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The Candle Night Newsletter--#22
March 31, 2008, Copyright (c) 2008
Candle Night Committee

Candle Night Summer Solstice 2008 is going to be extended. How about observing Candle Night with us?

Topics

- *Candle Night Summer Solstice 2008
- *Brief Report of Candle Night Winter Solstice 2007
- *Candles for Tying the Knot--Candle Stories

Candle Night Summer Solstice 2008

This year's Candle Night is scheduled to last for a longer period than usual. It will continue from June 21 (Sat), the day of the summer solstice, to July 7 (Mon). By doing this, we are hoping to deliver many people's hopes and messages to the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit to be held from July 7 to 9.

Brief Report of Candle Night Winter Solstice 2007

In the winter of 2007, 465 events were registered on our website, including the ones held in China, Slovenia, and the U.S. In addition, many events were held in Hong Kong. In Slovenia, an evening walking tour to Pericnik Falls took place as part of the Candle Night event.

Candle Night is open to anyone, as it accepts diverse principles and values. To join, you do not have to attend a special event - you can observe Candle Night anywhere, at a restaurant or at home with your family and friends. Enjoy your own Candle Night on the summer solstice 2008!

You can see the event locations for the Candle Night Winter Solstice 2007 at "Event Map" on our website; <http://event.candle-night.org/>

Candles for Tying the Knot--Candle Stories

Candles for Tying the Knot - "San-Ja Mairi (Visits to Three Temples)"
Hida City, Gifu Prefecture

Hida City in Gifu Prefecture is surrounded by the 3000-meter-high Kita Alps and the beautiful Hida mountains. On January 15th, the eve of the memorial of Shinran, a Japanese Buddhist saint, people traditionally pay holy visits to three temples (san-ja in Japanese): Enko-ji Temple, Shinshu-ji Temple and Honko-ji Temple.

This day was also thought to provide a chance for young people to find a potential partner. Young ladies who worked at a silk producing area far from home, returned on the holy day. Dressed in beautiful clothes, they walked along the Ayato River. Many love stories were born then. People still believe today that by visiting these temples on the holy day, they will find true love. In Hida City, traditional Japanese candles, called "Kigake-Warousoku (meaning pure Japanese candles) have been made since the Edo Period (1603-1867). Wax is taken from Japanese wax trees, and the wick is made from Japanese paper and rush fibers. "Kigake" means things made from pure materials. There is still one shop that makes the candles by hand. The crafters use natural and pure materials from plants.

On the day of san-ja mairi, three big handmade Japanese candles, 80 centimeters high and weighing 20 kilograms, are lit at three temples. Some 40 candles, made of snow and 2-meters high, were placed along the main street. Recently, more and more people in the city have made small snow statues and lit snow candles at the entrance to their homes.

On this day, 1,000 candles were lit along the Ayato River, a place where love is born. These candles were also handmade. The 1,000 candles were lit to pray for the saint and to show thankfulness. White candles are lit to pray for health, success, and love. If the prayers are answered, red candles are lit the following year to show thankfulness.

In winter, it is a traditional quiet custom to pray in the serene mountains of a traditional city. Does your town have a unique tradition or interesting festivals?

(Yuko Kishikami)

How do you describe a "candle" in your language? It is "ro-soku" in Japanese. Please share it with our worldwide readers! Send information to eninfo@candle-night.org

We also invite your local stories, festivals and events related to candles and fires.

Editor's Note

Whenever I conduct research on events, festivals and traditions related to candles, I am impressed by people's thoughts. Candles, fires and flames have the power to ignite people's ideas and thoughts. Just watching the flames of a fire, I feel my heart being unwound. (YK)

We hope you enjoyed this issue of the Candle Night Newsletter. If you find the Candle Night Newsletter interesting, please forward it to friends and suggest that they start their own free subscriptions at

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

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