ve begun to consider what actions to take in an emergency.

Other than leading a typical university life, I participate in prefectural and intercultural exchange events. I’ve also visited Fukushima’s famous tourist spots, and seen that every day Fukushima is prosperous and full of life. My path to school boasts Mt. Bandai as a backdrop together with the rice fields, and I take every opportunity to photograph this beautiful landscape. I’m planning on conveying the beauty of Aizu’s nature and scenery by taking daily pictures of the change from preparing the rice fields to planting the rice, and finally to reaping the rice and creating a time lapse to show everyone.



▲ In June, I participated in a prefecture-sponsored event

### Realizing the Importance of Communication through Disaster

**Christina Iwasawa**  
(From the Philippines, living in Shirakawa)



After arriving in Japan, I lived in Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Gunma for a bit, among other places, but I’ve been living in Shirakawa City for about 10 years now. Compared to the Philippines, everyday life in Japan is much safer. I also believe there’s a proper system in place for women to work safely. Therefore, no matter where I’ve lived in Japan, I’ve never had a negative image of the country or the places I stayed in. At the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake I did not have any appropriate information gathering tools, therefore getting necessary information, like those sent from the embassy, was extremely difficult, and I often found out about them afterwards. Due to this experience, I have taken to using a smartphone in my everyday life, which has been particularly helpful in keeping up with my friends and countrymen. By maintaining communication every day, we can help each other when we’re feeling troubled.



▲ I have worked in Shirakawa City since the disaster

Since I have been living in Japan for a long time, I am quite independent. However, when it comes to messages from my children’s schools or documents sent from the city hall, the Japanese is quite difficult and I have a hard time understanding it. I am also concerned about what will happen when I become one of the growing elderly. As far as pension and caregiving, there are many points I cannot understand. I believe that there are many foreign residents living in Japan, who think the same way I do. If there was an opportunity where people like me could learn about growing old in Japan, I would definitely like to participate.

## Scenes of Fukushima

### Learning about current Fukushima through experiences at Commutan

Established in Miharu-machi, Commutan Fukushima has seen an increase in elementary and middle school field trips, overseas tour groups and groups documenting Fukushima's progress along with the measures taken towards renewable energy.

The Commutan building is home to various exhibitions that show off Fukushima's natural environments and explain radiation. It also has a large spherical 360° theatre which shows a variety of short and educational films. All of these efforts help visitors understand the current situation in Fukushima. In the interactive area's "Radiation Lab" one can educate themselves by reading information display panels and participating in games. These allow visitors to distinguish the difference between radiation, radioactivity, and radioactive materials. Visitors can also learn about how to determine dosages of radiation. Using all this information, visitors can come to their own conclusions and use their own judgement in regards to radiation.



▲ Foreign visitors to Japan observing the displays in the Radiation Lab with great interest

### Cultural Exchange with Vietnamese Study Abroad students



▲ Vietnamese study abroad student Thuy painting a kokeshi doll

With the help of the Fukushima-Vietnam Friendship Association, two students from Phuong Dong University arrived on July 9th for a 3 week study abroad experience in Fukushima City. Their goal while here is to undergo corporate business training and learn the ways of Japanese business manners. On July 17th, the short-

term students along with 9 Vietnamese study abroad students from Fukushima University participated in a bus tour to Tsuchiyu Onsen where they were able to enjoy the hot springs and painting kokeshi dolls.

### Bon Festival Dance by Americans with Fukushima Roots

Approximately 80 people from the Honolulu Fukushima Kenjinkai and the Honolulu Fukushima Bon Dance Club performed for the Fukushima Hawaii Bon Dance Festival on July 22nd at Shiki no Sato in Fukushima City.

The traditional Bon Odori crossed the oceans with those who immigrated to Hawaii and is passed down as the Bon Dance, even now. Through this visit, those of Fukushima descent were able to dance with Fukushima residents, thus deepening their understanding of each other.

It was a deeply meaningful experience for all parties involved.



▲ Participants fully enjoying the bon dance

### Multilingual information on the Revitalization effort from "Fukushima Restoration Station"

On Fukushima Prefecture's official revitalization related information portal site "Fukushima Restoration Station" hosts the latest data on food safety efforts and the activities of those supporting Fukushima in 9 different languages (Japanese, English, Mandarin, Korean, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese).

**Fukushima Restoration Station** <http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/site/portal-english/>



## FIA Information

### OSupport Desk for Foreign Residents

Here at the FIA, we provide consultation services for foreigners in English, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Portuguese.

- **English, Chinese, Japanese Consultation**  
Every Tuesday to Saturday from 9:00 to 17:15
- **Korean, Tagalog, Portuguese Consultation**  
Thursday from 10:00 to 14:00  
※Appointment necessary for 4th and 5th Thursdays.

TEL : 024-524-1316(direct line) E-mail : [ask@worldvillage.org](mailto:ask@worldvillage.org)

## Publisher

### Fukushima International Association

Address : 〒960-8103

Funabacho 2-1, Fukushima City,  
Fukushima Prefecture

TEL : 024-524-1315 FAX : 024-521-8308

E-mail : [info@worldvillage.org](mailto:info@worldvillage.org)

URL : <http://www.worldvillage.org>

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