

THE PEACH



COBBLER

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Photo by Sean Gallogly

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Note from the Editor~



Greetings, peaches!

Classes are winding down for the semester and deskwarming season is slowly starting. I hope all your staff rooms are adequately equipped with air conditioning, because the Summer heat is just getting started.

Speaking of heat in this issue we have a quick guide on some things you can buy to beat this heat. Some of you may also notice the Tanabata article from last year, what can we say it was so well written we wanted to share it again with everyone. Our monthly segment The State of Games also continues in this issue!

Thank you to those who signed up for the leavers party, if you couldn't make it well hopefully catch you at the next gathering...

...speaking of the next gathering

GET EXCITED

because this year we are hosting a beach party!

Expect watermelon, fireworks, drinking and more.

More info coming soon

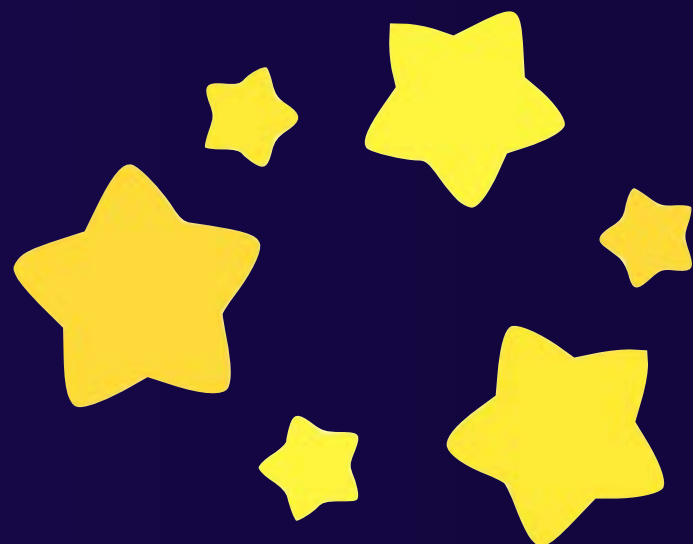
As per usual we have prefectural events along with the usual puzzles.

As always, we're looking for contributors! If you have photos of cool places you've explored, events you've attended within the prefecture, stories from your time on the JET Programme, or even book and movie recommendations, we'd love to feature you.

If you're interested in contributing, don't hesitate to reach out to us at:

✉ newsletter@okayama-ajet.com

✉ okayama.rose@gmail.com



Tanabata 七夕



Celebrating the Star Crossed Lovers



Occuring every year on the seventh day of the seventh month, **Tanabata** is Japan's nationwide festival for making wishes. On this day, people across Japan, particularly children, write their wishes on small and narrow strips of paper known as **Tanzaku** (短冊 / たんざく), which are usually used for writing short poems. Wishes in hand, people across Japan then affix their wishes to bamboo. Traditionally, the numerous wishes of the people are then floated down a river, or burned. Festivals pertaining to Tanabata appear throughout Japan with slight variations to the celebration style existing in different regions. Yes, all across the country, Japanese people write their wishes, offer them up to the heavens, enjoy summer festivities, and pray for a good day with no rain...but more on that later.

The origins of this festival date back thousands of years, going all the way back to ancient Japan. Introduced by Empress Koken in 755AD, the festivities and the practices were based on similar occasions in China. Specifically, it is heavily based on the Qixi Festival from ancient China, also known as the Festival to Plead for Skills. The customs were introduced to Japan during the Heian Era and debuted in the city of **Heian Kyo** (平安京), modern day Kyoto, being adopted in the Imperial Palace. Though it has its origins in the Heian Era (8th-12th Centuries), it was much later in the Edo Era (17th-19th Centuries) that the occasion was celebrated by the broader social classes.

[Click here for info on Tanabata Festival in Okayama](#)

Written by: Ryan Calpito

Tanabata is Japan's ancient story, **densetsu** (伝説 / でんせつ), about literal star-crossed lovers.

It's kanji, 七夕, literally meaning **seventh night**, Tanabata tells of a heartsick silk weaver and a lonely cattle herder split by the expanse of the cosmos. It is a story of fateful romance, but one that falls on the lines of the melancholic.



There are slight and minute variations here and there,
however they all go like this...

In the stars and cosmos that create the universe

there was a beautiful silk weaver, a maiden, Princess Orihime, the daughter of the Emperor of the Heavens, the galaxy itself, Tentei. The fabrics she wove, used to make clothing, were beautiful, desired, and appreciated by all. The princess wove these fabrics everyday, diligently, by the Heavenly River, or Amana no Gawa (天の川 / あまのがわ), the Milky Way Galaxy. Tentei was proud of Orihime, and loved her very much. However, although she was adept and took pride in her work, Orihime was busy and always working. She was lonely as a result, she did not have any time to meet others and as a result knew she would never be able to meet someone and fall in love. The knowledge of this weighed heavily on her, and she was deeply saddened with loneliness.



Tentei, recognizing his daughter's sadness, reached across the expanse of the cosmos to find his daughter a partner who could fix her heartache and loneliness. His search soon brought him to Hikoboshi, a diligent cattle herder who lived on the other side of the Amanogawa, who he introduced to his daughter. Finally, Tentei could help his daughter overcome her sorrow.

The two met and immediately fell deeply in love; a match made in heaven, so to speak. For the first time in an eternity, the two had found companionship and love. They were soon wed and lived happily as husband and wife. However, in their joy the couple had completely abandoned their duties. Orihime had ceased her weaving, and her looms began gathering dust; Hikoboshi's cattle were now scattered and wandering about the galaxy.



This disorder upset and angered Tentei, and in his rage, he forbade Orihime and Hikoboshi from meeting, splitting the couple and sending Hikoboshi back across the Amanogawa. Both returned to their duties, but their sadness had also returned tenfold. Orihime wept dearly everyday, bereft at the loss of her husband. Tentei felt pity, seeing the intense sorrow from his daughter and eventually made a deal with her. If the two of them could work as diligently as they had before, they would be allowed to meet once a year on the seventh day of the seventh month, to which Orihime acquiesced. But on the long-awaited day, the couple found they could not meet, for there was no bridge across the expanse of the Amanogawa. Coming so close, yet still remaining so far, Orihime wept on the banks of the river, being able to see Hikoboshi on the other side. She wept so hard, she caught the attention and sympathies of a flock of magpies who promised to form a bridge across the river so the two lovers could finally meet.



Thus, every year on the night of the seventh day of the seventh month, Princess Orihime and Hikoboshi's wish is granted and they are allowed to finally meet once more. However, the pair must return to their respective sides of the Amanogawa by the morning of the next day to resume their duties for the next year, once again patiently awaiting for next year's July 7th night.

It is said, however, that if it rains on Tanabata, the river's levels will rise and its currents will become too much for the magpies to handle. Should it rain, the bridge cannot be formed, and Hikoboshi and Orihime will be denied their once-annual time to be with each other. There is no rain check, sadly and they will have no choice but to wait for the coming year once more. This is why, traditionally, Japanese people will also pray for a rainless day; to grant the star-crossed lovers their once a year chance to be in each other's company. As a result, should unfortunate weather come on the day of Tanabata, the rain is referred to as 'The Tears of Orihime and Hikoboshi.'

Just as Orihime and Hikoboshi make a yearly wish on July 7th, the people of Japan also cast their wishes to the heavens with hopes of them one day being granted.

So how do Japanese people make these wishes? What do they say? For those of us that are studying or practicing Japanese, the phrasing is quite simple; unless of course, you want to go the extra mile and write your wishes in the form of a **tanka** (短歌 / たんか) poem.

Typically, and specifically, what I was taught in Japanese class in uni to practice a grammar point, wishes are written with some kind of verb. These verbs are written in potential form since, for example, “you wish to be able to do something, to become something, or to accomplish something.” You will write these potential verbs in their masu-form, and finally connect youni (ように) to the end.

As an example, and writing as Hikoboshi:
“I wish to be able to meet Orihime this year.”
“Kotoshi, Orihime ni aemasuyouni”
「今年、織姫に会えますように」

Typically these written phrases do not have a period affixed to them. This is because, this wish, this sentence, technically does not end and is stuck mid-sentence; imagine someone droning off at the end of a hopeful wish. Once written, these wishes can be fixed to bamboo typically at shrines and temples, though I’m sure there will be lots of bamboo in lots of different places that people will be attaching their wishes to. (Note: don’t go randomly attaching your wishy-washy dreams wishes to random innocent bamboo; that’s littering.)



Tanzaku and pens, or brushes, in hand, why not make a wish upon the stars this year? Fellow peaches and allies of Momotaro, from the Okayama AJET Board, we wish you a cool, fun, relaxing, and safe summer.

皆のために涼しくて、楽しくて、リラックスできて、安全な夏季節になれますように¹¹

MUST HAVE FOR THE SUMMER HEAT

Escape... or, at least survive hell's fire

1

SUNSCREEN

If nothing else please be sure to put on sunscreen here in the summer, protect yourself from the devil's heat waves from the sun. Popular brands include Shiseido's Anessa, Skin Aqua and Bioré UV.



2

ION DRINKS

With this heat you'll be sweating A LOT, if you say you're not you are either lying or just inside 24/7 with the AC cranked. Be sure to replenish all those electrolytes you are sweating out with ion drinks. OS-1 is really a life saviour but doesn't taste as good and not as readily available as other popular choices such as Pocari Sweat and Aquarius.

3

UV PROTECTIVE CLOTHING/ACCESSORIES

Some places you just can't apply sunscreen easily, or you honestly just can't be bothered to reapply all day. Japanese stores such as Tokyu Hands or AEON style have a range of options for UV protective accessories, including but not limited to UV protective sleeves, hats, and more.



4

FANS

Life before I bought a fan was pretty uncomfortable in the summer, I now carry one with me everywhere. You can get a variety of fans not just handheld but ones that attach to an umbrella/parasol, one's you can wear around your neck and even one's built into a jacket!

okaJET's **Beach** Episode!



Date...Time
August 8, 2:00PM

Location
Shibukawa Beach

Bus service from Okayama station available!





Where do I even begin? Summer Games Fest 2025 came and went, where it was the Xbox of all things that came out strongest. We saw the reveals of anticipated sequels like The Outer Worlds 2, Ninja Gaiden 4, an upcoming DLC for Indiana Jones and the Great Circle, and Black Ops 25. Oh, 7? Call of Duty needs to slow the hell down sometimes, man. Annual releases have become nauseating mainstays for far too long now. I'm looking at you, too, EA.





Perhaps the most unique thing announced was Xbox's first handheld system, the ROG Xbox Ally. The question on everyone's mind? Why? Their prime competitor looks to be the PlayStation Portal, which has just had a massive software update that allows for cloud streaming of games rather than connecting directly to the console. This makes it much less of a hassle to access your library from afar. With Xbox games readily available on Microsoft PC's as well, I just get the feeling that they're going to stretch themselves too thin. After all, there is one other handheld that's most likely going to stay on top...



The Nintendo Switch 2 obliterated expectations at launch, selling 3.5 million units in only four days. That doesn't just make it the best launch of a Nintendo console, it makes it the best launch of ANY. Trying to even find one now is proving to be a challenge, at least outside of the US, where smart overstocking seemed to fend off scalpers.

For comparison, the lifetime sales of the Wii U reached about 13.5 million. In 7 years.

I have mine and I absolutely love it so far. The larger controls are more comfortable, the screen quality and games look fantastic. No matter what the OLED crowd says to the contrary, Mario Kart World was the ideal launch title; it's a great time with an even better soundtrack to boot. There's just one problem... That's kind of all there is at the moment.



Of the major titles released at launch, Mario Kart World is the only first-party exclusive. Don't get me wrong, the enhanced version of Breath of the Wild, among other things, are great bonuses, and Cyberpunk 2077 in a portable state is extremely impressive. Solid titles like Bravely Default, Street Fighter VI, and Sonic X Shadow Generations will be bound to keep us busy for now, especially since many will still have a backlog of OG Switch games to get through, but with this successful launch, Nintendo can only keep up the momentum with a well-packed Direct.

We caught a glimpse of what's coming through the recent Donkey Kong Bananza Direct. If you're a fan of Super Mario Odyssey, do yourself a favor and check out this showcase, the game looks phenomenal and it was developed by the same team. The visuals are stunning and the soundtrack is straight up fire.

Lastly, I wanted to discuss something I've been curious about. What has gone right for the Switch 2 that went so wrong with the Wii U?



As one of the seemingly few people who actually had a Wii U, I think I can argue that the failure stems from quite a few very prominent issues. The most important of which? A lack of quality titles. I don't mean that its entire library was chock full of failures, it's more that Nintendo played it far too safe with what they already knew. Super Mario Bros. U, Smash Bros, Mario Kart 8, Star Fox Zero, Donkey Kong Tropical Freeze... These are all decent games, but system sellers, they are not.

When it was first revealed, the Gamepad was advertised as this huge new breakthrough that could redefine gameplay and allow for play on the go! Except, it only had a very small range and had to practically stay by the console permanently or else the signal would just cut abruptly. The pad itself was also not utilised much by any major titles bar ZombiU. Now answer me honestly, have you ever actually heard of ZombiU? No. And did anyone really care about it? Also no. It ended up selling just under 600,000 units.



The result of all this made the Gamepad seem like a gimmick. Most games could still use the Wii Pro Controller or Wii Remotes too, so the next point of failure became the lack of justification to actually buy the console. It was widely reported that the average person believed the Wii U to be some sort of upgrade or accessory to the existing Wii. But the Wii era came, took the world by storm, then petered out in its later years. At which point, Nintendo decided to announce what seemed to be a fancy looking add-on, at \$300 for the cheapest model. I'm sure you're able to piece together what all this means.

ZELDA

In fact, it got so bad that a set of advertisements were released where they explicitly had to state that the Wii U was in fact an entirely different console. I owned a Wii U from Christmas 2014 to around 2018 whenever I bought the Switch. In that time, I bought 5 games for the system and spent more time on the Wii and 3DS anyway. By the time Breath of the Wild released, which was meant to be a major event for the Wii U, the Switch had already come out.

Ultimately, I think it comes down to the fact that the Switch was what fans thought and wanted the Wii U to be. A system that could be played docked and on the go in handheld mode. Why is the Switch 2 doing so much better comparatively? Because people actually asked for it. Sounds painfully simple, but it's true. It's an all purpose console with fully integrated backwards compatibility, allowing access to the vast quality of the Switch's library and the next generation exclusives. It's a powerful system compared to its predecessor, it actively improves on the criticisms of the first Switch and isn't some sort of crazy new fad being capitalised on before the technology is actually ready.

All that, and a big whopping number 2 slapped right onto the box. It's bigger, better, and more of what the consumer actually likes. Not too hard, right?



Man, I can't wait for Nintendo to drop the Wii U 2 announcement next...



GAME OVER

Written by



@lewischissio

Events in Okayama

JULY - EARLY AUGUST 2025

亀岩まつり Kameiwa Festival



Date: July 9th
Location: Kameishi Shrine
Time: 19:00 - 22:00
Admission: Free

More Info: [日本語](#)

港のマルシェ Port Marche

Date: July 13th
Location: Shin-Okayama Port Ferry Terminal
Time: 15:00 - 20:00
Admission: Summer Cruise - Meeting time: 14:10
- Adults ¥2500 Elementary school kids ¥1000
Sunset Cruise - Meeting time: 17:30
- Adults ¥3000 Elementary school kids ¥1500

More Info: [日本語](#)

玉井宮東照宮 夏祭 (輪くぐり) Tamaigu-Toshogu Summer Festival (Ring-Passing Ritual)



Date: July 23rd - August 6th
Location: Tamaigu-Toshogu Shrine
Time: 9:00
Admission: Free

More Info: [日本語](#)

国際物理オリンピック ジュニアチャレンジin岡山 International Physics Olympiad Junior Challenge in Okayama



Date: July 26th
Location: Okayama Prefecture Lifelong Learning Centre Future Museum of People and Science Saipia
-1st Floor Science Experience and Learning Plaza
Time: 13:30 - 15:30
Admission: ¥100

More Info: [日本語](#)

北長瀬夕方市（第1回）

The 1st Kitanagase Evening Market



Date: July 26th and 27th

More info: [日本語](#)

Location: Kitanagase Mirai Fureai General Park

Time: 17:00 - 22:00

Admission: Free

岡山大学JホールレインボーコンサートーJホールJazzNIGHTー Okayama University J Hall Rainbow Concert - J Hall JazzNIGHT -



Date: July 30th

More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Junko Fukutake Hall

Time: 19:00 - 20:30

Admission: ¥500 All seats are none reserved

*Cash ONLY contactless payment are not accepted

第25回 おかやま桃太郎まつり「烏城夏まつり」

The 25th Okayama Momotaro Festival "Karasuki Summer Festival"

Date: August 2nd and 3rd

More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Okayama Castle Area

*No parking (bicycles and cars) visitors are asked to use public transit

Time: 18:00 - 21:30

Admission: Free



OTHER

International Meet Up Party 「せかつく」



Date: Saturday July 5th and August 7th

More info: [Instagram](#)

Location: Matador (Bar in Okayama City)

Time: 20:00 - 22:00

Admission:

Men ~ ¥4000

All you can drink and buffet style food included

Women ~ ¥3500

ANSWER KEY

Difficulty: Evil

Monthly Sudoku

JUNE 2025

2	3	7	8	5	9	4	6	1
5	6	1	2	4	3	8	7	9
4	9	8	1	6	7	5	3	2
6	8	9	4	1	5	7	2	3
1	4	3	6	7	2	9	5	8
7	5	2	9	3	8	6	1	4
9	2	6	5	8	1	3	4	7
3	1	5	7	9	4	2	8	6
8	7	4	3	2	6	1	9	5

Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

クロスワードパズルだよ！ 全部書けたら、㊶～㊷の文字を使って言葉を作ってね。

ヒント：上から二番目

答え 五年生

				① 各		② 一		③ 人	④ 力	車
	⑤ 逆			⑥ 自	由	時	間		不	
⑦ 七	転	八	⑧ 起			停		⑨ 下	足	箱
⑪ 五			⑩ 立	⑪ 入	禁	止		級		
三				場			⑫ 水	生	⑬ 動	物
	⑭ 修	⑮ 学	旅	行		⑯ 結	晶		体	
⑰ 有		年		⑱ 進	⑲ 化	論		⑳ 視	線	
㉑ 無	分	別			石		㉒ 遠	心	力	

タテのかぎ

① 一人一人、それぞれに。

② 車が止まって、安全を確認する事。

④ 能力が足りない事。

⑤ 一発○○サヨナラホームラン！

⑦ ちとせあめを食べて長生きしよう。

⑧ ○○！礼！着席！

⑨ 下の学年の生徒。

⑪ 運動会の一番最初。音楽に合わせて

○○○○が始まります。

⑫ 六角柱型のガラスのような宝石。

⑬ 動くものを見る能力。

⑮ ○○○に一年生から並んでください。

⑯ みんなで考えて○○を出す。

⑰ 有るのか、無いのか。

⑲ アンモナイトの○○。

ヨコのかぎ

③ お客を乗せて、人が引いて動かす車。

⑥ 好きな事が出来る。

⑦ 失敗にくじけず、何度もやり直す事。

⑨ くつを入れるたな。

⑩ 入っちゃダメ！

⑫ 水中で生活する動物。

⑭ 昼間は色々見学して、夜はまくら投げ。

⑮ 同じ形は一つも無い、雪の○○。

⑰ ダーウィンがとなえた。

⑲ 目で見ている方向。○○をそらす。

㉑ よく考えず軽はずみな事。○○○な行動。

バケツをふり回して水が落ちないのは、この力のおかげ。

Difficulty: Medium

Monthly Sudoku

JULY 2025

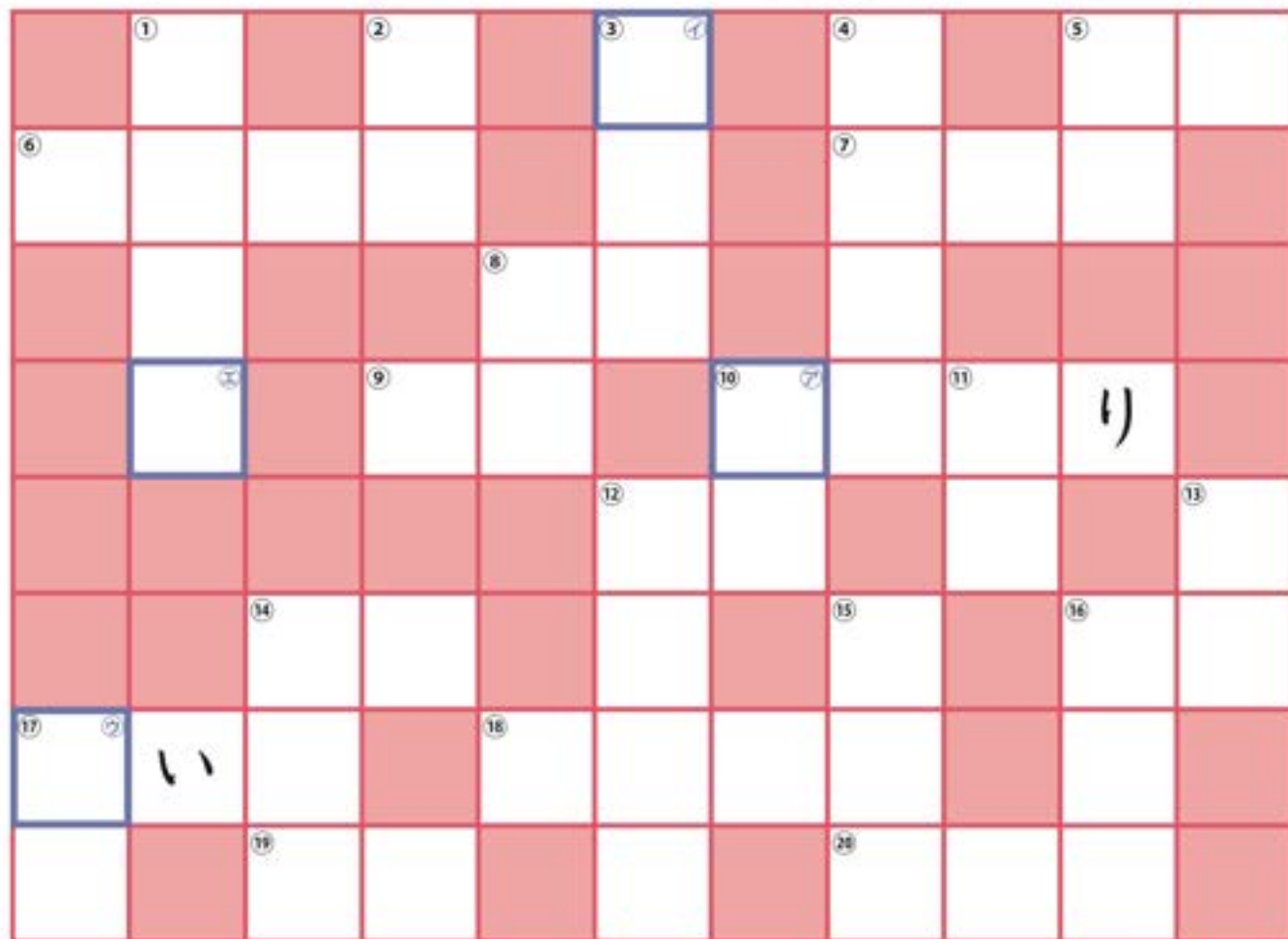
8		2	3	1	9		4	
1			5	4				
		9	8	2		5		
		6	4			1	2	8
3	8		1					
2			6					
		8		3	5		1	
7	4	5	9	6			8	
	1	3						

Fill in the puzzle so that every row across, every column down and every 9 by 9 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

クロスワードパズルだよ！ 全部書けたら、㊦～㊩の文字を使って言葉を作ってね。

ヒント：きみの学校にもある？

答え

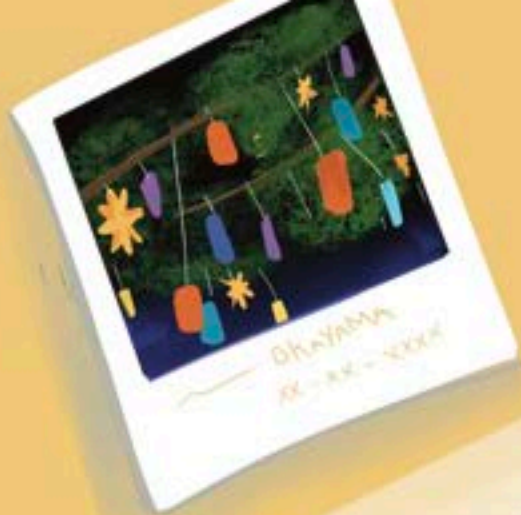


タテのかぎ

- ① 学校の先生方の会議。
- ② あとから何かたす事。
- ③ バランスが悪く、くずれそうな状態。
- ④ 少ない時間。○○○○では出来ない。
- ⑤ すぐ前の事。○○○になってやめる。
- ⑥ ツボをおす、マッサージの一種。
- ⑦ 全部言えるかな？ 春と秋の○○。
- ⑧ 神社や宮中の祭りの日。
- ⑨ 安全のため道路に立てられたしるし。
- ⑩ 作文などをまとめた物。卒業○○。
- ⑪ ○○○は、必ず期限までに出すように。
- ⑫ 成人前の人。○○○者は飲酒禁止です。
- ⑬ 「来てね！」って内容の手紙やカード。
- ⑭ あれこれ考え、頭を働かせる事。○○力。

ヨコのかぎ

- ⑤ まっすぐな線。
- ⑥ すべてのメンバーが加わり、何かする事。
- ⑦ たやすい事。それぐらいは○○○○だ。
- ⑧ 学校○○の運動着と上げき。
- ⑨ 台風は熱帯低○○に変わりました。
- ⑩ 7月7日は○○○○りの日。
- ⑪ 下校と中で○○を食っては、いけません。
- ⑫ 「こんなのはどうか？」って意見を出す事。
- ⑬ 人をよび集める事。図書委員を○○する。
- ⑭ 卒業まで、よい○○○をたくさん残そう。
- ⑮ あと一さつで年間読書の○○○○○だ！
- ⑯ 品物やサービスのねだん。○○○が高い。
- ⑰ 年始のあいさつを書く手紙。



Want to be part of
The Peach Cobbler!?!?!?



If you want to
contribute photos or
stories please contact
us at
newsletter@okayama-ajet.com
OR
okayama.rose@gmail.com



more info available on www.okayama-ajet.com

See you next issue!