

ASAHIKAWA INFO

August 2026, Volume 356



7/16 (Thu)

Wai Wai Lounge

Monthly language exchange for Korean, Chinese, and Russian



7/25 (Sat)

Bicycle Safety & Downtown Tour

Learned about bicycle safety and a walking tour around the Heiwa Dori Shopping Street!



7/26 (Sun)

Let's Go to Nagayama Tonden Matsuri!

Experienced a Japanese festival with local Japanese and foreign residents of Asahikawa!



7/28 (Tue)

Hello Kids!

Had a fun English Immersion play time for pre-school children

AIC has been cooking up some fun events throughout July! From language exchange and English immersion programs to event collaborations and trips to festivals! This month was packed with exchanges and fun!

We hope that you can join us some time!

UPCOMING BIG EVENT



AIC STAND x Harunire Café

Join us for some international food and drinks with people from all over the world



When:

September 4th, 2026 (Friday) 3:30 PM ~ 7:30 PM

Where:

Heiwa Dori Shopping Street (1-jodori 8-chome, Asahikawa)

Details:

AIC is collabing with Harunire Café of Asahikawa for an international food and drink stand! There will be many international-inspired dishes to enjoy, yummy cocktails and drinks, as well as an opportunity to meet people from all over!

MORE DETAILS TO COME VIA OUR SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE



9/4

AIC STAND

Check out our website and social media for information regarding the events above.

For further information or to register for events, contact:
Asahikawa International Committee (AIC)
Address: Asahikawa International Center Faeal Asahikawa 7F,
1-jo-dori 8-chome, Asahikawa 070-0031
Tel: (0166) 25-7491 Fax: (0166) 23-4924
Email: asahikawainternationalcenter@gmail.com
Website: <https://asahikawaic.jp/en/>



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

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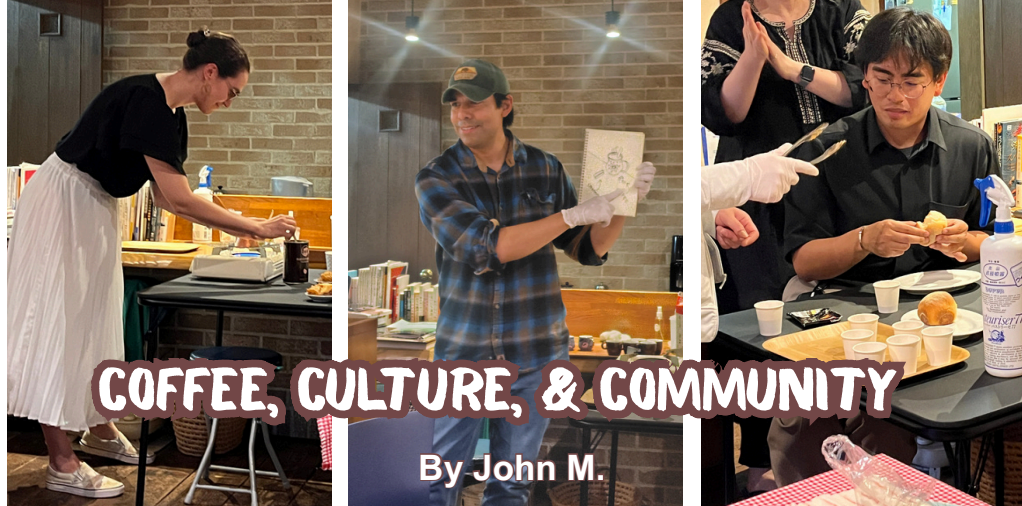
One Point Japanese

ワンチャン- To say that there is a possibility. Can be translated as "maybe", "perhaps", or "there is a chance that".

Example Sentence:

ニーナ: 今日 (きょう) の会議 (かいぎ) が
なくなったから、**ワンチャン**早 (はや) く
帰 (かえ) れると思 (おも) います。

Nina: Since today's meeting was cancelled,
I think I **might** be able to go home early.



The earthy aroma of coffee filled the evening air of Harunire Café as everyone recreated a taste of their homeland. As part of a test event, AIC collaborated with Michi-Hito, a local bag workshop, to host a coffee exchange event where international residents of Asahikawa introduced coffee culture from each of their countries giving everyone a glimpse of their childhoods through coffee.



Instant Coffee and Bread (Philippines)

Having Filipino roots, I had the honor of introducing coffee culture in the Philippines. Coffee culture there is very straightforward: a packet of sweet instant coffee—usually from Nestlé or the Indonesian brand Kopiko—paired with a simple bread roll called pandesal. In the provinces, this bread is often delivered by a traveling baker on a bicycle. Reflecting Spanish influence, Filipinos love dipping their pandesal into the coffee, enjoying the warm, coffee-infused bread right alongside their drink.



Bold Flavors to Bold Coffee (Serbia)

The next coffee is introduced by Jovana from Serbia. According to her, much of the coffee in Serbia is made using a Turkish coffee pot, or cezve. Fine grounds of unfiltered coffee are placed into the pot, where it simmers for several minutes. The coffee grounds float as the water boils, then sink to the bottom of the cup, creating a rich, earthy flavor. She mentions that the coffee has an extremely bold flavor, so it is often paired with an equally sweet dessert—like baklava—to complement the drink. Jovana also shares that women in Serbia sometimes use the remaining coffee grounds to read fortunes.



A Kick of Cinnamon (Mexico)

Mexican coffee culture was introduced by Victor, who has cultural roots in Mexico. According to Victor, coffee is central to daily life there, serving as a naturally welcoming centerpiece for conversation. Coffee in Mexico is typically made very sweet with plenty of sugar and milk, and many people like to add an extra kick by brewing or stirring it with a cinnamon stick. It is often enjoyed alongside a sweet bread, like a concha, or paired with a refreshing drink like horchata (a sweet rice beverage).



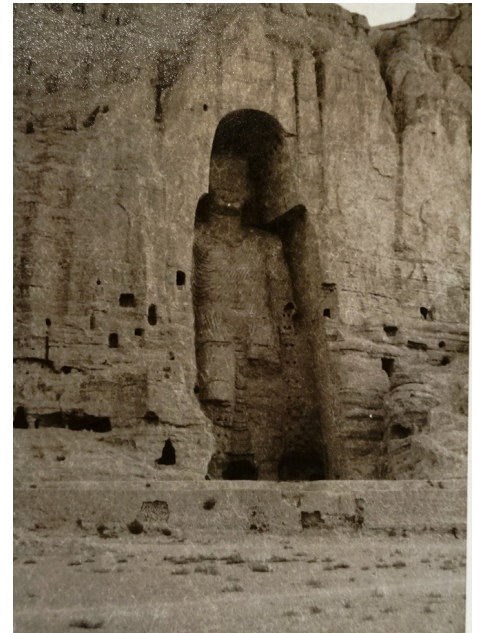
A Cup of Coffee per Meal (Cuba)

Cuban coffee culture was introduced by Mileydis, who was born in Cuba and has lived in Asahikawa for over 20 years. Many people in Cuba enjoy their coffee up to three times a day. It is typically prepared using finely ground Cuban coffee and sweetened with plenty of sugar. Mileydis mentions that coffee is often enjoyed alongside a sweet treat, such as a biscuit or a guava dessert. Instant coffee is quite uncommon in Cuba, as most Cubans prefer traditional filtered coffee.

This coffee exchange was an incredible evening of experiencing diverse coffee cultures from around the world. It was refreshing not only for local Japanese residents to discover new traditions, but also for the international community as well. Everyone had the opportunity to experience coffee in a completely new way. Furthermore, with each cup enjoyed alongside some refreshments, participants were able to share a comforting taste of home, no matter how far away.



Back then, horse-drawn wagons were the means of transport.



Bamiyan Valley's Buddha relief

The Afghanistan I Saw 56 Years Ago.

By Kenichi Shiga

On the summer of 1970, I took the land route from Iran into Afghanistan. At that time, it was a peaceful kingdom that was untainted by warfare under the reign of King Zahir Sha.

My first stop in Afghanistan was the 2000 year-old ancient Silk Road city of Herat. During my visit to this oasis city growing in the middle of the vast desert, I had carelessly drawn too much water from a water hand pump where an elderly man nearby saw this, "Water is life; use it wisely!", he sternly scolded. I still remember his words even today.

On a bus heading to Kandahar, I was sharing a ride with several men in turbans armed with traditional knives on their waists.

When I went to Kabul, it was a city teeming with life nicknamed the "the Paris of Central Asia", where backpackers from around the world gathered. In Chicken Street, Kabul, travelers who have crossed many borders gather and exchange information.

After leaving Kabul, I headed toward the Bamiyan Valley. Beyond the strenuous mountain passes awaited a 53-meter-tall Buddha, carved directly into the cliffside to guard over the valley. Climbing the stone cave path to the Buddha's head, I was met with an unforgettable view: a lush green valley stretching toward the majestic Hindu Kush Mountains. Learning of its destruction in 2001 came as a devastating shock that I still remember to this day.

The Afghanistan I walked on many years ago was a country where many people lived peacefully; naturally open to travelers from around the world.

That was 56 years ago. Considering the course of events that came afterwards, the peaceful Afghanistan I saw back then became an irreplaceable memory.

This journey of mine started in July 1969 and concluded in August 1971 when I returned to Japan. In those two years and two months, I had traveled to 30 countries in total. The memories of the desolate desert views and the warmth of the people I met in Afghanistan will still hold a place in my heart as long as I live.

About the Contributor

Name: Kenichi Shiga

About the Contributor: An avid volunteer for the Asahikawa International Committee. During his 20s, he spend much of his youth traveling around the world. He has a strong passion for international exchange as he has joined many cultural exchange events with AIC.

My Days in Asahikawa: When Nature Meets the City

Two Months in Asahikawa—The Spaces That Captured My Heart

By Dowan Kim



Asahikawa is the second-largest city in Hokkaido, so it is very convenient to live in. You can even see the beautiful Daisetsuzan Mountains from the city. It has already been two months since I came to Asahikawa. I have been walking around the city and found some beautiful places that I really love. The gardens, rivers, and parks here are so clean and quiet, which is exactly what I love about northern Japan.

1. Kitasaito Garden

Kitasaito Garden is right behind Asahikawa Station. It is very modern and clean, so I go there often for a walk. When I visited this garden with my manager, I learned something interesting about the pond in the center, called Kagami-ike (Mirror Pond). The clean water in the pond is actually brought directly from the nearby Chubetsu River. I was really impressed by this. Looking at the wild flowers around the clear water, I felt lucky that I can enjoy Hokkaido's beautiful nature right in the middle of the city. I heard this place turns completely white in winter, and I cannot wait to see the snow scenery.



2. Tokiwa Park

Tokiwa Park is a historic park that opened in 1916. It has a huge pond and a beautiful forest. I first visited this park in June to see a local festival (Gokokujinja Matsuri). It was wonderful to see everyone—from young children to elderly people—enjoying the early summer day together. One day, during a bike ride around the park, I was surprised to find a public swimming pool called "Tokiwa Park Pool." It was cool to see a swimming pool inside a public park that people use every day. There are also art and literature museums inside the quiet forest. This park is also the main venue for the famous Asahikawa Winter Festival, so I definitely want to come back in the winter to see the snow sculptures.

3. Asahibashi Bridge

Asahibashi Bridge is a famous steel bridge built in 1932 over the Ishikari River. The first time I went there, I rode my bicycle. I loved how the old, olive-green steel bridge looked together with the big river and nature. Riding my bike along the Ishikari River felt amazing. The cool wind and the bright sunlight reflecting on the water made me feel so happy. When the sun goes down, the lights on the bridge turn on, and you can see the beautiful silhouette of the Daisetsuzan Mountains behind it. Now I see why so many travelers and photographers love this place.



About the Contributor

Name: Dowan Kim (キム・ドワン)

From: Suwon, South Korea

Connection to Asahikawa: Dowan Kim is a public official from Suwon City, currently working in the International / City Relations Division of Asahikawa City Hall on a one-year exchange assignment.