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The Candle Night Newsletter #34
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Candle Night Committee

The next solstice is approaching. It is the shortest day in the northern hemisphere, and the longest day in the southern hemisphere. What's your plan for the day?

Candle Night Website for English readers has been remodeled.

Visit us and check the new contents!

<http://www.candle-night.org/en/>

We started Twitter!

http://twitter.com/candlenight_en

Let's Tweet with "candle night" or the hashtag #candlenight.

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Candle-Night/109894223133?ref=mf>

flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/candlenight/>

Myspace: http://www.myspace.com/candle_night

Topics

*Feeling comfortable and part of Nature

--Walking in the dark by Jun Nakano

*Report on "Candle Holders" Meeting

Feeling comfortable and part of Nature

--Walking in the dark by Jun Nakano

Jun Nakano has been enjoying walking in the dark for 15 years, sometimes with family and friends and sometimes alone. He has walked around Tokyo and more than 1,000 other places all over Japan. He walked through both towns and forests. Nakano told us about his experiences in the darkness: "I feel part of Nature in the utter darkness. It's surprisingly easy. It's scary--I feel swallowed by the darkness and melted into the surroundings. It's also comfortable, however, being part of the darkness. I have published many books on how attractive walking in the dark is. Sometimes I guide walking tours in the dark.

"It was 15 years ago in my 30's when I started being attracted by the darkness. I liked mountain hikes and I would enjoy them often. One day my wife and I went hiking and we missed the last train by mistake. While patiently waiting for the first train at Takao Station at around midnight, I came up with an idea of climbing nearby Kusato Mountain. The utter darkness was really scary but it was very new to me. While walking, the day was gradually breaking. It was as if the scenery in a black-and-white film suddenly changed into a color film. It was like a bright red flower appeared. I was overwhelmed and couldn't find words to describe it. I have never forgotten the sensation. I started walking in the dark to enjoy the complete darkness. Not many mountain hikers start to enjoy the night-walk. They just do it to wait for daybreak.

"I find something new whenever I tour a town, a mountain or a beach. In the summer of 2009, I walked through a forest in Hachijojima Island for three nights. I was extremely impressed. In the forest of "lighting mushroom", I found small fungi among fallen leaves on the ground. They were about to shine--but yet in the middle of "light" and "dark"--they showed a mysterious and illusionary world of subtleness. It was only a one-hour flight from Tokyo, but the island had an incomparable world of beauty in the darkness because there were no lights from town.

"Nowadays, most cities in Japan are lit up with numerous electric lights at night. I think towns in Tokyo are too bright. People's experiences in the dreadful darkness of air-raided shelters during World War II have influenced their thinking. Their strong will of "Future should be bright" has sustained economic high growth after the war, but it became excessive. So, I don't want to say "More darkness" to the generations who experienced the past war. However, Tokyo should use fewer lights in the future."

Nakano's book, "Walking at Night in Tokyo" (in Japanese) introduces night sceneries as well as his viewpoints. He says postscript in the book, "Night changes not only the scenery but also us. If you experience the darkness, you will start to see things more intensely. Our senses will sharpen in the darkness--we can experience more things with our five senses that might be easily overlooked in the daylight.

About 1,000 people so far have joined Nakano's night walking tour, with more expected to join in the years to come.

(Taeko Ohno)

Report on "Candle Holders" Meeting

"Candle Holders" are corporate supporters of Candle Night. We got together on October 7 for a "Candle-Holder Meeting." We exchanged ideas and information regarding the December Candle Night campaign. People from 10 companies attended, despite the fact that it was the night before a Typhoon was expected to hit Tokyo.

Kazuyoshi Fujita, one of the key promoters of Candle Night, made opening remarks.

Shin-ichi Tsuji, another key promoter, talked about his enthusiasm of having Candle Night in winter--especially during the Christmas season. His declaration of "Winter Solstice Supremacy" added excitement to the meeting. .

The second session, organized by Junko Edahiro, another key promoter, was held in World Cafe style as usual. She presented two questions: How and why is Candle Night important to Japan, the world and the Earth? What can we do to spread Candle Night to the public?

For the first question, each group presented these key ideas:

- *Good opportunity to tell someone you love them, which can be difficult in ordinary settings.
- *1000 people's 1000 steps instead of one's 1000 steps.
- *A good tool to communicate with families.
- *Seeing something invisible by turning out the lights.
- *Good opportunity for Asia to take a leading role in the environmental front.

*Getting a bird's eye view of the globe from space.

For the second question, the following ideas were presented:

*Collaborating with celebrities and popular spots, such as Tokyo Disneyland.

*Having a marathon race at night with candles.

*Having Candle Night opening ceremonies at professional soccer games.

*Having Candle Night as part of environmental education for children.

*Having events with customers of the corporate supporters.

*Having a contest using web tools such as YouTube to share the Candle Night moment with people around the world.

All participants enjoyed the discussion, and many wanted more time to talk about Candle Night.

(Akiko Kawagoe)

The next solstice will be on December 22, 2009.

Why don't you enjoy Candle Night with us?

Just turn off your lights and light a candle, you will be connected to us.

And please tell us the story about your Candle Night.

<http://www.candle-night.org/en/>

Editor's Note:

In late October, when the autumn leaves were beautiful in the mountains, I went to grasslands that remain in Gunma Prefecture to harvest thatch grass. In the past, thatch grass was used for roofs. The grassland was open to everyone in the town who wanted the grass. However, few people need the grass anymore and many grasslands have been transformed into forests. Harvesting thatch grass in Gunma Prefecture is part of an effort to preserve and restore the grassland. The adults enjoyed being surrounded by the tall grass, just like the children. It was a fun autumn day activity.
(Y.K.)

We also invite your local stories, festivals and events related to candles and fires. Please send emails to: eninfo@candle-night.org

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We welcome your comments. Please send them to: eninfo@candle-night.org

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