

Iwate International Exchange



~ Friends with the World ~



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 Closed: New Year holidays (12/29 - 1/3), other scheduled dates



8.3 Participated in Morioka Sansa Odori



11.20 World Area (2016 One World Festa in Iwate)

Looking Back at the Last Year

- April 2016 ~ March 2017 -

Let's look back at the events of the 2016 fiscal year through pictures.
Check page 3 for more information about our activities.



9.26 Iwate "Glocal" College – Special Lecture Celebrating the 60th Anniversary for the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Nepal



11.20 World Stage (2016 One World Festa in Iwate)



2.11 Hands-On Multilingual Disaster Training



10.8 Iwate Youth International Seminar – New Zealand Program



11.20 Bridge to the World (KAKEHASHI) Club (2016 One World Festa in Iwate)



10.2 International Exchange "Chatland" [Sunday Funday – International Exchange for Families]



1.22 International Exchange "Chatland" Let's learn about other cultures together with exchange students!

Events

◆Internationalization in Tono!

Workshop: “Start telling the world about Tono tomorrow”

~ A cosmopolitan feel. Open to visitors ~

Leader : Ryusuke Murao, Starbrand partner, author, Iwate Land of Hope Ambassador

📅 : April 26th (Wed.) 13:30 – 15:00

📍 : Aeria Tono

💰 : None (reservation required)

👤 : Tono Education and Culture Foundation

📞 : 0198-62-6191 ✉ : mail@tono-ecf.or.jp

🌐 : <http://www.tono-ecf.or.jp>

◆International Cooperation and Japan Overseas Cooperation Exhibition

With “international cooperation” as our motto, let’s find out what we can do as citizens!

There will be an introduction of JICA volunteer activities. Why not take the chance to deepen your understanding of international cooperation, and move from supporting it to taking part?

📅 : March 16th (Thurs.) – May 14th (Sun.) 9:00 – 16:30

(Closed on Mondays and Sunday afternoons)

📍 : Tono Global Plaza (formerly Kamigō Middle School)

👤 : Japan Overseas Cooperative Association (JOCA)

📞 : 0198-69-3633 Facebook: Tono Global Plaza, JOCA

◆The 7th Unicef Love Walk in Iwate

The fee for the Love Walk will be used by Unicef to improve the health of children in developing countries. Why don't you take part with your family and friends?

📅 : May 21st 2017 (Sun.) 9:00 – 12:45

📍 : Morioka Castle Site Park (start and finish)

💰 : Adults ¥500, Under 18s ¥200

📝 : May 12th (Fri.) (max. 200 people; first come first served)

👤 : Iwate Unicef Association, Iwate Walking Association, Morioka Walking Association

📞 : 019-687-4460 ✉ : sn.iunicef_iwate@todock.jp

◆KiFA Multicultural Concert and Tea Party

People from overseas present music, dance, workshops and a cafe.

The special guest is the cellist, Shika Udai.

📅 : June 4th (Sun.) 13:30 – 16:00

📍 : Kanegasaki South Lifelong Learning Center

👤 : Kanegasaki International Friendship Association

📞 : 0197-44-2099 ✉ : kanegasaki.ifa@gmail.com

🌐 : <http://kifa.cocolog-nifty.com/>

Living Information

◆Filipino Passport Services

Passport services will be provided by the Philippine Embassy.

For: Filipino natives living in Iwate, Akita and Aomori.

📅 : July 15th (Sat.), 16th (Sun.) 9:00 – 17:00

📍 : Meeting Room 701, 7th floor, Aiina

More information is available here:

<https://www.facebook.com/notes/cecilia-nishimura/consular-outreach-missions-oav-overseas-absentee-voters-registration-in-morioka-10154358728116864>

Exams

◆Japanese Language Proficiency Test 2017 (#1)

A Japanese test for non-native speakers.

📅 : July 2nd (Sun.) 2017

📝 : March 29th (Wed.) – April 28th (Fri.)

Apply by web or post

👤 : Japan Educational Exchange and Services (JEES)

📞 : 03-6686-2974 (9:30 – 17:30 weekdays, except holidays)

🌐 : <http://info.jees-jlpt.jp/>

A Word from The JICA Desk

△▼JICA Volunteers for Developing Countries Information Sessions and Spring Recruitment▼△

The spring recruitment period for the 2017 financial year's JICA volunteer program will take place between March 31st and May 10th. An information session will also take place at the time listed below. Please feel free to attend.

📅 : April 20th (Thurs.) 19:00 – 21:00

📍 : Meeting Room 501, 5th floor, Aiina

* Reservation not required. Drop in at any time.

Former Japan overseas cooperation volunteers and former senior overseas volunteers will talk about their experiences. Private consultation is also available. More information is available here:

<https://www.jica.go.jp/volunteer/>

Noguchi, Iwate International Relations Promotion Officer (JICA Iwate Desk)

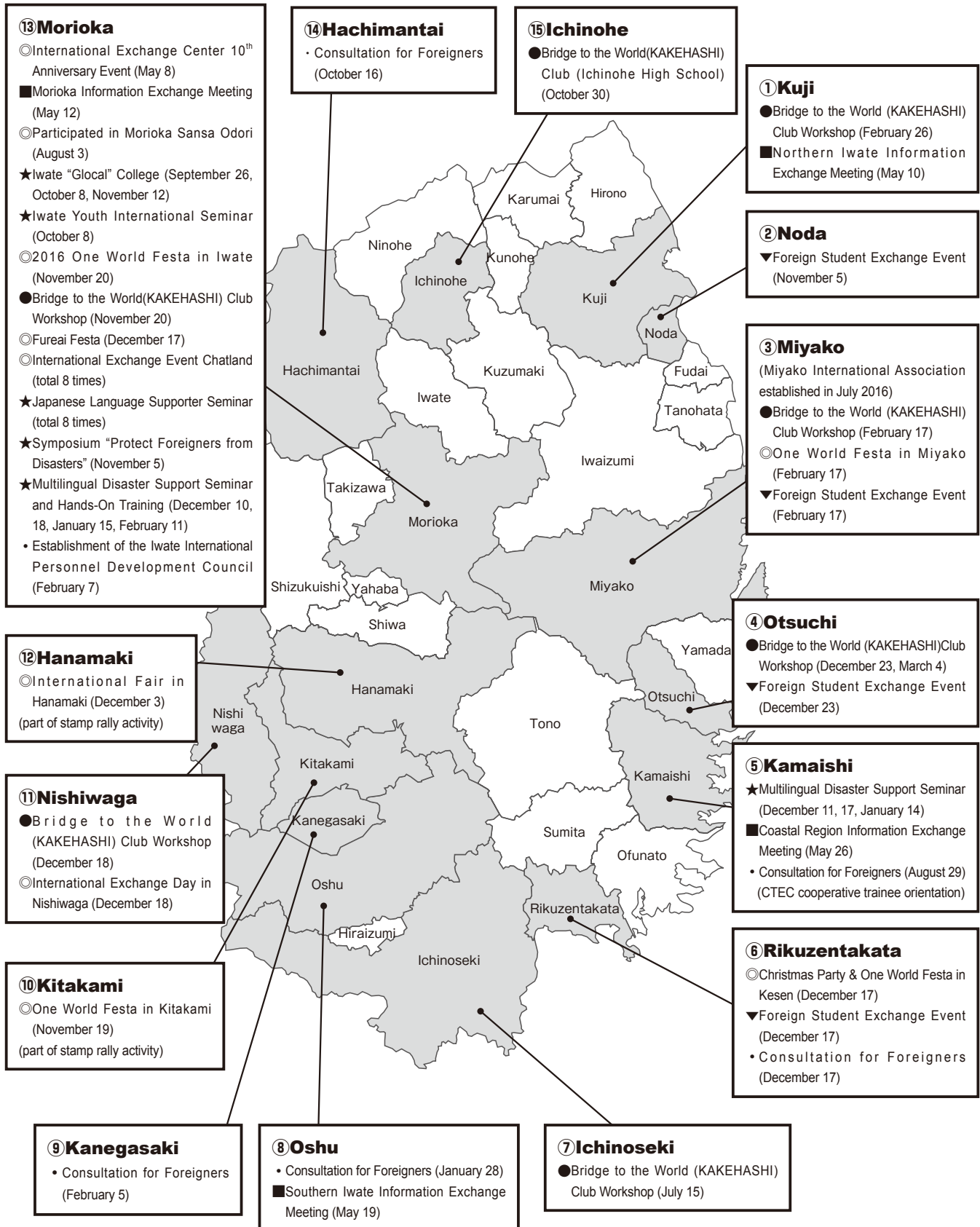
📞 : 019-654-8911 (within the Iwate International Association)

✉ : jicadpd-desk-iwateken@jica.go.jp

* The International Relations Promotion Officer gives career advice in terms of international cooperation to high school students, and university students. The officer is available for school visits.

Events of the 2016 Fiscal Year

Pictures of some of the events we held in the 2016 fiscal year are also on the 1st page.
We have also held many other events in the different regions throughout the prefecture.



Main Planned Events for the 2017 Fiscal Year

1. International Understanding and Exchange Promotion Based on the Region

International Exchange Events

● 2017 One World Festa in Iwate

On November 19 (Sun.) at Aina (International Exchange Center, etc.), with the theme of “Sports”.

● World Culture and Sports Fair

Held in 4 different venues within the prefecture, with the main theme being foreign culture and sports.

● Participate in Morioka Sansa Odori

We will collaborate with the international exchange organizations, the municipalities’ international associations and foreign residents for the festival.

● International Exchange Event Chatland

On the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month from 14:00-15:30 at the International Exchange Center, we will hold a salon where you can chat in multiple languages and meet people from abroad.

Collaboration Effort of Municipal International Associations and International Exchange Organizations

Regional International Associations and Information Exchange Meetings

In the beginning of the fiscal year, we will hold an information exchange meeting with the municipalities and the municipal international associations in the 4 regions of Iwate. We will visit each international association and provide precise and attentive support to any problems that have arisen in each association.

Support for International Exchange Affiliated Organizations

We will provide the necessary support for municipal international associations and international exchange organizations in 3 different activity categories.

(“International Exchange, Cooperation, Multicultural Society Support Fund”, “Japanese Language Classroom Fund”, “Activity Support for Municipal International Association”)

2. Creating a Multicultural Community

Providing Multilingual Information

We’ve revamped the website to make it easy to look at on your phone and tablet.

We also publish an International Association newsletter every 2 months which provides detailed information.

Japanese Language Study Support

We are holding Japanese Language Supporter Seminars to increase the number of instructors and train them so that foreign residents in every region can study Japanese.

Consultation for Foreigners

● The association has set up a consultation desk, specialists in foreign consultation (Chinese, Korean, English), and fixed consultation days for foreigners with the help of the legal services association. In addition, we make trips around the regions to provide consultation services.

We will also hold a new seminar aimed at long term residents about the social security system.

Formulation of a Foreigner Support System For Disasters

● By working with each of the municipalities, disaster prevention organizations, and supporters, we will hold a variety of seminars and hands-on training to formulate a foreigner support system during disaster times and foster awareness about disaster safety.

3. Cultivating the Next Generation of Human Resources

Conferences and Seminars

● Iwate “Glocal” College and Iwate Youth International Seminar

We will hold lectures to think about Iwate’s internationalization from a global perspective and seminars aimed at the youth.

● On Demand Classes with Foreign Instructors (New)

We will hold On Demand Classes where foreign residents will appear as lecturers or guest speakers for classes held at schools or municipal international associations.

The Iwate International Personnel Development Council (New)

The Iwate International Personnel Development Council provides study abroad support to students, among other activities.

Consultation for Foreigners

◆ General Support

- When: 9:00 am – 8:00 pm every day
- Languages: Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, French
- ※ Speakers of non-Japanese languages might be absent at certain times.

◆ Consultation in Foreign Languages

- **Chinese:** Tuesday - Friday
0:30 pm - 6:30 pm
- **Korean:** Wednesday 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
- **English:** Wednesday 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

◆ Consultation with a Legal Administration Expert

- Date and Time: Every third Wednesday,
3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
- Place: International Exchange Center (5th floor, Aina)
- Reservations: Iwate International Association
- ※ Prior booking is essential ⇒ Tel: 019-654-8900

Now Recruiting Supporting Members

The Iwate International Association is recruiting supporting members to assist with our activities and contribute towards our goals. We would very much appreciate your help. The membership fee provides invaluable assistance towards non-profit international events and multicultural activities.

<Annual Membership Fee> (one single payment) Adults 3,000 yen Groups 10,000 yen Students 1,000 yen

The Iwate International Personnel Development Council



It is becoming increasingly important to educate and utilize a young workforce, which can operate in a global society while also taking responsibility for the future of their

local community. In order to address this issue, the Iwate International Personnel Development Council, a cooperative project between the local government, industry and

academia, was established on February 7th (Wed.).

The Council will work with various groups on a number of projects. It will provide support to students travelling or studying overseas, invite foreign exchange students to the prefecture, and contribute to international exchange. The Iwate International Association will also be providing its assistance.

The Council's first activity in 2017 will be to support students leaving Iwate to study abroad.

◆ Course Details



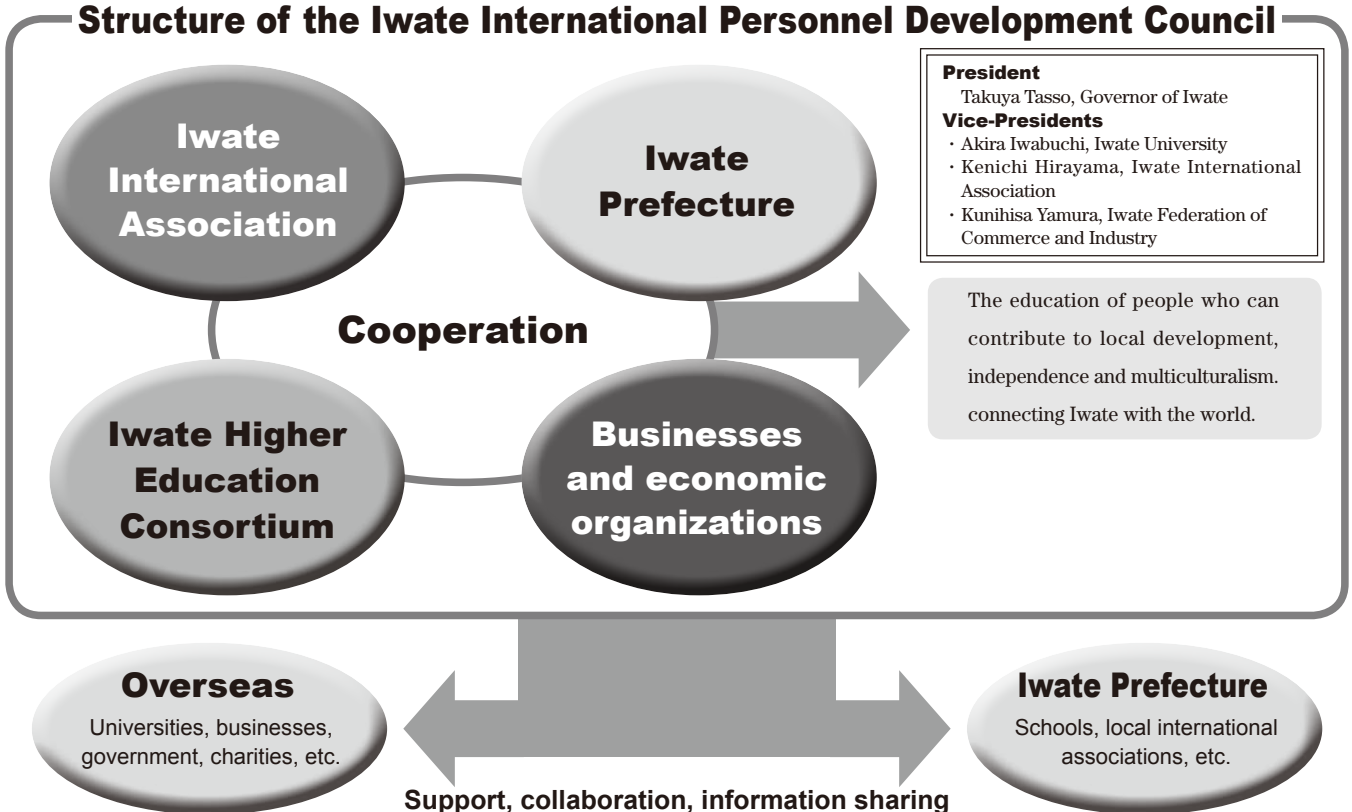
Program (participants choose one)

- ① Market development for local products ② Overseas expansion of the manufacturing industry
- ③ Promotion of a non-resident population ④ Local revitalization via sustainable business ⑤ Original concepts

Application period: mid-March – early May

Participants: roughly 10 people

Structure of the Iwate International Personnel Development Council



The Council is also recruiting collaborators who approve of its goals. For more information, please visit the Iwate International Association's website.

A Look at Data for



Internationalization in Iwate

Iwate is expecting an influx of foreign residents and tourists from here on. What kind of foreigners are living in or visiting Iwate right now? First, let's try to learn more about the foreigners who live nearby, and think about a multicultural society in which we live together in.

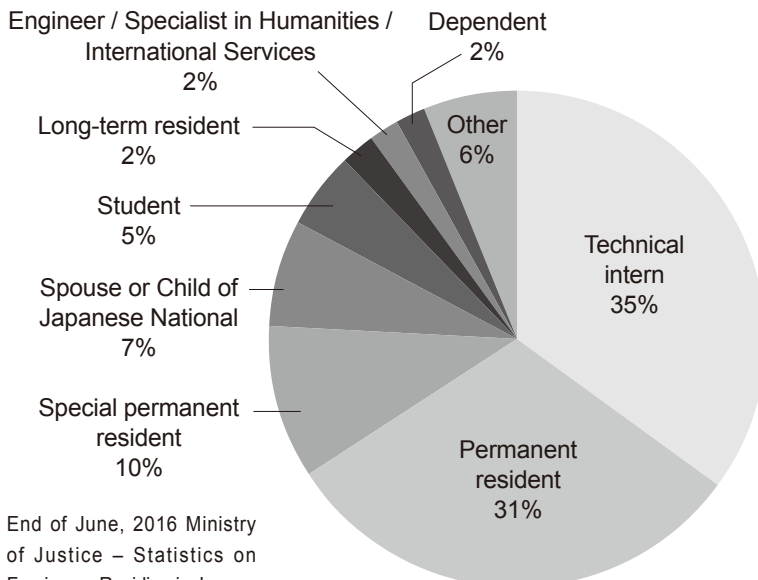
Q1. Which country makes up the most of Iwate's foreign residents?

Answer: There are 6,168 people from 71 different countries/regions holding foreign nationalities in Iwate. 5,713 of those people, making up 90% of the total, are from Asian countries. The country (region) with the highest number is China, followed by the Philippines and Vietnam.



The colored parts indicate the countries/regions that foreign residents in Iwate are from. Created with Iwate Foreign Nationality Resident Registration data (As of December 31, 2016).

Q2. What kind of people are the foreigners living in Iwate?



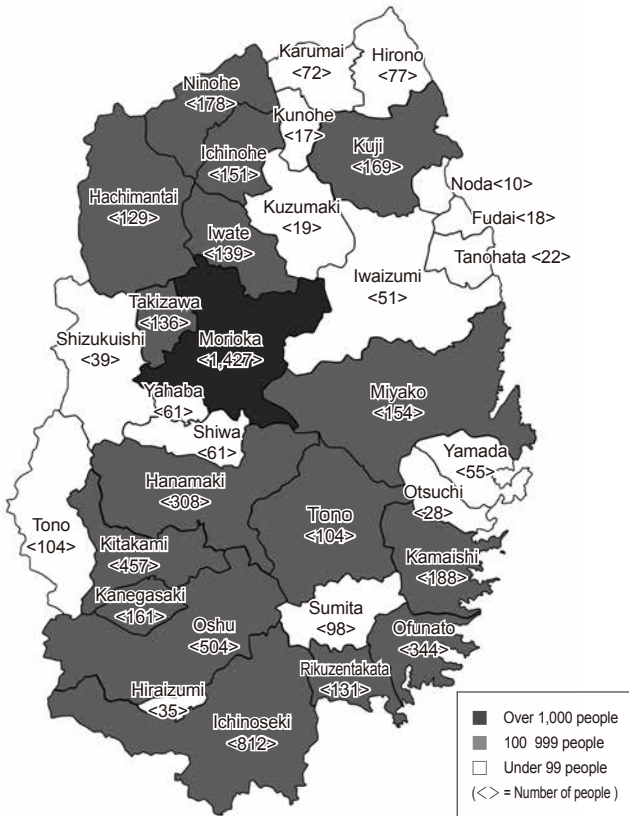
End of June, 2016 Ministry of Justice – Statistics on Foreigners Residing in Japan

Answer: It's believed that a high number of Iwate's foreign residents are living here short-term as technical interns, or are married to Japanese people.

The number of technical interns, who are employed in many industries such as seafood manufacturing, agricultural, and construction, have increased rapidly since the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami.

The status of residence for those who have married Japanese people is "Spouse or Child of Japanese National". There are also many people who have lived in Japan for many years, and hold "Permanent Residency" status.

Q3. What makes Iwate's foreign residence situation special?

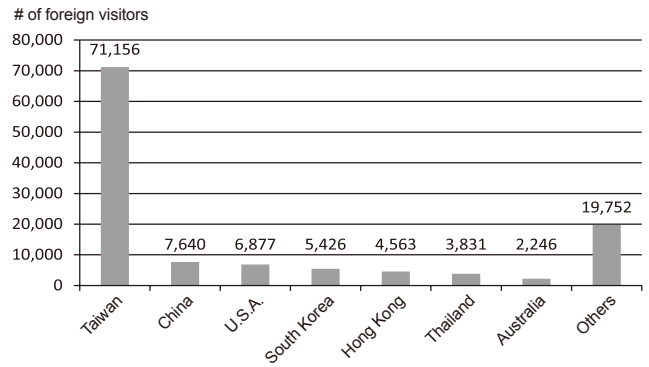


Iwate Foreign Nationality Resident Registration data (As of December 31, 2016).

Answer: There are foreigners residing in all of Iwate's municipalities.

The number of foreigners is low and they are spread out all across the regions, so it's very difficult to provide necessary support to everyone.

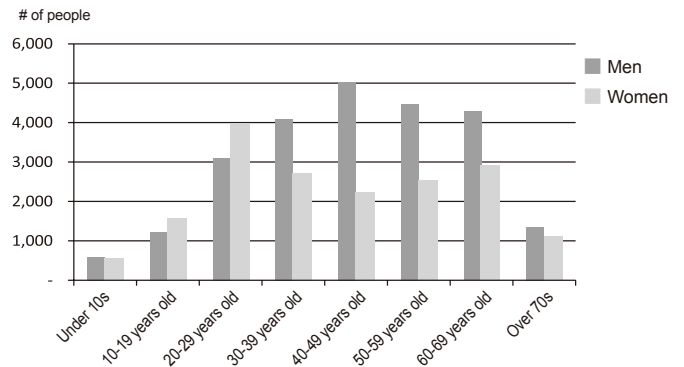
Q4. Where are the foreign tourists in Iwate coming from?



January-December 2015, Iwate Tourism Statistics – Foreign Tourists

Answer: In 2015, Iwate had 121,491 foreign visitors, with visitors from East Asia making up the majority. The number of visitors from Taiwan is particularly apparent.

Q5. In a year, how many people from Iwate go abroad?



Ministry of Justice – 2015 Annual Report Statistics on Emigration and Immigration Management – Number of foreign departures (Separated by prefecture/gender)

Answer: In 2015, approximately 3.3% of Iwate citizens (41,663 people) went abroad. For people 20 years of age and younger, there is a higher percentage of women, and for people over 30 years of age, there is a higher percentage of men.



What is a “Foreigner” ?

“Foreigner” means someone who doesn't have Japanese citizenship (Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, Article 2). If someone was originally a “foreigner” but is naturalized and holds Japanese citizenship, they are not considered “foreigners”.

For those who are currently residing in Japan, but are staying on a status of residence of less than 3 months, they are not subject to the basic resident register, so they are not included in the foreign resident statistics.

The image of “having roots in a foreign country”

Sometimes, a child with one or both parents from a foreign country is, regardless of nationality, described as a child “with roots in a foreign country.” Being Japanese does not necessarily mean that they can speak Japanese. They might have been raised in a very different situation – Perhaps they have lived abroad for an extended period of time and didn't grow up with a Japanese education, or one of their parents is originally from another country, so their everyday Japanese vocabulary is very limited.

According to Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry 2016 Fiscal Year Special Report on Demographic Statistics, 3.3% of married couples are international marriages. Children with foreign backgrounds are likely to increase more and more.

The Things We Saw and Felt with our Connections to the World

High school students who have strong connections with other countries since childhood, and were raised by a parent from a foreign country. A university student who became aware of the world after going on a trip abroad. What do each of these people's experiences and thoughts say about multicultural communities and Iwate's future?



Yukiya Sato

A university student from Tanohata who is enrolled in the faculty of education at Iwate University. He participates in a wide variety of activities, such as working with NPOs that support Filipino residents. Currently, he is interested in "Glocal"; he hopes to find a job where he can utilize the global perspective he has gained in the local community.

Naomi Nishiyama

A high school student in Ichinohe. In 2016, she participated in a joint program between Ichinohe and Karumai to bring students on a trip abroad to Portland, USA. She has also participated in the Bridge To the World(KAKEHASHI) Club and Ihatov English Camp. Her childhood dream will come true as she starts her new career as a police officer from spring.

Takamitsu Konno

A high school student in Ichinoseki. In 2016, he participated in a North America study trip managed by Iwate Prefecture, where he visited Canada (Toronto) and the east coast of the United States. He's also participated in Ihatov English Camp and the Iwate International Association's One World Festa. His dream is to become a pediatrician.

(As of February 2017)

◆ My connection with the world

Naomi: My mother is Vietnamese, and my father is half Japanese and half Chinese. I go to Vietnam, my mother's country, very often.

Takamitsu: I'm half Japanese. My mother is Filipino. I've visited the Philippines frequently since I was a child.

Yukiya: My parents are both Japanese. I entered university and went on my first trip abroad to the Philippines, marking the start of my connection with the world. I've fallen in love with the Philippines, and have gone there 3 times in 3 years. I've also gone backpacking in Thailand.

— Naomi and Takamitsu, you both said you go to your mother's home countries often. Do you feel any differences from Japan?

Naomi: The way they express affection in Vietnam is different! Whenever I go visit, my grandparents say, "You've come a long way," then hug and kiss me. My Japanese grandparents don't do that (haha).

Takamitsu: Filipino people are friendly and warm-hearted. The locals in my mother's hometown casually start conversations with me.

On the other hand, there's a severe reality... When we went to a big store, my mother told me that I can't speak Japanese here. I found out that it's because if they found out I'm Japanese, they'd attack me for money.



It was really shocking. In the urban areas, there are child beggars and a lot of homeless people. It's not really a difference from



Japan, but more like a shock where I felt the gaps between classes throughout the world. It's what made me want to help people suffering from poverty in the future.

— Did you feel anything different when you went abroad to North America?

Naomi: They were learning about the Pacific War when we sat in on their classes. After reading out these passages saying that Japan did bad things during the war, the teacher said to me, "You are my friend. This is a class, so don't take it personally." They didn't discriminate based on ethnicity, and I felt like it was truly the land of freedom.

Takamitsu: There were a lot of people speaking languages other than English on the streets, reminding me once again that it's a multiracial nation. We were also spoken to in Chinese a lot, with people saying "Ni hao" to us. For America, China has a more global presence than Japan, and I felt that it was because they used English as a communication tool to create their presence throughout the world.

— Yukiya, were you able to see something during your multiple visits to the Philippines and Thailand?

Yukiya: I'm of the impression that a system to support minorities hasn't been set up. For instance, there are blind people singing on the streets to get some extra change. The reality is that those kinds of people will be left behind with the economic development.

◆ A "Non-Japanese" living in Iwate

— Are there other half Japanese people like you in your vicinity?

Naomi: Ichinohe has taken in some trainees from Vietnam, and I think about 60% of the children in the district I live in are half Vietnamese. But when I was a child, I was the only one in the area. It wasn't to the extent that I was bullied, but I was teased for it.

Takamitsu: There's maybe 1 or 2 around my age. I was made fun of a lot as a kid for having a mother from foreign country, and I thought it was unfair, wondering why I was the only one like this.

— Have you ever thought that your mother was having difficulties living in the community?

Takamitsu: People in our area are all really warm-hearted. My mother is really cheerful and a social butterfly, so I think she's adapted very well. Recently she's started working as an interpreter, and I really respect her. If I was thrown into a foreign country, I definitely wouldn't be able to make a great life for myself like she has.

Naomi: My mom was the first generation of trainees. She came

to Ichinohe during a time when it was really rare to see any foreigners, so she was told by people around her that she can't work because she's a foreigner. I heard from her many times that she would make international calls to her parents crying over that. Now it seems that she's adopted a clear-cut attitude and working hard, deciding that she's no longer someone who can be discriminated against. I also had some negative experiences at school and in the community. For instance, my dream is to become a police officer, but people around me decided that it's impossible because I'm half. I was really sad, so I took it out on my mom, saying it was her fault. But then I thought, I'll show you guys. When I got accepted as a police officer, I was so happy.

Takamitsu: I don't think I've ever had a bad experience in the local community or at school. If anything, people were even kinder to me.

Naomi: I wish that was the norm.

◆ What's necessary for multicultural communities?

Takamitsu: I think it's important to educate people from infancy. It's fine if you take small steps towards it. As long as you're able to interact with foreigners from a young age, you'll understand how fun it is, and any negative feelings of oppositions towards foreigners or half Japanese people will disappear.

Yukiya: I'm specializing in elementary school English education at university right now, and I think teaching English from elementary school is very important, at least with the intention of familiarization. Within the teacher training curriculum, the only people who study cross-cultural understanding are English language teachers. But since there are half Japanese children and the children of foreigners in local schools, it makes sense for all teachers to learn about other cultures.

Naomi: I think it would be good if the number of half Japanese police officers, doctors, and nurses increased. Like in American schools, there are teachers from all sorts of backgrounds, like black, white, and Japanese-American. Even with just the presence of a half Japanese person working in the town hall, I think the foreigners living in the area would feel relieved.

— If you think about it like that, the significance of your roles is really big, isn't it?

Takamitsu: I really hated being half when I was younger, but if you get past that, it's absolutely an advantage, so I'm really glad that I'm half.

Naomi: Until just a little while ago, I also hated being called "half". Now, I want to carry it and use it as an advantage.

(Interview/Report
by Izumi Suzuki)



International Athletes Talk

About Internationalization And Promoting Sport In Iwate

Pro sports teams with their roots in Iwate play a role in the revitalization and internationalization of the region. They help bring about a multicultural society, through sport. We asked two players from pro teams to talk about the appeal of sport, and how it contributes to internationalization and local communities.

Iwate is like my home town, Portland. People who visit Iwate should spread the word!



Adam Drexler

Basketball player for the Iwate Big Bulls

Height: 196cm. Weight: 92kg. Originally from Portland, Oregon, USA. Studied at Houston University, Texas. Resident in Morioka since November 2016.

A fan of wanko soba.



◆ Why did you start playing basketball, and what's its appeal as a sport?

I've been playing since I could walk, practically. But I didn't think I might have a future in the sport until my second year of high school. The simple answer for why I like basketball is dunking! It's a sport where I can showcase my athleticism, and really use it to my advantage.

◆ Your father (Clyde Drexler) was a famous basketball player; what did you learn from him?

He would come home after the games, and I'd be bouncing a ball around the house. He told me, "Have fun! It's not about being Clyde Drexler, it's about being Adam Drexler. Be yourself."

◆ Why did you come to Iwate?

I had a few options in the States, but my mother encouraged me to get out there and experience the world. So I went through the offers, and decided on Japan, and Iwate.

◆ What's your impression of people in Iwate?



© IWATE BIGBULLS

Everyone has been very nice and very generous. Once, I left my cell phone in a taxi, and a passer-by on the street noticed me panicking. They didn't speak English, but I tried to explain. They actually helped call the taxi company for me, and we were able to find my cell phone.

◆ Do you have any advice for Iwate, as it tries to internationalize and promote itself across the world?

Whatever you're doing now, just keep doing it. Iwate's got beautiful sights, the mountains, and downtown scenery. It's pleasant, and clean. People who visit Iwate should spread the word and let everybody else know that this is a great place. I was born in Portland, and the city design's kind of similar. There's a river running through the city. The people have a kind of charm to them; it's nice. It's regarded as a hidden gem because it's so quiet and peaceful. I think Morioka has that hidden gem aspect about it too.

◆ Do you have any ideas for how Iwate can promote sport?

In Houston, at high school, throughout college and even at the professional level, players



promote the sport in their neighborhood. The professional team, the Rockets, are all over the city doing events. Everyone in the community has a role to play in promoting the game. When you show people your love for the game, maybe they'll fall in love with it too.

◆ **What's your ambition for the future?**

To be a better player, and a better person. To experience more, and learn more.

I like this easy-going town! I want to get into the national team and light up the World Cup.



Dallas Tatana

Rugby player for the Kamaishi Seawaves

Height: 186cm. Weight: 106kg. Originally from Christchurch, New Zealand. Graduated from Sapporo Yamanote High School and Tokai University. Resident in Kamaishi since April 2015. A fan of Morioka Reimen.



◆ **Why did you start playing rugby, and what's its appeal as a sport?**

I started playing when I was 13. My father is a rugby coach, and all my friends played. Training is tough, but it feels great to win a match. Whatever team you're in, you can make friends and have fun. I enjoy clashing with opponents and scoring tries.

◆ **Why did you come to Iwate?**

I've lived in Japan since high school. When I lived in New Zealand, my school played a match against Sapporo Yamanote High School, and their coach asked me if I'd consider coming to play in Japan. After graduating I went to Tokai University, where we played against the Kamaishi Seawaves, who then made me an offer. There were many other players from different countries, which means lots of variation. It seemed like a good environment to work and play rugby in, so I decided to come to Iwate.

◆ **What do you think of Iwate?**

Compared to Sapporo's cold or Tokyo's heat, it's just right. The people here are kind, with good manners. They enjoy rugby, and they always tell me to do my best, which I appreciate. I like rivers and the sea, and I often go fishing. Iwate is quiet, and comfortable. I can take it slow, which suits me. It feels very natural.

◆ **What do you think about internationalization in Iwate?**

I work at a hotel, speaking English with guests from overseas. We have lots of foreign visitors, including tourists and businesspeople. People



come to see the ruins of the blast furnace, the Dai-Kannon statue and the disaster area. We need English signs or pamphlets. It would also be good if restaurants had English or pictures in their menus.

◆ **New Zealand's rugby team is always ranked #1 in the world. How do they bring up their players?**

The government provides backup for rugby. Also, by playing rugby with children, players become a role model for them. The kids think that being a rugby player is cool. Saturdays are known as a day for rugby. Clubs and school teams all have matches. Lots of people volunteer to help, including my father, who volunteers as the team's coach.

◆ **What can you and the Seawaves do to contribute to rugby in Kamaishi, as it moves towards the World Cup in 2019?**

We visit schools, and teach the kids how to play rugby. When there's a match in Kamaishi, we do events beforehand. Another way we can contribute is by winning matches. If we do that, I think people will look forward to the World Cup more. I want to get into the national team and light up the tournament. I'm in Japan's Rugby Sevens team, but the next step is to play in the 15-man team. I hope I can represent Japan, and that many people in Iwate will come to the games and support me.

((Interview/Report

by Fujio Omori)



© 釜石シーウェイブス RFC

Oh My いわて

We talked to South Korean native Mrs. Yuika Shouji, who currently resides in Nishiwaga.

I've been living in Nishiwaga for 10 years now, ever since I got married. The most surprising thing about Nishiwaga to me is the snow. It hardly snows at all in my hometown (South Jeolla Province, South Korea), so I was really shocked at how much it snows here. But the scenery in spring after it all melts is absolutely the best. Of course we have cherry blossoms, but there are also mizubasho, zazenso, and katakuri flowers blooming all over the place. From late April to early May, there's a katakuri festival held at the handful of katakuri fields in town. When you look at the flowers, you feel like spring's come and you feel really happy.

Another great thing about spring in Nishiwaga is the wild edible plants that grow here! Nishi-warabi is especially famous. The warabi, or bracken, that you can find in Nishiwaga is called "nishi-warabi". It's thick and tough, and it tastes really good. They grow here and there along the roadsides. I go looking for them with a plastic bag in hand, and it fills up in no time. We eat warabi in South Korea, too, but I've never seen any as thick as nishi-warabi. In South Korea, it's very common to eat it by stir-frying it with pork, but in Nishiwaga, people eat it boiled and seasoned with dressing. The most important point for preparing warabi is to boil it to remove the bitter taste. There are a plethora of other plants as well, such as kogomi, bakke (fukinoto), and shidoke. I really like to deep-fry them into tempura. In South Korea, in addition to warabi, we also eat zenmai in bibimbap. Besides those two, I don't think I've eaten many of the other vegetables before. But for the residents of Nishiwaga, they've

Spring in Nishiwaga



Yasugasawa katakuri flower field
Katakuri flowers and beniyama cherry blossoms (Photo: Nishiwaga)

been eating edible wild plants since long ago.

Lastly, I'd like to talk about how you can enjoy spring in Nishiwaga. I recommend that you come visit just as the katakuri flowers are starting to bloom. You can watch the katakuri festival, take a dip in some hot springs, then do some extremely thrifty shopping at the famous Super Osen (There's a chain in Kitakami, but the main store is in Nishiwaga. A lot of people come all the way here to shop from Yokote City in Akita too!) Nishiwaga has a lot of hot springs, so you can go for a day trip, or even stay overnight. A lot of places have extremely reasonable prices for day trips. It's really great!

Please come to Nishiwaga to have fun this spring!!



Mrs. Yuika Shoji

From South Jeolla Province, South Korea
Resident of Nishiwaga
Korean Language Instructor at Morioka
Learn Hangul Club
Mother of 2 (6 and 4 y/o sons)
Likes Morioka Reimen

Iwate Quiz ?

We asked Yumie (USA) and Chin (China), Coordinators for International Relations in Iwate Prefecture, to set some quiz questions for us. Can you figure them out?

1. Which of the following temples has 500 Buddhist disciple statues?

- ① Tendaiji Temple (Ninohe)
- ② Daiji-ji Temple (Morioka)
- ③ Hoonji Temple (Morioka)
- ④ Chusonji Temple (Hiraizumi)

2. ___ senbei are one of Miyako's most popular souvenirs.

- ① Shrimp
- ② Squid
- ③ Crab
- ④ Sea urchin

