

## Seasonal words for September

*Nagatsuki* is another name for the ninth month in Japan. This is explained as having come from *Yonagatsuki*, meaning that it is a month in which the nights become longer with each passing day. When we enter the ninth month, we still experience some lingering summer heat, but this diminishes when we pass the middle of the month. So, have you ever heard the expression “*aki no yonaga*” (“long fall nights”)? In summer, the days are long and the nights are short, and so the majority of our activities are performed during the day. In fall, though, because the nights get steadily longer, the number of people who make effective use of this increased time at night to get things done increases.

A lot of people probably feel inclined to read a book or something on these long fall nights, and this brings up quite an interesting subject. Apparently, if you are going to read a book for study, it is recommended that the temperature of your room should be a bit low, at about 18°C. The ideal is what is called “*zukan sokunetsu*” (“cool head, warm feet”), where the temperature near your head is about 15°C and that near your feet about 20°C.

By contrast, if you are going to read for enjoyment, apparently a higher temperature of 20 to 25°C is best. You can't concentrate as well, but it makes you feel relaxed.

## ことばの歳時記

さいじき  
がつ きご  
～9月の季語～

9月の異名は「長月（ながつき）」といいます。日毎に夜が長くなる「夜長月（よながつき）」から来たという説があります。9月に入ってしばらくは残暑が続きますが、中旬を過ぎたころから、暑さも和らぎます。

さてみなさんは「秋の夜長」という言葉を聞いたことはありますか？ 夏は昼が長く夜が短いため、日中の活動量は多くなりますが、秋になると段々と夜が長くなるため、その分長い夜を有効に活用して過ごす人が増えます。

秋の夜長に「本でも読んでみようかなあ」という気分になる人も多いかと思いますが、そこでちょっとおもしろいお話を紹介します。勉強のための本を読むなら、部屋の温度は少し低めの18°Cがお勧めだそうです。それも、頭のあたりは15°C、足のあたりは20°Cぐらいで、よく言われる「頭寒足熱（ずかんそくねつ）」の形が理想的です。

逆に、趣味の本を楽しむなら、20°Cから25°Cと高めがいいそうです。集中力は下がりますが、それだけくつろいだ気分になれるからです。