

ASAHIKAWA INFO

July 2026, Volume 355



Course on Bike Safety & Asahikawa Downtown Tour 7/25

Learn about important bike safety rules, followed by a fun tour around Asahikawa's Downtown area



Nihongo Lounge Special

7/26

Let's Go to Tonden Matsuri

Join AIC to experience an authentic Japanese festival!



A fun English immersion event for preschoolers of Asahikawa

Hello Kids 7/28

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 Feesal Asahikawa 7F,
1-jo-dori 8-chome, Asahikawa 070-0031
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Email: asahikawainternationalcenter@gmail.com
Website: <https://asahikawaic.jp/en/>



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One Point Japanese

微妙 (びみょう) - To say something is meh/ or off. Used to describe things and situations that are mediocre, questionable, or underwhelming.
Example Sentence:
ももか: このみそ汁はちょっと微妙だな。
サム: そうなの? はちみつを入れたんだけど。
Momoka : This miso soup tastes kinda meh.
Sam: Really? I put some honey in it.

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.



The Asahikawa Summer Festival

By John M.

One of the most vibrant and culturally unique aspects of living in Japan is the summer festival season. This year, the Asahikawa Summer Festival returns from Thursday, July 30th to Saturday, August 1st. Get ready for three unforgettable days packed with incredible food, lively festivities, and non-stop fun!

Taisetsu Sanroku Matsuri

7/30 (Thursday) 5:00 PM ~ 10:00 PM, 7/31 (Friday) 1:00 PM ~ 10:00 PM, 8/1 (Saturday) 12:00 PM ~ 9:50 PM
(3-jo-dori 6-chome)

Running all three days of the festival, the Taisetsu Sanroku Matsuri takes over 3-jo-dori 6-chome (right by Showa-Dori). It's a food lover's paradise, featuring delicious food trucks from the Kamikawa region alongside stalls from Asahikawa's favorite local restaurants. To top it all off, a live stage will host rappers, comedians, and musical acts to keep the summer festival energy electric!



Scan for more info!

July 30th (Opening Ceremony & Fireworks Show)

From 6:30 PM (Fireworks Show begins at 7:45 PM) (Ishikari River Bank Near Asahibashi)

The Asahikawa Summer Festival opens with a bang along the Ishikari Riverbank, right near the iconic Asahibashi Bridge. The opening ceremony kicks off with an energetic performance by the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Band, followed by traditional dance performances by passionate local groups. To cap off the night, a spectacular fireworks display will light up the sky—visible from both the riverbank and all across downtown!



July 31st (Citizen's Parade)

7/31 5:30 PM (Heiwa-Dori Shopping Park)

The excitement moves to the Heiwa-Dori Shopping Park, where the streets come alive with color and rhythm! Watch in awe as nearly 2,000 local residents dance through the street dressed in vibrant yukatas and traditional Japanese attire. This parade is a beautiful showcase of local pride and connection. Keep an eye out for members of the Asahikawa International Committee, who will also be joining in on the cultural fun!

August 1 (Shrine Procession and the Rekka

Tanabata Festival

Joint Taisetsu Portable Shrine Procession from 5:00 PM (Heiwa-Dori Shopping Street)

Rekka Tanabata Festival Parade from 5:05 PM (From Tokiwa Park to Showa-Dori)

The festival reaches its thrilling climax at the Heiwa-Dori Shopping Street with the grand Joint Taisetsu Portable Shrine (*Daisetsu Rengo Omikoshi*) procession. Experience Japanese culture at its finest as locals shoulder the massive, ornate shrine and carry it through the heart of downtown to bring blessings to the city. Right on its heels is the Rekka Tanabata Festival parade along Showa-Dori, featuring a stunning procession of traditional floats, dynamic dancers, and thunderous taiko drum performances that will leave you completely energized!





Threads of Love: June Celebrations of Children's Growth and Achievement

By Keiko M.A.

As the California sun stretches from dawn to purple-hued sunsets, June arrives as graduation season—a time when children and their loved ones celebrate the completion of one chapter in their academic journey and look ahead to the opportunities that await them.

In Japan, the term *sotsugyō-shiki* refers to graduation ceremonies held at all educational levels, from elementary school through college and university. In contrast, the United States typically holds promotion ceremonies for elementary and middle school students, while formal graduation ceremonies are reserved for high school and higher education.

Here in Southern California, the approach to promotion/graduation is often marked by personal and heartfelt traditions. In the days leading up to ceremonies, many mothers devote time to creating ribbon leis for their children to wear on their special day. The ribbon colors are thoughtfully chosen to reflect each school's official colors, adding a meaningful and personalized touch to the celebration.

Last year, I made one for my son. His school's mascot is the Mariners, so I worked with navy blue and white—the school colors. I also created small money flowers to decorate the lei. As a Japanese person, I have always found money leis especially fascinating.

In Japan, simply handing over money can feel too plain or even impolite. For this reason, monetary gifts are traditionally presented in decorative envelopes known as *shūgi-bukuro* for formal occasions and *pochi-bukuro* for more casual ones.

I still remember that when I was a child, my grandmother—who lived in a small fishing village—would give me an allowance wrapped in tissue paper whenever my family visited my grandparents. Even then, the simplicity of the gesture carried a quiet sense of warmth and care.

Seeing money leis made with real cash in person was quite an eye-opening experience, and it inspired me to try making one myself. I knew, of course, that my teenage son and his friends would love it. Alongside ribbon leis, fresh flower leis—often crafted with orchids—and candy leis are also popular, particularly among elementary school children. Each variation carries its own charm, yet all share a common spirit of celebration and affection.

Today as well, somewhere in California, children are being draped in leis, —symbols of love and hope—as they step forward into bright and promising futures.

About the Contributor

Keiko M.A.

Born and raised in Asahikawa, Japan.

Studied in the United States as a Rotary International
Ambassadorial Scholar (Asahikwa East Rotary Club).

Holds a Master's degree in Intercultural Communication.

Currently resides in California and works as a freelance translator.

THE QUEST FOR THE PERFECT PARFAIT (PART 2)

BY JOVANA M.

Do you have a sweet tooth? Check out these wonderful parfait spots throughout Asahikawa! Try to find these cafes using the hints below!

The answers are at the bottom!

1. NEAR AN ICONIC BRIDGE

When you need a break from everything matcha, why not try everything houjicya? It'll give a roasted earthy taste to a familiar treat. Don't like houjicya but still want to experiment? Ask about the seasonal parfait at this local gem near a famous bridge. The zunda parfait is smashing!

10:00 AM - 9:30 PM



2. LATE NIGHT CAFE

It's late, all the cafés are closed yet it's still too early to catch the train back. Why not pop by this eclectic cozy spot for a quick treat and browse through some books? Parfaits will vary by season but when all else fails, their double chocolate float is pretty damn close. Feeling more daring? There's also a stout float.

Mon, Tue, Thur : 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Fri, Sat : 6:00 PM - 11:00 PM

Closed on Wednesdays and Sundays

3. HIDDEN GEM

Perhaps the prettiest~ fruit parfaits in all the city. If only the claim could be verified. This café's fluffy pancake brunch plates are so filling there's hardly room for anything else. Dare to try? Head towards Nishi Aeon.

11:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Closed: Tue



Answers:

1. Fukuyoshi Cafe 2. Switch Flavor 3. Mush Cafe

The following restaurant recommendations are based on personal experience. No sponsorships or partnerships were involved in the creation of this content. Please be aware that restaurant reservations, inquiries, and menus are primarily available only in Japanese.