

Comments on the 2022 Composition Contest

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In 2022, Tokushima held the annual composition contest for high school students on October 2nd. This event, which is held in tandem with the speech contest, is unique to Tokushima Prefecture. For the past several years, I have had the pleasure of judging the writing submissions, and I have always enjoyed reading students' ideas on a broad range of societal issues. This year the topic was "How can we revitalize Tokushima Prefecture?" One thing that I have in common with the high-school contestants is that most of us have lived in Tokushima for roughly seventeen years. The topic is close to my heart, and it was clear from the enthusiastic compositions, that we all feel the same. There is much love for Tokushima Prefecture!

Suggestions focussed around two broad themes: developing and enhancing local attractions to encourage commerce and tourism, and secondly, systematically encouraging people to move to Tokushima to increase the population base. One common idea for increasing tourism and commerce is to use SNS and the internet to promote local businesses and events more effectively. Surely high school students have unique insight into this area. Events like "Tokushima Marché" are fun and unique, but attracting people is always a challenge. Technology can be used to promote such events, as well as local shops. Another idea to encourage tourism and give people a positive image of Tokushima was to have Tokushima-themed food fairs at Vortis soccer games. Sporting events like these already attract people from around Japan. This provides an opportunity to project a positive image of the prefecture to visitors, in hopes that they will come back next time to explore the area further. To combat population decline, participants proposed ways to attract industry to the prefecture so that there are more jobs for young people. The acceleration of online and distance work also makes it easier to live away from the larger cities, and Tokushima's relaxed, suburban lifestyle is appealing to many people.

Finally, it is important to stress that all ideas are valuable. Winning a contest like this is not as important as contributing to the community. I hope that all of you continue to exercise your voice in the future and I sincerely appreciate your efforts and ideas. And to all of those who are looking for ways to revitalize Tokushima, get to know the young people around you. They are the future, and they have many great ideas!