



[The Nippon Foundation News] Summer Festivals

Greetings from The Nippon Foundation. With the easing of coronavirus-prevention measures in May, many local summer festivals across Japan have been held for the first time in four years this year. *Tanabata*, the star festival, is based on a Chinese legend in which the female deity Orihime (represented by the star Vega) and the male deity Hikoboshi (Altair) fall in love, but are separated by the Milky Way and are only allowed to meet once a year, on the seventh day of the seventh month. The most famous Tanabata festival is held in Sendai in northeastern Japan, but the Asagaya neighborhood in Tokyo's western suburbs has been holding its own Tanabata festival for more than 60 years. The shopping arcade next to the train station is decorated with large streamers and papier-mâché figures from popular culture that are hung from the arcade's roof, and merchants sell food, drinks, and toys in front of their shops.

One station east of Asagaya, the Koenji neighborhood has been holding an Awa Odori ("Fool's Dance," a reference to the lyrics of the associated song) festival since 1957. Awa Odori is a dance that originated in Tokushima, on the southern island of Shikoku, in the 16th century as part of the *Obon* holiday tradition, when one's ancestors are said to return to visit their relatives on earth. Today the Koenji Awa Odori festival is Japan's second largest Awa Odori, after Tokushima's, with more than 10,000 dancers and 1 million spectators converging on Koenji over two days in late August.



The Asagaya Tanabata (left) and Koenji Awa Odori (right) festivals were both held for the first time in four years this year

The Nippon Foundation will be holding a symposium on support for evacuees from Ukraine on Tuesday, September 19, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. The symposium will analyze data collected from roughly 2,000 Ukrainian evacuees in Japan and look at the issues they face and what frameworks for support are needed going forward. The event will be held both in-person (by invitation only) and online (for NGOs, schools and other organizations, and individuals, with a limit of 600 participants). For more information, please visit:

[The Nippon Foundation Symposium on Support for Evacuees from Ukraine \(in Japanese only\)](#)

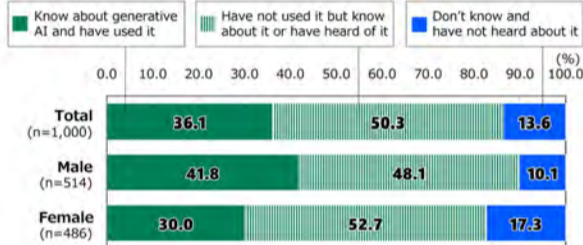
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Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds - Generative AI

Roughly 40% of young people 'have used' generative AI, and 10% used for summer homework



The 57th installment of the Awareness Survey of 18-Year-Olds was carried out from August 19 to 20 on the subject of "Generative AI." The survey found that close to 90% of respondents "Knew of" generative artificial intelligence and close to 40% had used it, primarily to create text, while roughly 60% of those who had not used it "Would like to try" using generative AI. In addition, close to 20% of those who knew about generative AI replied that "The emergence of generative AI has affected or changed their dreams for the future, the type of job they want to pursue, or the subjects they want to study."

[Full Article](#)

Skipping Rope in a Wheelchair?

Thinking in terms of 'How can I do it?' expands possibilities regardless of disability



D-SHIPS32 is an NGO working to create new frameworks to promote a donation culture in Japan. The group is using the proceeds from the sale of non-fungible tokens (NFTs) to create an interactive metaverse for children with disabilities. Using the metaverse, children with disabilities can have various experiences or travel to different places, and this is intended to give them motivation in their daily lives in the physical world. D-SHIPS32's Daisuke Uehara says that instead of focusing on what a person cannot do, the question should be "How can I do it?".

[Full Article](#)

Fishermen and Students Taking on the Challenge of Ocean Acidification

Elementary, junior high, and senior high school students joining effort



To combat acidification that could affect the area's oysters, the town of Hinase has been working to restore seaweed beds for the past 35 years. Since 2013, local elementary, junior high, and senior high school students, as well as students from other areas visiting on excursions, have been participating in this activity. In another project, an elementary school student from Tokyo won the Grand Prize at the 2nd Ocean Infographic Contest for a research report on blue carbon that was made into an infographic poster.

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Yohei Sasakawa Blog

Chairman of The Nippon Foundation



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