

Asahikawa Info

March 2022, Vol. 304

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Asahikawa International Committee (AIC)
(SUGANO Ayumi, SAITO Emmy, or GONZÁLEZ Gabriel)

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Hokkaido News Top 5

February 2022, compiled by the AIC

New Storehouse for Nikka Whiskey Finally in Operation, 1/27

The construction of the new Nikka Whiskey storehouse in Yoichi has finally been completed and began operation on January 26th. It can hold up to 7,000 barrels and will help ramp up production for the ever-popular highball ingredient. The barrels are stored multi-level by an automatic belt system that maneuvers them in and out of the building. Though the cost of construction has not been made public, the new storehouse at the Yoichi distillery has been underway since 1989. They have hired more hands and split work into day and night shifts, hoping to triple their production of unblended whiskey by 2022, their largest goal since their establishment in 1934.

Biei and Kamifurano Receive Recognition as Geoparks, 1/29

The Japanese Geopark Committee (JGC) has finally recognized the Tokachidake Mountain Range and its surrounding area as a geopark at their last meeting on January 28th. Both Biei and Kamifurano were ecstatic to hear the news and now anticipate establishing exchange and partnerships with other geopark municipalities across the nation. They are focusing on improvements such as training "geoguides" to help people around the park, hiring specialists to work in their executive office, and teach disaster preparedness and environmental conservation to children. The towns hope the increased awareness brought by the geopark recognition will also improve tourism and interest young people in becoming new geoguides.

The First Ever Asahikawa Snow Duathlon Begins, 1/31

The competition opened on January 30th in Asahikawa at the Tomizawa Cross-Country Ski Course, with 30 competitors racing nimbly on fields of snow, aiming to become the first champion of the event. The race had four categories: two for men, one for women and a junior category for children. Participants started off racing on a compact snow course with fat bikes (with large-tires) and quickly changed into their ski gear for the way back. Koyo Ogasawara had the shortest total time and won the competition, saying: "I'm honestly so happy I won. I'd love to come back next year."

Director Ryusuke Hamaguchi Stunned at Oscar Nominations, 2/10

Hamaguchi's film "Drive My Car" is based on a short story by Haruki Murakami and was nominated for Best Picture, Best Director, Best International Feature Film and Best Adapted Screenplay at the 94th Academy Awards. "This has reached a global audience. We thought the actors' performances were amazing and we weren't mistaken," said Hamaguchi in amazement. The film's nominations brought joy not only to those involved in the film, but also the townspeople of Akabirashi who happy to hear people can enjoy Akabirashi's scenery in the film, where the climax scene is set.

Free Admission to Museums and Zoo on Citizen's Day, 2/15

In celebration of its 100th anniversary as a city, Asahikawa plans to offer free admission to the Asahiyama Zoo and museums all around the city on August 8th, the day it was promoted to city status. People will also be able to use inner-city transit buses for free and the city will be planting 100 cherry trees on the southern side of the Asahikawa Station as a part of their efforts to become a zero-carbon city by 2050. The city anticipates this all-day celebration will cost around ¥130,000,000.

Your Perspective, Everyone's Perspective

きみのみかた みんなのみかた

What's the first thing that comes to mind when you look at a piece of art? Maybe you think something like "Oh, that looks nice," or "Uh, I don't get it." Everyone reacts to art in their own personal way, be it with a personal ambivalence or a voracious curiosity. This exhibition presents to you the visitor over 1,700 objects from the museums collections for you to explore how you look at art, regardless of age or experience.

Date: Until 03/13 (Sunday)

Time: 9:45-17:00

Venue: Sapporo Art Museum (Sapporo Art Park, 2-chome 75-banchi, Sapporo)

Admission: General ¥800 (¥640*), High School and University students ¥400 (¥320*), Elementary and Middle school students ¥200 (¥160*), Preschoolers and below FREE (*groups of 20+)

For further information, contact: 011-591-0090 (Sapporo Art Museum), <https://artpark.or.jp/>



Paintings by the KANDA Brothers: KAZUAKI and NISSHO

神田一明、日勝展

Brothers Kazuaki and Nissho Kanda began their art journeys from a young age, even learning and teaching each other along the way. This exhibit is centered around the works representative of both artists and the different paths they took, intending to demonstrate the constant rapport between the two in life and in their art.

Date: Until 03/13 (Sunday)

Time: 9:30-17:00 (Entry ends at 16:30), Closed: Mondays (except 1/10), 2021/12/29-2022/1/3, 1/11 (Tuesday)

Place: Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art (Inside Tokiwa Park, Asahikawa)

Admission: General ¥800(¥600), High School and College Students ¥500(¥400), Elementary and Middle School Students ¥300(¥200) *Prices in parentheses are for groups of 10+ or pre-sale

Ticket Office: Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art

For further information, contact: 0166-25-2577 (Hokkaido Asahikawa Museum of Art)



Hokkaido Asahikawa Higashi High School Wind Band: 23rd Annual Concert

北海道旭川東高等学校吹奏楽局 第23回定期演奏会

Come and listen to the Asahikawa Higashi High School Wind Band perform musical selections such as "Orient Express", "Le chant de l'amour et de la prière", and "Eurobeat Disney Medley."

Date: 3/20 (Sunday)

Time: Opens 17:30, Starts 18:00

Place: Asahikawa Civic Culture Hall (Large Hall, 7-jo-dori 9-chome, Asahikawa)

Admission: General ¥500, Preschoolers and under FREE

Ticket Office: Gyokkodo (3F Aeon Mall, 0166-73-8801), Coach and Four (Music Corner, 0166-76-4002) *until 3/17

For further information, contact: 090-2695-3646 (Hokkaido Asahikawa Higashi High School Wind Band Director, 16:00-19:00)



Kanako Minami: Flute Recital with Katsushige Sato on Piano

南加奈子 フルートリサイタル Piano 佐藤勝重

Come and listen to flutist Kanako Minami and pianist Katsushige Sato as they perform pieces such as Introduction et Rondo Op.98 by Kuhlau, Arpeggione Sonata by Schubert, Histoire du Tango by Piazzolla, and Flute Sonata by Prokofiev.

Date: 3/20 (Sunday)

Time: Opens 18:00, Starts 18:30

Place: Asahikawa Taisetsu Crystal Hall, Concert Hall (Kagura 3-jo 7-chome, Asahikawa)

Admission: General ¥3,000, ages 65+ ¥2,000, students and ages 75+ FREE

Ticket Office: Gyokkodo (3F Aeon Mall, 0166-73-8801), Coach and Four (Music Corner, 0166-76-4002), Minami Music Academy (0166-48-9454), Lawson Ticket (L-code: 11656)

For further information, contact: 0166-48-9454/080-3230-7697 (Concert Executive Committee)



Hokkaido Asahikawa Nishi High School Winds Club, 23rd Annual Concert

北海道旭川西高等学校吹奏楽部 第23回定期演奏会

Come and listen to the Asahikawa Nishi High School Winds Club as they perform musical selections such as "Lady Liberty Leading the People", "Silhouette Stage", and "Japanese Graffiti XII".

Date: 3/21 (Monday/Holiday)

Time: Opens 17:15, Starts 18:00

Place: Asahikawa Civic Culture Hall (Large Hall, 17-jo-dori 9-chome, Asahikawa)

Admission: General ¥800, Middle and High School students ¥500, Elementary and under FREE

Ticket Office: Gyokkodo (3F Aeon Mall, 0166-73-8801)

For further information, contact: 0166-52-1215 (Asahikawa Nishi High School)



Kyokuzan Fujita: Asahikawa's Very Own Haiku Poet, "As calm as water"

藤田旭山展 旭川ゆかりの俳人 ~水の如く淡々たる~

This exposition looks back on the life and work of Kyokuzan Fujita, a haiku poet that strived to always write poetry that respects both freedom and individuality. Introduce yourself not only to his published collections, but the original manuscripts written by his own hand.

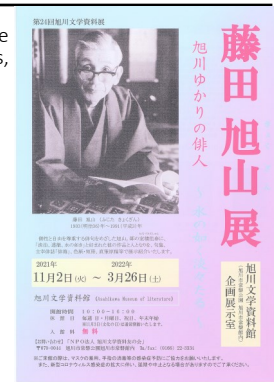
Date: Until 3/26 (Saturday)

Time: 10:00-16:00, Closed: Mondays, Holidays, and during New Year's

Place: Asahikawa Museum of Literature (Inside Tokiwa Park, Asahikawa)

Admission: FREE

For further information, contact: 0166-22-3334 (Tokiwa Kan)



American Music: Learn how music in America was born!

アメリカ音楽講座 Learn how music in America was born!

Although the U.S. as a country may be young, its music is famous throughout the entire world! Music today has been influenced on a global scale thanks to genres that have come out of this one country. In this presentation, we'll take a look some of the older American musical genres like gospel, jazz, blues, bluegrass, country and rock 'n' roll and how they were born.

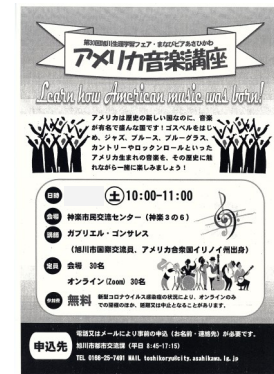
Date: 3/26 (Saturday)

Time: 10:00-11:00

Place: Kagura Community Center (Kagura 3-jo 6-chome, Asahikawa)

Admission: FREE, up to 30 people in person and 30 people on Zoom

For further information, contact: 0166-25-7491 (Asahikawa International/City Relations Division)



Kiyoshi Sato Tuba Recital

佐藤潔チューバリサイタル

Come and listen to tuba player Kiyoshi Sato and pianist Aika Shibutani as they perform musical selections such as Sonata in F major by Marcello, Flute Sonata in E flat major by J.S. Bach, Short Selections from Saint-Saëns, and Sonata by Broughton.

Date: 3/31 (Thursday)

Time: Opens 18:30, Starts 19:00

Place: Asahikawa Kagura Public Hall, Kirarin (Kagura 3-jo 6-chome 1-12, Asahikawa)

Admission: ¥3,000

Ticket Office: 090-3111-9844 (Mizuno)

For further information, contact: 090-3111-9844 (Mizuno)



March Events in Asahikawa



Right now, I am waiting for my turn to get my third vaccination, or the booster shot against the coronavirus, which I signed up for this coming March.

People are waiting eagerly coming of March cleared from the fear of Omicron strain,

“Has March ever taken so long to get here?” People are feeling so.

The classical Japanese literary expression for March is *Yayoi*, meaning “every plant is growing more and more”. That’s not how it is in Asahikawa yet, but people here are beginning to feel the bright sunshine and warm breeze as March starts, too.

This month, you’ll still see lots of thick layers of snow on road-sides and elsewhere. Occasionally you might even find yourself in a violent snowstorm. However, you’ll surely feel the signs of the approaching spring. The snow is melting day by day and men are freed from the troublesome labor of shoveling snow.

One day in the middle of the month you might see a tiny pretty crocus flower showing herself in a little opening of stacked snow. On day like that, the original sense of *Yayoi* begins to really show here, along with the other districts of this region.

You might see an Adonis (*Adonis amurensis*) on the brink of a stream opening her bright yellow corolla, asking for the warm sunlight. Among the shrubs along the riverside, when you are enjoying spring-ski-wandering, you will find willow’s vines blooming lots of their somber flowers. Though somber they are, pretty and lovely they look- like the pussy’s velvet paw. Birch’s flowers, or catkins, are not pretty; they look like some insect’s larva and scatter a lot of pollen. Their pollen is said to cause allergies in some people. So, it is better for you to wear a mask and prevent allergies too, not only for COVID-19 and the Omicron variant.

The riverside of Chubetsu River, just behind of Asahikawa JR Station, is very nice to enjoy spring-ski-wandering on your feet. This course used to be made for the international cross-country ski competition run by VASALOPPET JAPAN which would have been held at the beginning of March, if the Corona virus hadn’t been prevalent.

This area is very nice to stroll around, noticing the signs of the approaching spring, where all the vegetation is ready to grow. (But there is one thing you have to be careful of! Last year, there were several reports of bear sightings by the riverside.)

As for myself, I have to make my garden tidy by putting snow-guards off from my plants.

-KITAMURA Tadao

AIC: Please tell about yourself and where your from!

Jess: Hello! I am Jess Hopkins. I love spending time outdoors, reading romance novels, doing yoga and trying all kinds of Hokkaido ice cream. I am from the Gold Coast, Australia. The Gold Coast is the opposite of Asahikawa in most ways. It has opposite seasons, so right now it is summer with extremely hot and humid temperatures. In winter it never snows. It is also a beach town with stunning views along the coast line. Asahikawa's freezing winters, piles of snow and beautiful mountains are very different to me! I love living in Hokkaido and enjoying those differences.

AIC: Is this your first time in Japan? How long have you been in Japan?

Jess: This is my fourth time in Japan. The first time I came with my now husband in 2013. We had just met and decided to get to know each other better on an adventure. It was a very special trip for us: we had our first skiing trip, I ate my first ramen and I fell in love with Japan. I moved to Japan in October 2021, so I have only been here a few months. I have been lucky enough to experience my first winter. The highlights have been meeting lots of lovely people, going snowboarding, surviving my first snowstorm



Name: Jess Hopkins
Home Country: Australia
Interviewed: 2022/02/24

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

Hello, Asahikawa!

and challenging myself.

AIC: What brings you to Asahikawa in particular?

Jess: I live in Takasu, so I visit Asahikawa at least once a week to go shopping and drink good coffee!

AIC: What kind of work do you do?

Jess: I am an ALT at an elementary and junior high school. I have fantastic students and really enjoy my work.

AIC: What are your hobbies? What do you like to do in your free time?

Jess: An ideal free day for me looks like this: first I wake up and do some yoga. Then I go to the local library and do some Japanese studying. Then I usually go into Asahikawa and see some friends while I do some shopping. I love looking at recycle shops and 100 yen shops. Then I go to Freehouse THE YEAST and enjoy a beer. I usually like to end the day by going home, setting up on the couch and calling my sister back in Australia. We usually watch an anime or TV show together! Currently, we are watching Bungo Stray Dogs because it is her favorite!

AIC: Do you have any favorite foods?

Jess: I have so many favorite Japanese foods! My husband has taken to making a delicious hot pot (shabu shabu) which is so good in winter. I love how intimate sharing hot pot with loved ones is. I am currently obsessed with all sushi. I went to Toriton for the first time and wish that I could eat it every day! Finally, Hokkaido cheesecake is ridiculously good. I recently went to Otaru, which has so much cheesecake. I was really happy! It is also easy to find good cheesecake in Asahikawa.

AIC: Any places you would recommend to others?

Jess: I enjoy going to Pulp Town and looking through the recycle shop there, and then going to the Starbucks down the road! Coffee Stand Container in the main part of the city has

Hello, Asahikawa! Cont.

amazing coffee! Also Switch Flavor is such a cute night book bar/coffee house that I highly recommend visiting.

AIC: What have been your impressions of Asahikawa so far?

Jess: I really enjoy coming to Asahikawa. There is so much good food, shopping and coffee. It is also stunning. On a good day, you can see the Daisetsuzan Mountain Range! Asahikawa is in a very special part of the world and I feel very lucky to be here.

AIC: Do you mind sharing any frustrations or challenges you have encountered thus far?

Jess: The main challenge has been getting over the insecurity of not knowing Japanese very well. However, I have learnt that even if you can't communicate particularly well, you can still make people feel happy to be around you. I have found some good friends in Hokkaido, even with the lan-

guage barrier.

AIC: Do you have any goals or things you are looking forward to doing here?

Jess: I am looking forward to learning more Japanese, eating more good food and seeing each different season. I have never been in Japan for spring, so I am very excited to see the cherry blossoms. I am also excited to do some of the hiking trails around Hokkaido. They look phenomenal!



Movies - March

*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.

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.

★ **Dinos Cinemas:** Taisetsu-dori 5-chome / 0166 - 21 - 1218 URL: <http://cinema.sugai-dinos.jp/pc/> (Japanese)

Now Showing

- Death on the Nile (English)
- King Richard (English)
- Ushikubi Mura (Japanese)
- Missing (Japanese)
- Aikoku Joshi: Beni Bushidou (Japanese)
- Drive My Car (Japanese/PG12)
- Usogui (Japanese)
- West Side Story (English)
- The 355 (English/PG12)
- Daikaiju no Atoshimatsu (Japanese)
- Ghostbusters: Afterlife (English) ~3/3
- Noise (Japanese) ~3/3
- Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City (English)
- The Confidence Man JP: Episode of the Hero (Japanese)
- Spider-Man: No Way Home (English)
- 99.9: Criminal Lawyer (Japanese)
- Jujutsu Kaisen 0 (Japanese/Anime)

Coming Soon

- Mankai Movie 「A3!」 Autumn & Winter (Japanese/Anime) 3/4
- Doraemon: Nobita's Little Star Wars (Japanese/Anime) 3/4
- The Last 10 Years (Japanese) 3/4
- Shimajiro to Kirakira Okoku no Ojisama (Japanese/Anime) 3/11
- The Batman (English) 3/11
- Wedding High (Japanese) 3/12
- Gunpowder Milkshake (English) 3/18
- Kappei (Japanese) 3/18
- Sing2 (English/Anime) 3/18
- Nightmare Alley (English) 3/25
- Ware Yowakereba Yajima Kajiko Den (Japanese) 4/1
- Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore (English) 4/8
- Tonbi (Japanese) 4/8

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Dinos Cinemas Only: Every Thursday is "Men's Day." Admission is ¥1,100 (tax included) for men.

★ **Aeon Cinema:** Miyashita-dori 7-chome / 0166 – 74 – 6411 URL: cinema.aeoncinema.com/wm/asahikawa (Japanese)

Now Showing

- Death on the Nile (English)
- Shin Jiko Bukken: Honto ni Kowai Junin Tachi (Japanese/R15+)
- Cyrano (English/PG12)
- King Richard (English)
- Goodbye, Don Glee! (Japanese/Anime)
- Ushikubi Mura (Japanese)
- The Blue Skies at Your Feet (Japanese)
- Uncharted (English)
- West Side Story (English)
- Usogui (Japanese)
- The Deer King (Japanese/Anime)
- Ghostbusters: Afterlife (English/PG12)
- Daikaiju no Atoshimatsu (Japanese)
- Noise (Japanese)
- The Confidence Man JP: Episode of the Hero (Japanese)
- Spider-Man: No Way Home (English)
- 99.9: Criminal Lawyer (Japanese)
- Jujutsu Kaisen 0 (Japanese/Anime)

Coming Soon

- The Last 10 Years (Japanese) 3/4
- Doraemon: Nobita's Little Star Wars (Japanese/Anime) 3/4
- The Batman (English) 3/11
- Yumemiru Shogakko (Japanese) 3/11
- Cannibal Cabin (English/PG12) 3/11
- Wedding High (Japanese) 3/12
- Sing2 (English/Anime) 3/18
- Kappei (Japanese) 3/18
- Ultraman Trigger Episode Z (Japanese) 3/18
- Nightmare Alley (English) 3/25
- Osomatsu-san (Japanese) 3/25
- Thomas the Tank Engine All-Star Parade (English/Anime) 3/25
- Forest Gump 4K (English/PG12) 3/25
- The Power of the Dog (English) 4/1
- Morbius (English) 4/1

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

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

Now Showing

- Death on the Nile (English)
- King Richard (English)
- Uncharted (English 4DX) ~3/3
- Aikoku Joshi: Beni Bushidou (Japanese)
- West Side Story (English)
- Usogui (Japanese)
- Just Remembering (Japanese)
- Jujutsu Kaisen 0 (Japanese 4DX/Anime)
- Ghostbusters: Afterlife (English/PG12)
- Daikaiju no Atoshimatsu (Japanese)
- The 355 (English/PG12)
- Noise (Japanese) ~3/3
- Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City (English/PG12) ~3/3
- Drive My Car (Japanese/PG12)
- The Confidence Man JP: Episode of the Hero (Japanese)
- Spider-Man: No Way Home (English 4DX)
- 99.9: Criminal Lawyer (Japanese)

Coming Soon

- Doraemon: Nobita's Little Star Wars (Japanese/Anime) 3/4
- The Last 10 Years (Japanese) 3/4
- Blue Thermal (Japanese/Anime) 3/4
- The Batman (English 4DX) 3/11
- Wedding High (Japanese) 3/12
- Sing2 (English/Anime) 3/18
- Butt Detective: Shiriarty (Japanese/Anime) 3/18
- Nightmare Alley (English) 3/25
- Ambulance (English) 3/25
- Morbius (English) 4/1
- Soon to Reach the Sea (Japanese/PG12) 4/1
- I Want to be Killed by a High School Girl (Japanese/PG12) 4/1
- Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore (English) 4/8
- Tonbi (Japanese) 4/8

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

AIC Bulletin Board

Color Your Japanese!

Need Help?



Improve your Japanese communication skills by using this FREE online resource! Irodori offers Japanese language textbooks and audio files for the A1 and A2 levels of the CEFR language scale. Made to help foreign migrants improve their everyday Japanese, this resource focuses on communication over grammar, words or kanji. It also includes mini-cultural lessons for you to better understand Japanese society! To access, go to: www.irodori.jpf.go.jp

If you ever find yourself in need of assistance, know that the Hokkaido Foreign Resident Support Center is there for you! They are able to provide you with consultation services in various languages (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Russian, Indonesian, Thai, Nepalese, Burmese) on residence procedures, employment, medical care, welfare, childbirth, child care, education, and more for FREE! Call them at **011-200-9595** or go to: www.hiecc.or.jp/soudan



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

Dates: March 11th & 25th, April 8th & 22nd, May 6th & 20th
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.



The Asahikawa International Center (Feeeal Asahikawa 7F 1-jo-dori 8-chome) has free Wi-Fi available for public use and is free of charge. If you reside in Asahikawa, registration for a user card is required. 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.



Asahikawa International Committee
 Asahikawa International Center Feeeal Asahikawa 7F, 1-jo-dori 8-chome, Asahikawa 070-0031
Tel: (0166) 25-7491 **Fax:** (0166) 23-4924
E-mail: cir_kokusai@city.asahikawa.hokkaido.jp