

旭川 ASAHIKAWA Info

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Hokkaido News Top 5



November 2020
Compiled by AIC

First Ever Secondary Burial Site Unearthed in Hokkaido 9/17

The Tohoku University of Art and Design (Yamagata City) and the Date Institute of Funkawan Culture are continuing to excavate the Usu Moshiri remains after the discovery of “secondary burial grounds” from the late stages of the Jomon Period that date back to approximately 2,800 years ago. The bones of at least 10 people were reburied at this site. This type of discovery is the first of its kind for Hokkaido.

Students Develop Unique Snow Shoveling App 9/24

The venture capital corporation “Bay Sherwood,” founded by university students from Hokkaido, has launched the smartphone app “Snow Bell,” an application that allows users to easily request snow shoveling services and match them with the right people for the job. Bay Sherwood has already started registering users in order to prepare for the upcoming winter months. When asked about their motivation for creating the application, the students said they wanted to help relieve citizens of the hardship of snow shoveling and make life easier for those living in Hokkaido.

Local Ainu Hold Ceremony to Welcome Return of Salmon 9/28

An Ainu ceremony to welcome salmon that are swimming upstream to spawn, called the “Kamui Chepunomi,” was held in Kaguraoka Park on the bank of the Chubetsu River. 70 locals watched over the ceremony and offered their gratitude for the blessings of nature. This year marks the 33rd anniversary of the “Kamui Chepunomi.”

Pro Chef Makes Cooking Videos to Boost Hokkaido Produce Sales 10/5

Sapporo-born chef WAKIYA Yuuji, who specialized in Chinese cuisine and currently works in the Tokyo Metropolitan area, is collaborating with the Hokkaido government to produce cooking videos that feature dishes made with Hokkaido-sourced ingredients. The goal is to increase sales of Hokkaido’s produce. Videos will be uploaded to Youtube once a week.

Stamp Rally Initiative Aims to Support Sweets Shops 10/8

Sweets shops in Asahikawa started a smart phone stamp rally event called “The Asahikawa-wide Sweets Quest.” Their goal is to increase the consumption of sweets after the sweets industry took a hard blow due to the novel coronavirus. Participants are eligible to receive prizes such as gift certificates via a lottery system depending on how many stamps they collect. Local shops hope to bring smiles to people’s faces with tasty sweets.



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For further information or to register for events contact:

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Life in Asahikawa

What Kind of November Will We Have This Year?

By KITAMURA Tadao

I'm not talking about the U.S. Presidential Election. The Coronavirus pandemic is still raging all over the world. However, no one can deny that we are seeing a few signs showing that the situation is improving. Governments and institutions are beginning policies to recover economic losses caused by the pandemic.

For the time being, the second wave of this pandemic is diminishing in this country, however, around ten or so infected individuals are found every day in Hokkaido.

People are warned that the third wave of the pandemic will arrive alongside another type of influenza which fares well in colder weather. People will have to keep wearing their masks for the foreseeable future.

The climate in November is never stable. The temperature often falls below the freezing point, the duration of sunshine becomes extremely short, and sunny days become rather precious; most days are either cloudy or rainy. The old name for this month is *shimotsuki* (霜月), meaning "the frosty month."

You'll see the first snowfall of the year around the middle of this month. The temperature is cold and the humidity is low, so you are more susceptible to catching a cold. It is recommended that you get yourself vaccinated against the flu in a local clinic.

People are busy preparing for the coming winter. They have to change the tires of their cars to winter tires in order to prevent slipping on snowy or icy roads. They construct makeshift shelters in their gardens using thin bamboo poles, straw mats, and straw ropes to protect their plants from the cold wind and weight of the snow. One November day, a very strong wind will blow throughout the city, and it will pluck all of the leaves from each tree. This is called *kogarashi* (木枯らし), the nipping winter wind. The next morning you'll find quite a different sight than you are used to.

Even among such unpleasant days, on occasion, there will be beautiful sunny days called *koharubiyori* (小春日和), "slight spring weather." They are also sometimes called "Indian summer" or "St. Martin's summer." On days like these, it is very pleasant to stroll about the suburbs of this city. I also recommend central Tokiwa Park. After all of the winter preparations are finished, the altered appearances of the plants and trees make for a different type of scenery. On the roadsides of town you'll see rows of *Nanakamado* trees.

Nanakamado, the Japanese rowan (*Sorbus commixta* Hedl.), is Asahikawa's official "city tree." They now hold plentiful clusters of pretty red berries. When snow falls on them, the sight will remind you of a brightly decorated Christmas tree.





Hello Asahikawa!

Name: Ada Balog
Home Country: Romania
Interviewed: 10/10/2020

If you live in Asahikawa or are just passing through and would like to be interviewed for "Hello Asahikawa," email us at cir_kokusai@city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp!

AIC: Hello Ada! Where are you from?

Ada: I'm originally from Romania.

AIC: Woah! That's so far away. What brings you to Japan?

Ada: When I was little I saw a Japanese anime for the first time. After the revolution, the minister started allowing different television channels. That was the first time I saw Japanese anime and I really loved the language. I was lucky enough that in secondary school I found a Japanese person who was in Satu Mare, my town. He was a retired professor from Tokyo University travelling and doing volunteering by teaching Japanese. I did Japanese with him for three years, and I that got me so into the culture.



AIC: That's so cool! So most of your Japanese has been self-study then?

Ada: Yes. The first three years was with him, and after that when I went to university in Britain, I was lucky enough to catch one of the teachers for half a year, but then she had to go back to Japan, and after that it was just self-studying on my own.

AIC: Now you're finally here! Is living in Japan how you imagined? Different?

Ada: Do you know when you have a lifelong dream, you build it up in your head and you romanticize it quite a lot? After the first seven years, the last two to three years before I came here, I started to think about it more realistically because I wanted to build a life here and work. So of course not everything is going to be rosy. It's much more than I expected, in both the good and the bad. It's much more beautiful than I expected. The language—I just fell in love with it, and the same with the people. The working environment is much more harsh than I expected, so there is both good and bad.

AIC: How does Asahikawa differ from where you lived in Romania?

Ada: To be honest, it's quite similar. Asahikawa is the second largest city in Hokkaido after Sapporo, and my city, Satu Mare, is the second largest in the northern part of Romania after Cluj, the big university-city. It has the same vibe. It's a mix between a small rural town with forests, and a big town with restaurants and karaoke. It's quite comforting for me because Asahikawa has kind of the same atmosphere. I went to Tokyo for my first month in Japan for training, and it was the biggest culture shock I've ever had, but it was really interesting. Metros, people, busy streets, and big buildings... It was a shock.

AIC: Have you gotten to explore Asahikawa? What are your favorite spots?

Ada: Because of the coronavirus, I've been stuck in Asahikawa. For the year that I've been here, except the first month in Tokyo, I've been to Sapporo twice, and the rest of the time I've been in Asahikawa. I travel a lot on my bike, and I have found really beautiful spots next to the river. Crystal Park is really nice. I also like Coffee Stand Container, Fukuyoshi Café, and Tokiwa Park. I have also been to Kaguraoka Koen. It's beautiful. It has the waterfall too. I love going anywhere that has a temple.



AIC: Do you have any favorite foods in Asahikawa?

Ada: Anything except *shirako*. My company president took me out to dinner, and told me “Just eat it, it'll be good,” and he didn't tell me what it was. I couldn't spit it out because the chef and my president were there, so I had to keep eating it. I have PTSD from that (*laughs*). I had to be like “Yum!” Besides that, Japanese food is delicious. My favorite is *sushi*. *Sushi* is delicious. Compared to Romanian food it is much more healthy.

AIC: What kind of food is typical in Romania?

Ada: Our environment is pretty similar to Asahikawa, so it's quite cold. We live next to the mountains. Because Romania is almost a second-world country, it's mostly farms, so a lot of people do physical labor, and they need to a lot of protein. The food is very heavy, so there is a lot of potatoes and meat. Very few vegetables. Mostly soups, stews, and bread. It's a very hearty meal for the people who are working physically. It's a nice change to come to Asahikawa where everything is very healthy. Even the *combinis* here have everything. In Romania, the convenience stores only have snacks, drinks, and maybe potatoes (*laughs*). Like, full potatoes.



AIC: Potatoes? (*laughs*) Do you miss anything about life back in Romania?

Ada: Maybe friends and having a social life. It's very hard to have a social life in Japan when you're just starting out. If it wasn't for my foreign coworker, it would have taken me longer to find foreign friends. I find that it is hard to make real connections with Japanese people. In Romania, if I see somebody on the street, I can start talking to them, and we might even go out and get coffee. It's kind of good in a way, because in Japan, people won't try and get all up in your business. In Romania, your friends will give you their opinions—they will tell you what to do, what's best, or what they honestly think. In Japan, people are more apprehensive. They leave you to your own devices. I appreciate it, but it's a very different culture than what I am used to.

AIC: Have you noticed any other cultural differences that shocked you?

Ada: The service industry. I knew since I have researched Japan before, but it was an actual shock to come here and have the convenience store staff say “*Irasshaimase*” and bow to you. In Romania, people just give you this look like, “It looks like you're not going to steal anything. You're alright.” (*laughs*)

AIC: **Same in America! (laughs) What do you like to do in your free time?**
Ada: I try to stay as active as possible because I don't want to stay in my apartment too much. I try to go out and bike, go to the gym, or go to a café to read or write when I have time. I also have a diary that I write in. I like to write about how my day went or my plans for the future. I'm quite a systematical person, so it helps me relax if I have things written down. I also like exploring the city and going to the cinema.

AIC: **How long do you plan to be in Japan?**
Ada: To be honest, for the rest of my life. It has been my dream since I was little. I went to university in Britain, got my Masters, I took my exams and everything. If you stay in Japan for five years working under a contract and you pay your own taxes, you can apply for citizenship. Foreigners who have citizenship receive a big scholarship to universities. After I get my citizenship, I want to save money and do my doctorate in Okinawa or Osaka. If you have a doctorate, you can teach English at a university level, and that pays really well, so my dream would be to teach at a high school or university level.

AIC: **Last but not least, do you like Karaoke?**
Ada: Yes, but only with close friends, because it's embarrassing sometimes. You know when you go all out on a song, and you're so into it, but your friends aren't into it at all? Most of my friends are older than me, and they're surprised that I know super old songs. I love rock and roll, so I know all the 70s, 80s, and 90s songs.



AIC: **Alright, that's all I have. Thank you Ada!**
Ada: Thank you!

★ Movies ~ November ★

*The 1st day of every month is "Movie Day" in Asahikawa. Admission (tax included) is ¥1,100 for Adults, ¥800 for High School Students and Under at all theaters.

*<Aeon Cinema Only> Every Monday is "Happy Monday." Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for all.

★ **Aeon Cinema:** Miyashita-dori 7-chome / 0166 - 74 - 6411

URL: cinema.aeoncinema.com/wm/asahikawa (Japanese)

Now Showing

- True Mothers (Japanese)
- Your Eyes Tell (Japanese)
- The Voice of Sin (Japanese)
- Tonkatsu DJ Age-Taro (Japanese)
- Mi wo Tsukushi Ryoricho (Japanese)
- Demon Slayer: Mugen Train (Japanese/PG12/Anime)
- Nozomi (Japanese)
- Kim Ji-young: Born 1982 (Korean)
- The Asadas (Japanese)
- Violet Evergarden (Japanese/Anime)
- Tenet (English)
- Crayon Shin-chan: Crash! Rakuga Kingdom and Almost Four Heroes (Japanese/Anime)
- Stigmatized Properties (Japanese)
- Tapestry (Japanese)

Coming Soon

- Ora, Ora be Goin' Alone (Japanese) 11/6
- Monster Strike: Lucifer (Japanese/Anime) 11/6
- Kanshari, Zutto Isshoni (Japanese) 11/6
- Flight on the Water (Japanese) 11/13
- The Legacy of Dr. Death: Black File (Japanese) 11/13
- Hotel Royal (Japanese/PG12) 11/13
- Stand By Me Doraemon 2 (Japanese/Anime) 11/20
- Food Luck! (Japanese) 11/20
- One in a Hundred Thousand (Japanese) 11/27
- Shin Samejima Jiken (Japanese) 11/27
- Silent Tokyo (Japanese) 12/4

Movie schedules change often. Please call the theater for confirmation and details.

★ Movies ~ November ★

*<Cineplex 7 Asahikawa and Dinos Cinemas Only> Every Wednesday is “Ladies’ Day.” Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for women at all theaters.

*<Dinos Cinemas Only> Every Thursday is “Men’s Day.” Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for men.

★ **Cineplex 7 Asahikawa:** Nagayama 12-jo 3-chome Western Powers Nagayama / 0166 – 49 – 1000

URL: <http://www.unitedcinemas.jp/asahikawa/index.html> (Japanese)

Directions: Take Dohoku Bus No. 66, 72 or 665 at Bus stop No. 18 in front of Feeeal Asahikawa Department Store (1-jo-dori 8-chome). Get off at “Nagayama 10 (ju)-jo 3 (san)-chome.”

Now Showing

- PreCure Miracle Leap: A Wonderful Day with Everyone (Japanese/Anime)
- Tonkatsu DJ Age-Taro (Japanese)
- The Voice of Sin (Japanese)
- Your Eyes Tell (Japanese)
- Damon Slayer: Mugen Train (Japanese/PG12/Anime)
- Yoake wo Shinjite (Japanese)
- Hoshinoko (Japanese)
- Nozomi (Japanese)
- Stigmatized Properties (Japanese)
- The Asadas! (Japanese)
- Mobile Suit Gundam W: Endless Waltz (Japanese 4DX/Anime)
- Mobile Suit Gundam F91 (Japanese 4DX/Anime)
- Midnight Swan (Japanese)
- Tenet (English 4DX)
- The Cornered Mouse Dreams Cheese (Japanese/R15+)
- Tapestry (Japanese)

Coming Soon

- Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone (Japanese 4DX) 11/6
- Monster Strike: Lucifer (Japanese/Anime) 11/6
- 461 Lunch Boxes (Japanese) 11/6
- Hotel Royal (Japanese/PG12) 11/13
- The Legacy of Dr. Death: Black File (Japanese) 11/13
- Stand By Me Doraemon 2 (Japanese/Anime) 11/20
- Remi Sans Famille (Japanese) 11/20
- Hayabusa 2 ~Reborn (Japanese/Anime) 11/27
- Silent Tokyo (Japanese) 12/4
- Evangelion: 1.0 You Are (Not) Alone (Japanese 4DX/Anime) 12/4
- New Interpretation Records of the Three Kingdoms (Japanese) 12/11
- Evangelion: 2.0 You Can (Not) Advance (Japanese 4DX/Anime) 12/11
- Death of the Nile (English) 12/18
- Evangelion: 3.0 You Can (Not) Redo (Japanese 4DX/Anime) 12/18

★ **Dinos Cinemas:** Taisetsu-dori 5-chome / 0166 – 21 – 1218

URL: <http://cinema.sugai-dinos.jp/pc/> (Japanese)

Directions: Take Dohoku Bus No. 61, 62, 67 or 667 at Bus stop No. 18 in front of Feeeal Asahikawa Department Store (1-jo-dori 8-chome). Get off at “Nippon Seishi mae.”

Now Showing

- The Voice of Sin (Japanese)
- Tonkatsu DJ Age-Taro (Japanese)
- Mid90s (English)~11/5
- Your Eyes Tell (Japanese)
- Demon Slayer: Mugen Train (Japanese/Anime)
- Mi wo Tsukushi Ryoricho (Japanese)
- Yoake wo Shinjite (Japanese)
- Nozomi (Japanese)~11/15
- The Asadas! (Japanese)
- Tenet (English)
- Crayon Shin-chan: Crash! Rakuga Kingdom and Almost Four Heroes (Japanese/Anime)
- Tapestry (Japanese)

Coming Soon

- Wife of a Spy (Japanese) 11/6
- Legend of Hei (Chinese/Anime) 11/7
- The Legacy of Dr. Death: Black File (Japanese) 11/13
- Hotel Royal (Japanese/PG12) 11/13
- Majo Minarai wo Sagashite (Japanese/Anime) 11/13
- Ainu Mosir (Japanese) 11/20~12/3
- Stand By Me Doraemon 2 (Japanese/Anime) 11/20
- Silent Tokyo (Japanese) 12/4
- Fate/Grand Order Wandering: Agateram (Japanese/Anime) 12/5
- New Interpretation Records of the Three Kingdoms (Japanese) 12/11
- Death of the Nile (English) 12/18

Movie schedules change often. Please call the theater for confirmation and details.

2020 Multicultural Coexistence Seminar In Asahikawa

As Japan becomes more globalized, the number of foreign residents in Japan will continue to increase. Learn about mutual understanding with different cultures and how to respect them, how to make an easy work and living environment for foreign residents, and about "Yasashii Nihongo," a method of speaking easy-to-understand Japanese with foreigners. (Japanese)

Date and Time: November 12th (Thursday), 2020.
14:30-17:30

Location: Kamikawa General Subprefectural Bureau,
3rd Floor Lecture Hall (Nagayama 6-jo 19-chome)

Capacity: 30 (First come first serve basis). Free entry

How to Apply: In an e-mail, please send your name, municipality of residence, phone number, e-mail address, and occupation (optional) to somu.kokusai1@pref.hokkaido.lg.jp

Asahiyama Zoo Winter Preparations and Opening

The Asahiyama Zoo will be **closing** from **November 4th (Wednesday) to November 10th (Tuesday)** to prepare for the winter season! They will be using this time to repair and maintain the facilities, clean the feeding grounds, and replace exhibit signs. Be sure to take note of these closure days before you plan your trip to the Asahiyama Zoo.

The zoo staff hopes that you will be able to enjoy the wonderful winter exhibits when they **reopen** on **November 11th (Wednesday)**. Many animals like the Ezo Tanuki will be donning their fluffy winter coats. If there is snow on the ground, you may even get to see the penguins out and about on their winter walk. That's right! Penguins will be walking around zoo ground in one of the zoo's most well attended events. It only happens two times a day, so don't miss it!

Interesting activities, such as quizzes, discussions, songs, games, handcrafts and many more, all in English! Come meet new people, relax, and relate on Fun Fridays!

FUN FRIDAYS

Dates: November 13th & 27th, December 11th & 25th, January 8th & 22nd

Times: 1:00pm-2:00pm ~Afternoon~ 2nd and 4th Friday of the month
6:30pm-8:30pm ~Night~ 2nd Friday of the month

Location: Asahikawa International Center, Common Meeting Room (1)
(Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome)

Charge: ¥1,500 for 3 months (Free for volunteer leaders)

The AIC offers many services to make your life in Asahikawa more enjoyable. Here are just a few:

Volunteer Guide: Volunteers are registered to help translate and interpret.

Event Volunteer: The AIC plans many exciting events throughout the year, such as Friendship Parties. Why not become a volunteer and help plan these events?

Homestay: Families are registered to welcome you into their homes for an overnight stay or just for an afternoon visit.

For further information or to register, please contact AIC.

FREE Wi-Fi

The Asahikawa International Center (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome) has free wifi available for public use free of charge. Registration for a user card is needed, if you are residing in Asahikawa. Please feel free to come by anytime, as well as check out some of the other services and activities available at the Asahikawa International Center .

Spread the Word...

Contribute to the AIC newsletter and share any interesting information you may have with other readers. You may write on any topic including, items to buy or sell, offers for culture/language exchanges, or write an essay about your life in Asahikawa or your hometown. The article should not be profit related! Please send your submissions to us at the AIC.



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****The opinions expressed in the essays are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Asahikawa International Committee or the City of Asahikawa.****