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The Candle Night Newsletter #35  
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Candle Night Committee

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Candle Night tries to promote not only "slow time," but also "slow" and warm relationships among people while they enjoy the candlelight. In this issue of the Candle Night Newsletter, we will share some of the stories related to candle fire.

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Topics

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- \*Ice Candles Shedding the Lights on Snowy Towns
- \*Atomic Bomb Fires are Still Burning Silently--Candle Night 1 Pi:ce

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Ice Candles Shedding the Lights on Snowy Towns

Ice candle festivals are held across snowy regions in Japan, such as Hokkaido and Nagano Prefecture, where the temperatures dip to their lowest in January and February. The areas endure severe cold and are covered with heavy snow from November until around March.

Ice candle holders are made of ice. Beautiful flickering candlelight through the ice holder lights up the snow-covered towns. To make the holder, first fill a bucket with water and leave it outside overnight to freeze, remove the ice from the bucket when the edges are frozen and drain the remaining water.

In this issue of the Candle Night Newsletter, we would like to share a story about a Naraijuku Ice Candle Festival in the Kiso area, which extends from Nagano to Gifu Prefectures.

In the Edo Period (1603-1868) in Japan, the five famous post roads known as Go-Kaido were built. They started at the Nihonbashi Bridge in Edo (present Tokyo), and connected to other areas. Nakasendo, one of the five roads, was completed in 1694. Sixty-nine post stations were placed along the road from Nihonbashi to Otsujuku (Otsu station, present Otsu City in Shiga Prefecture). The stations from Niekawajuku (present Shiojiri City in Nagano Prefecture) to Magomejuku (present Nakatsukawa City in Gifu Prefecture) are known as 11 stations of the Kisoji, an old trade route in the Kiso Valley. The area is located in the mountainous area with a variety of landscapes.

An ice candle event called "Kisoji Hyosetsu Himatsuri 2010 (Light-Up Festival in Snow and Ice)" was held from January 29 to February 13, 2010 in the area which still has the air of old post stations.

[http://www.kisoji.com/kisoji/event/event\\_detail/2009hyosetsu/2010hyosetsu.html](http://www.kisoji.com/kisoji/event/event_detail/2009hyosetsu/2010hyosetsu.html)

Fifteen places including eleven at Kisoji post stations, three at the foot of Mount Kiso-Ontake and one at Kiso-Hirasawa held a series of ice candle events.

The Naraijuku Ice Candle Festival held its 12th event on February 3, 2010, and is the oldest ice candle festival in Kisoji.

[http://www.kisoji.com/kisoji/event/event\\_detail/2010hyosetsu/index10\\_07.html](http://www.kisoji.com/kisoji/event/event_detail/2010hyosetsu/index10_07.html)

Naraijuku Station (present Shiojiri City in Nagano Prefecture) is halfway through the Nakasendo, located at the highest altitude out of the 11 stations. The Torii pass, known as one of the hardest mountain passes for travelers, lies just beyond this station. It used to be the busiest station in Kisoji where many travelers came and went during the Edo Period. The old town scenery is still treasured and the houses show flavors of the old-time station, extending for about one kilometer along the Naraigawa River.

To prepare for the event, residents of the town spent almost a week making ice candle holders. On the day of the ice candle festival, about 3,000 ice candles were placed along the street. Many tourists enjoyed walking through the town in the gentle candlelight, as if they were experiencing the Edo Period.

Kunimoto Wada of the Shiojiri City Tourist Association said, "We had a bean-throwing event (a traditional seasonal event to turn evil away by throwing beans) on the same

day since it was the Setsubun (the traditional end of winter), but we enjoyed our town scenery the most after the festival. House lights were turned off, so it was dark except for the candlelight. It took a while for the ice holders to melt, but we enjoyed watching them melt little by little, changing shape. "

The ice candle festival has become one of the most popular sights at the historic post stations.

(Taeko Ohno)

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Atomic Bomb Fires are Still Burning Silently--Candle Night 1 Pi:ce  
--a story related to candles and fire.

On August 6, 1945, the nuclear bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, killing more than 120,000 people. The fires of the bomb still burn in the Peace Tower in Hoshino Village in Fukuoka Prefecture. A Candle Night event called "Candle Night 1 Pi:ce" is spreading silently across Japan.

Since winter 2007, Candle Night 1 Pi:ce has been gaining people's attention. In summer 2009, 51 such events were held in Japan. Takehiko Yoshizawa, representative of the executive committee of the event, told us what motivated them to initiate the activity.

"In the winter of 2007, I heard that the fires of the atomic bomb are still burning at Hoshino Village. That's when I knew I wanted to plan a Candle Night event. I thought using the fire of the atomic bomb would put more meaning to the event, so out of curiosity, I started using the fire for our event.

--"What were the reactions among the people?"

"In 2007, I went to Hoshino Village with three of my friends where we took fires from the Peace Tower. Each of us brought a fire to a different city--Osaka, Kyoto and Kobe, where we were going to hold the events. It took a week to carry the fires to the event sites. As a coordinator, I spent all day beside the fires. They seemed to tell us a lot with their warmth, beauty and flames--the victims' senses of terror, sadness and even the

indignity of lives. At the events, we passed the fires to the participants, explaining where the fires came from, and how we felt while carrying them. Every participant handled the fire carefully, gazing at the flames. They seemed to be thinking a lot while gazing at the burning fires.

"One thing I noticed at the last Candle Night event was that not many people knew about the existence of the 'peace fire.' Even people from Hiroshima, Nagasaki where the atomic bombs were dropped, and Fukuoka where the fire still burns, didn't know.

"So I was determined to tell the story about the fire and I started to call for others across Japan to join the event.

--What do you have in your mind for the next event in summer 2010?

"We would like to hold an event outside Japan. There may be some hurdles to overcome, such as transportation of the fires, procedures and costs. There are also difference in the backgrounds, like history, culture and language. We want to find partners in other countries who would like to overcome those hurdles with us. I do believe even one person can change the future and make a miracle happen in our country and throughout the world."

--"What are your plans for future "Candle Night 1 Pi:ce?"

"I hope the fires keep burning not only silently at Hoshino Village but also around the world. We need a system to make that happen. When the Candle Night events are over, the fires should be put out, according to the ordinance of the village. I hope many local governments, schools and temples in different locations talk about having the fires. I wish there could be such a place to light the fire in each country. Our role is to give people a chance to realize the idea."

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Candle Night 1 Pi:ce tries to tell a lot through their Candle Night events. Please contact [info@1pi-ce.jp](mailto:info@1pi-ce.jp) if you find it interesting. We look forward to seeing to what extent the fire will reach in 2010.

(Yuko Kishikami)

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Editor's Note:

Many people in the world try to retrieve the sense of connectedness with people and nature. If you find such ideas and movements around you, please tell us. (Y.K)

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

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