

A W A J I T O T H E W O R L D

# AW

Vol 1

Feb 2023



TRAVEL

EAT

DISCOVER

# CONTENTS



PASONA HEARTFUL



OMAMORI: EN MUSUBI

## GENERAL

- 04 WELCOME WORDS
- 05 MEET THE TEAM

## FEATURES & EVENTS: VALENTINE'S DAY

- 06 VALENTINE'S DAY CULTURE IN JAPAN
- 08 PASONA HEARTFUL
- 10 *OMAMORI: EN MUSUBI*

## TRAVEL

- 12 ROMANTIC BEACH SPOTS: SUNSET VIEWS FROM AWAJI

## ART AND CULTURE

- 14 NINGYO JORURI: AWAJI PUPPET THEATER
- 17 AWAJI WORLD BALLET
- 19 IZANAGI-JINGU SHRINE

## FOOD AND DRINK

- 22 HELLO KITTY SHOWBOX
- 26 OCEAN TERRACE

A W A J I T O T H E W O R L D



**Editor in Chief**

Magdaleena Kupila

**Layout and Design**

Felicia Jenifer, Magdaleena Kupila

**Logo Design**

Felicia Jenifer

**Writers**

Mabaleng Kgaphola, Magdaleena Kupila,  
Felicia Jenifer, Hansel Dwi Putra, Nikolas Stirling

**Concept and Idea**

Mabaleng Kgaphola

**Photography**

Steven Heil

**Special Thanks**

Anna Sranna, Dicle Bozdereli, Edward Hingert,  
Nikolas Stirling, Pablo Acero

**EDITORIAL OFFICES**

656-1531

Hyogo-ken

Awaji-shi

Ei 685

Manabi no Sato

This magazine is published by the Awaji Youth  
Federation, Pasona Group.



# WELCOME

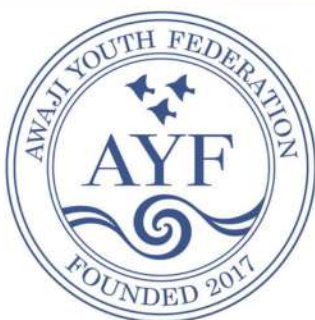
## ABOUT AWAJI TO THE WORLD

Awaji to the World is an outcome of the Awaji Youth Federation (AYF) Fellowship, implemented by Pasona Group on Awaji Island. Awaji Island is rich in culture & history and home to Japanese traditional puppet theaters, the best gourmets in Japan, and beautiful sunsets. Awaji to the World is a project that aims to spread the beauty of Awaji Island through magazine publications that are friendly to English speakers.

Awaji to the world wants to provide a platform to showcase Awaji-based businesses and activities such as the beaches and cycling activities, as well as showcasing Pasona-owned facilities as the magazine is an outcome of the AYF and Pasona group's Marketing Hub division.

The vision of the magazine is in alignment with Pasona Group Marketing strategy which is to attract upper-class foreigners who are willing and interested in unique and exclusive experiences to come to Awaji Island. However, many foreigners do not have enough information available in English which can entice and attract them to Awaji Island. The team aims to create articles and picture stories that are both personal and from a foreigner's voice and perspective. Hopefully, this will increase the awareness of Awaji Island and in the long term, bring more people to the island.

It took the team endless dedication, presentations, and negotiation to actually realize this platform. We are a team of four unique and talented individuals with diverse backgrounds united by our shared common interest to create and showcase some of the must-see hidden gems located on Awaji island.



AWAJI YOUTH FEDERATION



# MEET THE TEAM



**MAGDALEENA KUPILA**

I come from Finland with a background in geography and I find joy in writing. I wish to bring the amazing things and places in Awaji to The World's knowledge via our magazine.



**FELICIA JENIFER**

My background is business and marketing in Singapore and my role in this project includes content writing, marketing, and graphic design.



**HANSEL DWI PUTRA**

I am from Indonesia and my background is in international management with a focus on marketing. My role includes marketing activities and content writing.



**MABALENG KGAPHOLA**

I am a proudly South African PR professional with 7 years experience working as a PR/communications officer for government and telecommunications companies.

“

From all of us to all of you, we hope you enjoy this first issue of Awaji to the World, brought to you by the Magazine Team of Awaji Youth Federation.

”



Do you know that in Japan, women are the ones who are expected to plan the day and give chocolate to men? In response to this, men are encouraged on March 14th (known as White Day) to give chocolate in return to women.

# VALENTINE'S DAY IN JAPAN

HANSEL DWI PUTRA

**V**alentine's Day is one of the world's most popular holidays, being an occasion to celebrate with someone special in your life. Stores sell candy boxes and chocolates, restaurants design new menus, and shopping districts put up love-themed decorations. It is relatively common in Western culture for men to show affection for the women they love by sending gifts such as flowers, candy, or chocolate. However, the way Valentine's Day is celebrated in Japan is slightly different because the gender roles are switched.

The history of Valentine's Day in Japan goes back to the 1950s. At that time, confectioners saw an opportunity and started campaigns targeted at women who wanted to share their affection with their loved ones. This is the reason why chocolate is more popular in Japan for Valentine's Day in comparison to flowers.

In the modern era, Valentine's Day in Japan still centers around chocolate, and it has become a tradition for women to give chocolate to men.

Different chocolates mean different things depending on the relationship between the senders and receivers. Generally, the two types of chocolates for Valentine's Day in Japan are *honmei-choco* and *giri-choco*.

### *Honmei-choco* – 本命チョコ

Translating to “true feelings chocolate”, *honmei-choco* is chocolate given to someone the givers have romantic feelings for. This type of chocolate is carefully prepared by women and is usually handmade. People who cannot cook, or do not have time, instead purchase expensive chocolates to show their feelings and sincerity.

### *Giri-choco* – 義理チョコ

Known as “obligation chocolate”, it is given to colleagues, co-workers, or other people for whom the givers have no romantic feelings. Women send this type of chocolate due to social obligations or as a token of gratitude. *Giri-choco* is less expensive and fancy in comparison to *honmei-choco*.

In recent years, new types of chocolate have emerged due to cultural changes in society. Terms such as *tomo-choco* (友チョコ), *jibun-choco* (自分チョコ), *gyaku-choco* (逆チョコ), and even *homo-choco* (ホモチョコ) and *yuri-choco* (ユリチョコ) are becoming more popular.

*Tomo-choco* refers to chocolate given by women to friends, while *jibun-choco* is chocolate you buy and gift to yourself as a special treat. *Gyaku-choco* is similar to the Western style of Valentine's Day where men give gifts to women. *Homo-choco* and *yuri-choco* are chocolates given to and from people of the same gender. *Homo-choco* refers to chocolate given from men to men, while *yuri-choco* is given from women to women.

In the last few years, there has been more flexibility in Valentine's Day customs in Japan. *Giri-choco* is increasingly seen as a stressful practice in the working environment since people are required to spend a lot of money out of a sense of obligation to bosses and colleagues. This includes men as well, who are required to give chocolates in return on White Day.

While Valentine's Day is often a memorable day for women who have romantic feelings for someone, it can be a wonderful day for anyone. Everyone deserves love on Valentine's Day and that can be in the form of *tomo-choco*, or even *jibun-choco*. Whether you are someone in love, someone who wants to appreciate your colleagues and friends, or simply someone who loves chocolate, Valentine's Day is yours to spend in whatever way brings you joy.



# PASONA HEARTFUL

MABALENG KGAPHOLA



**P**asona Heartful is a valued department within Pasona Group; this unique subsidiary was established in 2005, and to date, it employs approximately 300 Japanese citizens with physical or mental disabilities. I personally found it quite refreshing how Pasona Group as a private company, acknowledges the need to engage and provide work for people with physical or mental disabilities in a meaningful and dynamic way. What's even more unique about Heartful is how employees are encouraged to experiment with their own ideas and skills while making an income and participating in society as workers. Heartful employees are involved in a range of activities such as agriculture, administration, pastry making, and arts and crafts. The organization currently has branches operating in Osaka, Tokyo, and Awaji island, with smaller outlets in Fukuoka and Sendai.

## Heartful employees are divided into 3 main groups.

The first group is people with physical disabilities who primarily engage in work that pertains to new business formulation. They are given the opportunity to ideate and implement viable business concepts.

The second group is mainly made up of employees who are on the spectrum. These are high functioning individuals who usually do administration or office work.

And the last group includes workers with more severe mental disabilities (but are talented in arts) and they mainly work in the arts and crafts section creating handmade items that are sold at various Pasona Group offices and Heartful Online Store. Some of them enjoy creating beautiful paintings. Many of their works are displayed in Pasona offices as well as made into cards, bags, and other merchandise.

## Heartful gifts from the Heart

As the season of love is fast approaching, the team at Heartful have prepared something special to help you celebrate the occasion with your loved ones. Heartful has selected a range of exclusive love-themed products which will only be available this February and March. Products include tasty treats such as heart-shaped cookies, decadent chocolate cakes, chocolate-covered almond nuts, and chocolate marshmallows.



## PASONA HEARTFUL PRODUCTS

For those with a less sweet tooth, Heartful has prepared scented candles and handmade soaps as perfect alternatives just for you. The Heartful online store is easy to use and customers can get their love-themed goodies delivered to their homes or offices. Make sure you support this beautiful initiative and spread love through Heartful.

# OMAMORI: EN MUSUBI

FELICIA JENIFER

Japanese temples and shrines are widely known among all travelers around the world, but I wouldn't be surprised if most people do not really know the details about *omamori* (お守り), often translated as lucky charm or amulet in English. It is believed that a deity will give power and strength inside the small pouch of the *omamori*.

When I first came to Japan for a leisure trip, I visited a famous shrine in Tokyo that sells *omamori* - my first thought was "I have seen this before in anime!", and that was the decision maker for me to purchase an *omamori*. People who are not familiar with anime may purchase *omamori* for various reasons; some purchase it because of the look or the meaning behind the *omamori*. But some people would also purchase it for the sake of a souvenir to bring home. The most common charms found at temples and shrines are for success/good luck, education, traffic safety, love, wealth, and protection from evil spirits.





The way *omamori* works is simple; you should keep your *omamori* in your bag, wallet, or pouch. For example, if it's an *omamori* for financial luck, you should keep it in your wallet or work bag.

One of the most popular *omamori* that people can get is relationship *omamori*, or what are often called *en musubi* (縁結び) – *en* means the bond or ties between two people, while *musubi* means knot. *En musubi* is not only popular for romantic relationships, but can also work for all sorts of connections, including friends, family, and even work. I personally have purchased a few *en musubi omamori* in some shrines all over Japan. I would like to recommend a couple of the *en musubi* types you can purchase when you visit any Japanese temples or shrines.

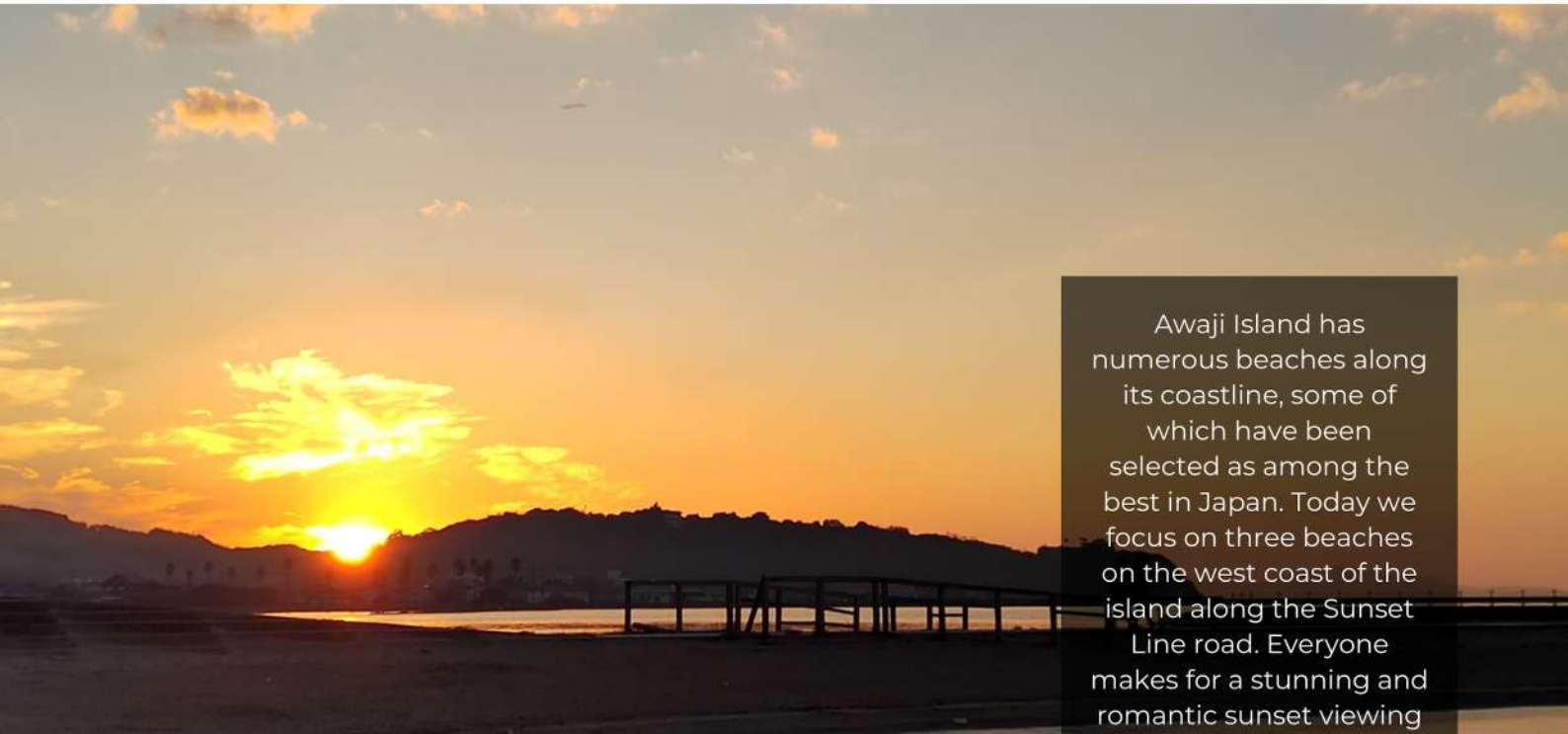
The first *en musubi omamori* that I would like to recommend is the good connection *omamori*. It is believed that the *omamori* will bring you together with someone. This could be meeting someone new or even developing a deep relationship with someone that you already know, romantically or platonically. I personally have purchased it and believe it or not, I met some amazing people when I least expected it, and I can proudly call them my friends for life.

The other *en musubi omamori* that I would like to recommend is the couple *omamori*. Normally coming in blue and pink colors, it is believed that this *omamori* will help you develop an even stronger and deeper relationship with your partner.

Although there are various types of *en musubi omamori*, like good marriage and safe birth, I personally haven't purchased them yet. Even if you are already married or in a long-term relationship, you can still purchase *en musubi omamori* to wish for future happiness and harmony with your beloved ones.

# ROMANTIC BEACH SPOTS: SUNSET VIEWS FROM AWAJI

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY MAGDALEENA KUPILA



Awaji Island has numerous beaches along its coastline, some of which have been selected as among the best in Japan. Today we focus on three beaches on the west coast of the island along the Sunset Line road. Everyone makes for a stunning and romantic sunset viewing spot!

## Keinomatsubara beach 慶野松原

**K**einomatsubara beach is located in Minamiawaji and marks the start of Awaji's Sunset Line road. It is the longest swimming beach on the island and has been selected as one of Japan's top 100 places to see the sunset. Definitely a place worth visiting!

The beach features a long pine forest area which one must walk through to get to the actual sandy beach for the sunset views, but we would argue that the numerous pine trees are also worth admiring.

Keinomatsubara has good parking areas, facilities and even a pontoon during the summer time. Since the beach is the longest on the island, it offers an excellent and clear view to the Seto Inland Sea, and you can enjoy the sunset's beautiful colors in all their glory.





## Ei Beach 江井海水浴場

Next to Taganohama lies a smaller beach at the village of Ei. It basically offers all the same views of the ocean and the sunset as Taganohama beach but is more private and romantic for those who seek a less crowded spot to enjoy the sun's last rays.

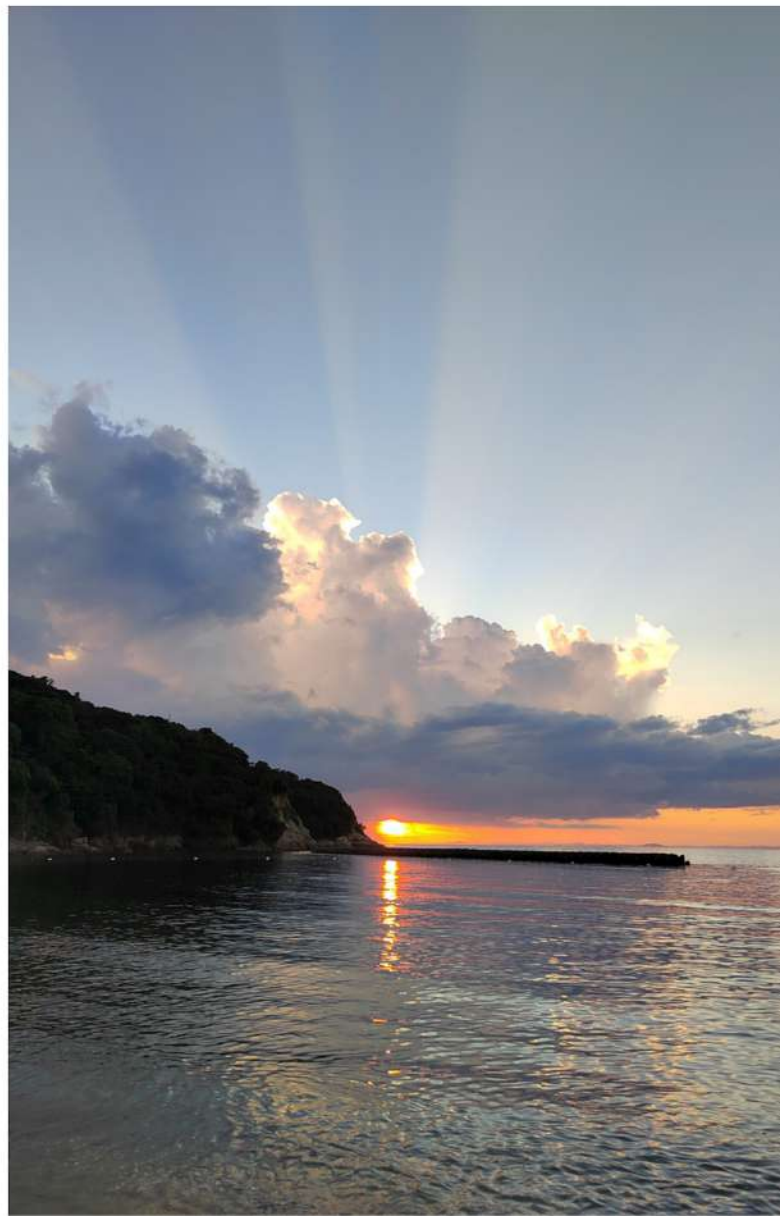
Ei beach's parking space is quite limited and accessed through a narrow street which would not fit bigger cars, so the beach is best reached by walking or biking. The shower and toilet facilities at Ei beach are good and one can also walk along the wave breaker to a small lighthouse.

## Taganohama beach 多賀の浜海水浴場

Taganohama beach is situated in the Awaji City area of the island and is a popular spot during the summer months. People come here for a day trip to the beach from the rest of Hyogo Prefecture and even Osaka. The car parking is free except for the summer holiday time in Japan - usually the month of July.

Taganohama has public toilets and outdoor showers, and a lush green grass field where people can play sports or enjoy picnics.

The beach is the perfect spot for sunset viewing. The most breathtaking sunsets can be seen in the summer months, when you can watch the sun sink into the ocean but even during winter times the sky is lit up in beautiful pastel colors for all to admire.



# NINGYO JŌRURI: AWAJI ISLAND'S PRECIOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE

NIKOLAS STIRLING

**O**ur team was lucky enough to experience one of Awaji Island's most precious cultural heritages—the Awaji Ningyo Jōruri puppet theatre.

While the current Awaji Puppet Theatre building was completed in 2012, this style of puppetry unique to Awaji Island in fact dates back to at least 1643. Once upon a time, there were around 40 troupes performing puppet theatre on Awaji, but as Japan modernised, the art form's popularity dwindled, and now the Awaji Puppet Theatre in Minamiawaji is the only theatre dedicated to its performance.





Her movements and gestures were so human, and when she looked at us, we really felt as though we were in the gaze of another living thing. Some might find the sensation unsettling, but we couldn't help but admire the skill of the puppeteers in creating such realism.

Before the play began, we were treated to a backstage tour. Members of the troupe explained and demonstrated all the inner workings of the stage. These included a carefully balanced system of ropes and weights to open and close painted screens that form backdrops.

During a play, three kinds of performers appear before the audience. They are the *tayū* (narrator), the *hiki* (shamisen player) and the *tsukai* (the puppeteers). The *tayū* narrates the story and voices the characters, the *hiki*'s playing builds atmosphere, and the *tsukai* operate the puppets.

The troupe has a wide repertoire of plays, entertaining audiences with new tales every month. Our visit included a backstage tour and a performance of the final act of Asagao Nikki or The Tale of Morning Glory. This is a sad story of separated lovers and a woman's desperate journey to reunite with the man she fell in love with.

It takes three skilled puppeteers working in perfect synchronicity to operate a single puppet. One controls the head and right arm, one controls the left arm, and a third controls the legs and feet. The way the puppeteers were able to make the wooden puppet come alive before our eyes was truly extraordinary.

The script the *tayū* reads from is written in a special style known as *jōruri moji*. This style of writing is unique to Awaji puppet theater and can only be read by its performers and some individuals well versed in calligraphy. It was abundantly clear how much the books containing the scripts are treasured by the performers. We were shown one that was over a century old and yet still in excellent condition, in spite of continuous use and Japan's humid climate that can easily cause books to mold. This is just one example of the reverence with which the performers regard the tools of their trade and the history of the theater.

At the end of the performance, we were invited to participate in the tradition of *ohineri*, in which the audience shows their appreciation by throwing a few coins wrapped in *washi* paper at the curtain as it closes over the stage.

Awaji Ningyo Jōruri has many fans and a loyal group of champions dedicated to its preservation, so we hope this unique and authentic art form will continue to entertain audiences for many years to come. At this time when many traditional arts and crafts are under threat in Japan, it was reassuring to see that this tradition is alive and well on the island of its birthplace.





Spreading the  
Beauty and Magic of  
Ballet to the World

# AWAJI WORLD BALLET

HANSEL DWI PUTRA

**B**allet is one of the most elegant forms of expressive art. It allows dancers to express their feelings in a very emotional way. While ballet is still a popular form of dance that has changed a lot over the years, its popularity has decreased in comparison to the 20th century. Therefore, it piqued my interest when I found out about Awaji World Ballet.

Awaji World Ballet is a project aimed to keep ballet alive by having ballet performances, workshops, and an academy on Awaji Island, Hyogo, Japan.

The project is also launched to provide support and a home to ballet dancers from Ukraine who could not perform due to Russia's invasion.

This is an outstanding idea. Earlier, I mentioned briefly that ballet is a very unique form of art that eases the conveying of expressions that are difficult to express through words alone. This is even more relevant nowadays to our modern fast-paced world full of conflicts and changes due to rapid technological development.

I had an incredible opportunity to watch one of the ballet performances, “Don Quixote”. It tells a story about a poor man who loved reading stories about chivalry and knights. Being too absorbed in reading the stories, soon he became unable to distinguish between reality and fiction. He then set off on a journey with a fat farmer Sancho Panza to meet Princess Dulcinea from the story.

As a person who has not spectated many ballets before, I was extremely impressed by the performance. The choice of music fits the theme and the progression of the story. The elegant dance accompanying quick changes in tempo perfectly depicts the mood of the scenes. The performance was so spectacular that it left me craving for more.

I was told that they hold performances almost every month and the upcoming performance in February is going to be in collaboration with the Awaji's Taiko Team “Kotan”. They are hoping to deliver energetic and powerful performances using Dance/*Mai* (舞) as the main concept. It is nothing short of impressive how they are able to deliver such a high level of performance using different themes and concepts every time.

Besides performances, Awaji World Ballet Project also offers ballet classes “Awaji World Ballet Academy” which aims to bring ballet closer to people by providing a wide range of lessons for both beginner and more experienced students. The lessons are taught by professional Ukrainian dancers and other world-class instructors.



Awaji World Ballet also holds a competition that allows participants to not only compete but also learn ballet. The three steps of the competition include learning about ballet from workshops, competition in the form of performances, and receiving advice from judges and announcements of the winners. This allows participants to improve their skills while participating in the competition.

While ballet is not as popular as it used to be due to the abundance in the availability of entertainment and the ease of their accessibility, it certainly remains a valuable form of art that possesses the potential to touch people’s hearts. It is very encouraging to see this outstanding initiative taking place on Awaji island.

# IZANAGI-JINGU SHRINE

MAGDALEENA KUPILA

## Origin of Awaji Island: the gods *Izanagi* and *Izanami*

According to Japanese ancient literature (the *Kojiki* 古事記 and *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀) the male and female deities, *Izanagi* and *Izanami*, who became husband and wife, gave birth to the islands of Japan. The first one they created was Awaji Island. On the island, there are many places related to the creation myth, but the most important one in my opinion is Izanagi-Jingu Shrine. It is said to be among the oldest Shinto shrines in Japan and the place where the god *Izanagi no Mikoto* spent the rest of his life after completing all his godly duties.





### The sacred tree (*shinboku* 神木)

One can also find an over 900-year-old sacred tree inside Izanagi-Jingu Shrine called *Meoto-ookusu* (夫婦大楠). It began life as two separate trees that eventually joined together as one. Walking around the two entwined trees makes one realize how small and trivial we as humans are. The tree has survived many centuries and will continue to grow even after we're gone. This kind of ideology makes one realize why nature is so respected in Shintoism.

*Meoto-ookusu* (夫婦大楠)'s literal meaning is "the husband-and-wife giant camphor tree". One of the fused trees is considered male and the other female, hence the husband-and-wife name. This tree that resembles two people embracing is popular among visitors who come to pray for a good marriage, good relationship, healthy pregnancy, and smooth childbirth. In my opinion, this would be a very romantic place to visit with your partner to pray for anything related to relationships and marriage.

### Receiving a Shinto blessing

It was cold and windy when we arrived at Izanagi-Jingu Shrine for the experience of receiving a traditional Shinto blessing. Our group was instructed to wash our hands in the *temizuya* (手水舎) purification fountain before stepping through the shrine's *tamagaki* (玉垣) sacred fence. The idea is to purify yourself and your soul before entering the sacred grounds. The priest welcomed us and guided us to the worship hall *haiden* (拝殿), which is a building with a roof but no real walls, so even "inside" feels like outside. By the time

we'd taken our shoes off, we were already shivering from the winter wind, but we were soon seated on warm electric blankets on top of the tatami in the *haiden*, which helped a lot.

After a few welcoming words, the ceremony began. Having the least Japanese knowledge in our group, I barely understood anything from the songs or sacred words, but still it was interesting to watch and enjoy. At one point, two shrine priestesses, *miko* (御子), performed a synchronized dance in front of us while one of the men played taiko drum and another a flute. The *miko* had *suzu* (鈴) bells with them which they chimed perfectly in time with the song and dancing. The whole thing was mesmerizing and beautiful.



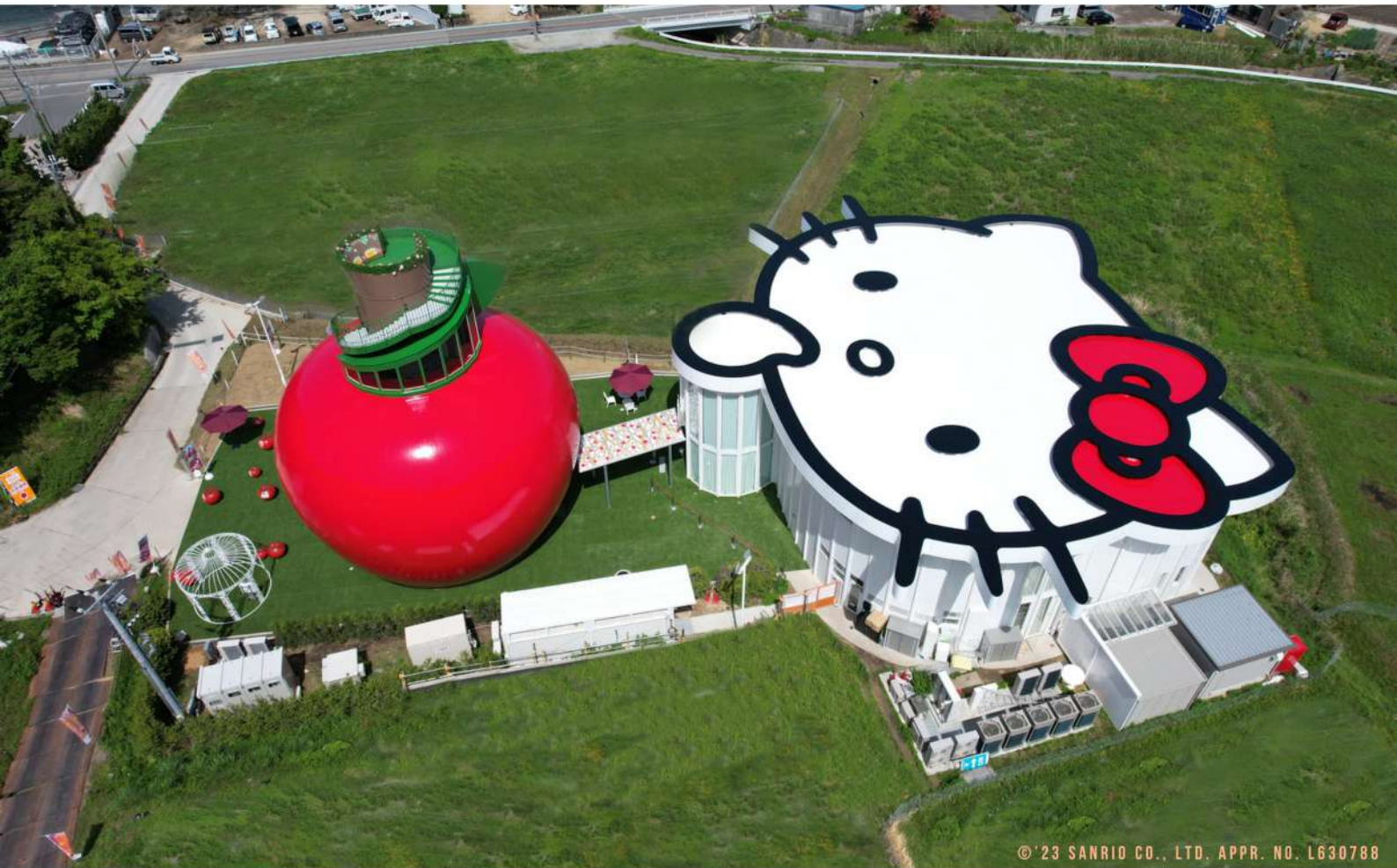
After the initial part came the actual blessing, where three of us were handed *tamagushi* (玉串), a branch of the *sakaki* tree wrapped with *shide* (紙垂), sacred white paper. Only the three of us with the *tamagushi* got to enter the most sacred part of the shrine, the *honden* (本殿), where the god is believed to be enshrined. There we offered the *sakaki* tree branches to the god with a bow and exited the sacred home of the god by once again bowing.

Even though some of the blessings and ritual parts were lost on me due to the language barrier, I very much enjoyed the experience. It was unique and magnificent, and I believe many who do not have much knowledge about Shintoism or Japanese language would enjoy it as well.

In my opinion, Izanagi-Jingu Shrine perfectly combines a culturally rich spiritual experience with a sense of rustic, cozy intimacy. Anyone can visit the shrine to learn more about Shintoism and Japanese spirituality.

# HELLO KITTY SHOWBOX

HANSEL DWI PUTRA



© '23 SANRIO CO., LTD. APPR. NO. L630788

**H**ello Kitty has become a global icon and is adored by children and adults throughout the world. The cute fictional cat was created in 1974 by Sanrio, a Japanese merchandising company that focuses on *kawaii* culture (cuteness). She wears a red bow on her head and is also known as “Kitty-chan”. Hello Kitty is designed with no mouth, meaning she can represent all kinds of emotions and desires, be it joy, happiness, or sadness, and she lets people share in those emotions along with her.

This design also means that Hello Kitty “speaks from the heart”.

My mother has been a huge fan of Hello Kitty since long ago and we have always collected various Hello Kitty-themed goods and accessories in our house. I am quite familiar with Hello Kitty myself, having visited a few Hello Kitty cafes and exhibitions in Indonesia and Japan. My love for Hello Kitty is due to the fact that it brings out the inner child in me.



Looking at the adorable characters reminds me of the happy and innocent childhood I had, and as an adult who deals with many hardships, the cute characters heal and warm my heart.

Awaji is famous for its rich culture and history, which is why I did not expect to discover a place on Awaji Island that offers a complete experience to enjoy Hello Kitty. It is incredible how Awaji brings people closer by offering a unique experience with the world's most famous fictional character in its theater restaurant at Hello Kitty Showbox. Hello Kitty Showbox is located on the northwest side of Awaji Island, in the farmlands of Ojimahirabayashi.

Upon entering the restaurant, I was met with the sight of a giant screen spanning around 6 meters wide and 15 meters tall. I was told that the establishment uses a theater restaurant concept where you can enjoy a delicious meal while watching a wonderful performance. I sat down at the table in front of the stage and waited patiently while enjoying the relaxing atmosphere and the high class yet charming decor. This venue is perfect for families, couples, and anyone who appreciates the adorableness of Hello Kitty.

The performance surpassed all my expectations. It started with a projection on the screen illustrating the story of Hello Kitty and her dream. This was very enjoyable, but the part that really blew me away was the actual performance which consists of a medley of songs, musical performances, and dances. I am not a music expert, but the cohesion between the background music and the instruments was perfect. The powerful dances fit the music as well and all of these combined to create a very cute but classy atmosphere.

The meal was also incredibly delicious. I was informed that all the ingredients come from local farms. The healthy and environmentally conscious menu was created by Hal Yamashita, an award-winning chef who has traveled the world and developed his own fusion style of cooking. He calls this *Shin-washoku* or "New Japanese Cuisine".



This style is all about using the finest ingredients and the passion handed down through generations while at the same time acknowledging that preparation and presentation methods have evolved dramatically in recent years.

As the food is Hello Kitty themed, not only does it taste great, it's also fun to look at. I was served a full-course lunch meal consisting of salad, Awaji onion consommé soup, cheese rice gratin, and homemade apple pie. The salad was very unique, made with smoked applewood, which matched surprisingly well with the dressing. The soup was light but intensely savory. I have eaten many vegetarian meals in my life and the rice gratin is up there with one of the best I have ever eaten. The dish provided a strong, robust flavor which I would not typically expect from vegetarian food. The apple pie was also the perfect dessert to close this unique course.

It was a great meal and you truly would not believe that it is made without any animal-based ingredients. For kids, they have a set menu that consists of curry, potato salad, corn soup, dessert, and juice.

After lunchtime, you can also buy items from their café menu which includes Hello Kitty-themed pancakes, sweets, and apple pie.

Don't forget to check the second floor after the performance, as this is your chance to purchase limited edition Hello Kitty goods. If you're a fan of Hello Kitty, I can guarantee that you'll be amazed by the items sold at the store.

The theater restaurant is exceptional, but there is still more to enjoy. Located in front of the restaurant is Awaji Apple House, a gigantic apple-shaped house where you can step into the world of Hello Kitty and get immersed through the magic of projection mapping.

Moreover, at the top of this cute-looking building is a 360° observation deck with superb views of the surrounding scenery. You can even see a cute Hello Kitty face on the rooftop of the theater restaurant from the Hello Kitty Apple House.

*Kawaii* is more than a word in Japanese culture. Living in a world where stress is unavoidable, it is also a symbol of positivity. Sometimes, it's important to take a step back, relax, and treat yourself to a day of being surrounded by *kawaii* things. Why not visit Hello Kitty Showbox? It doesn't matter whether you go as a family, a couple, or simply as a fan of all things *kawaii*, Hello Kitty Showbox has something for everyone. It might just become one of your favorite destinations in Japan.



# OCEAN TERRACE

FELICIA JENIFER



**A**waji Island, located in Japan's Seto Inland, is known for its Awaji Beef, a type of beef that melts at a low temperature; its texture is smooth and brings out the sweetness of the meat. Awaji Beef is a gem of a mixture of red meat with a solid flavor and high-quality marbling. High-quality marbling on meat indicates the tenderness of a meat, and the marbling adds flavor and deliciousness as the fat softens into the steak.

Ocean Terrace is one of the restaurants located on Awaji Island that owns Awaji Beef Certification. True to its name, "Ocean Terrace" offers terrace seats with a great sea-view, where you can gaze

upon the clear blue sky and the glittering Seto Inland Sea. At dusk, you can enjoy the beautiful sunset view accompanying by the comfortable sea breeze regardless of seasons.

Featuring an extensive Awaji beef menu, the place offers a memorable dining experience. One of the highlights of Ocean Terrace is the special menu in all seasons and occasions such as Anniversary, Christmas, Valentine's Day and many others.

I had always been interested to visit Ocean Terrace, and finally on a sunny Saturday I decided to visit the restaurant for the first time. Walking up the Ocean Terrace's stairs, I was welcomed by the polite staff and was

guided to sit on a table that had the ocean view.

It took me a while to choose from the variety of available options on the menu. Some customers were grilling the Awaji beef on their own while the other customers had their meat grilled by the chef in *teppanyaki* style. At first, I was hesitant to choose - but in the end, I settled for a *saikoro* steak. After about 15 minutes or so, I could tell that the food was ready because of the approaching mouth-watering aroma from afar.

Although I couldn't wait to taste the *saikoro* steak, I snapped a couple of pictures of the steak using the ocean view as the background before digging in. Then, I took my first bite of the *saikoro* steak. The taste and aroma of the Awaji beef spread and melted all over my mouth. The beef has a unique texture; it melted like butter and the meat is tender. I loved the mix of the creaminess texture. No doubt, this is the best steak I have ever tasted in my whole life.

The whole experience was amazing and romantic. With the beautiful view of the ocean and delicious menu, it is indeed one of the best places to spend together with your loved ones. Furthermore, every Saturday, Ocean Terrace provides their customers with their Jazz Night Special Menu that includes appetizers, a main dish, a drink, and a dessert. As the name stated, the customers can also enjoy their dinner with a surprise special Jazz performance and a cake plate for those who celebrate their anniversaries (such as birthdays, couple's anniversary, etc.) at the restaurant that will deliver you an even more romantic experience with your loved ones.

I recommend and encourage everyone of you to visit this restaurant to taste the deliciousness of Awaji Beef and celebrate your special occasion with the romantic view of the ocean and beautiful sunset.



AWAJI TO THE WORLD



## ESSENTIAL WEBSITES



Pasona Heartful



Awaji Puppet Theater



Awaji World Ballet



Izanagi-Jingu Shrine



Hello Kitty Showbox



Ocean Terrace



Keino Matsubara  
Beach



Ei Beach



Taganohama  
Beach



Awaji Youth Federation

