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The Candle Night Newsletter #27
December 10, 2008, Copyright (c) 2008
Candle Night Committee

Cold waves have hit Japan. It is rapidly getting colder day by day. The next solstice is approaching. How will you spend the next Candle Night?

Topics

- *Candle Night Website and Candlescape Updated
- *Recreating Ancient Night of 'Heian' Dynasty--Lights-down at Kyoto Gyoen Forests
- *Korean Women's Environmental Network Published Candle Night Book

The Candle Night website has been updated and redesigned. Our cover page has a new appearance for December. <http://www.candle-night.org/english/>

New Candlescape Showing Messages from Japan and Around the World

Our 3-D globe-based message board, "Candlescape," has been redesigned. Just enter the name of the city you live in. Your location on the globe will be identified and your message will appear from that point. You can virtually enjoy the dynamic movement of the earth, together with multi-lingual messages scattered all over the globe! Just give it a try at the following URL.

<http://feel.candle-night.org/scape/>

Event Report

Recreating Ancient Night of 'Heian' Dynasty Lights-down at Kyoto Gyoen Forests

The Kyoto Gyoen National Garden is located in Japan's ancient capital, Kyoto City, where emperors had lived. It was the lynchpin of Japanese culture and politics from the Heian Period to the beginning of the Meiji Period (794-1869). The garden is located in the heart of the historical city, covering 0.63 square kilometers of land. After the Meiji Restoration, the residences of the Imperial family and court nobles were removed and Tokyo became the capital city of Japan. The garden has 50,000 trees including 200 ancient giant trees. Wild birds and butterflies also live in the forest,

where the old noble's mansions remain.

The year 2008 marks the 1,000th anniversary of The Tale of Genji. The famous Japanese classic novel depicts the court life of the noble man, Hikaru Genji and the women who surrounded him in the splendid Heian Dynasty. The year also corresponds to the 130th birthday of the Kyoto Gyoen National Garden. Attempting to re-create a night of ancient times and this special ancient place, a "lights-down" event was held on October 15th and 16th, and November 10th and 11th, 2008 at the garden to commemorate both occasions.

At the southern end of the garden, half of its 128 outdoor lamps were turned off, and music concerts and lectures were held at the Imperial residence. For these four days, some 7,900 people came to visit the park. Maybe the "darkness" pointed out the affluent lights in their everyday lives?

On October 15th and 16th, it was clear and the moon was shining over the garden. However, on November 10th, it was dark and cloudy. Seiji Ozawa, director of the Kyoto Gyoen National Garden Office, who prepared for the event with its co-organizer, the Genji Millennium Committee, told about the event. "After a lecture regarding the moon concluded, the clouds over the dark sky suddenly split apart, and the moon started to shed its lights. People stopped and were fascinated by the beauty of the lights in the darkness. It was totally unexpected. I felt the strength of the moonlight."

During the Heian Period, a mansion of the highest-ranking court noble, Michinaga Fujiwara was built at the east side of the garden. Murasaki Shikibu, the author of The Tale of Genji, used to serve for Shoshi, an empress, and also the daughter of Michinaga.

When people stood in the garden, at the stage of the famous Tale of Genji, they may have thought about the world of Genji and enjoyed the shining moonlight, the flickering branches in the wind, and the smell of the earth.

When lights are turned off on a cloudy night, the strong lights of the city faintly reflect over the clouds. Many streetlights and neon signs cast their light over the clouds up to the sky. On a clear night, however, the stronger moonlight shines down from a rift in the clouds.

Participants shared their impressions of the event. "Lights-up events are becoming more popular and flourish in Japan in these days. The lights-down events deepened my thoughts from various points of view." "It is wonderful that the garden in the center of the old capital shed its lights on global warming issues, by reducing its own lights." The atmosphere and nature of the garden can also help people sharpen their senses.

For the past two years, Ozawa and his colleagues have worked to prevent "light pollution," to protect rich biodiversity of the forests and to cope with climate change. They continue to work for this cause by changing 150 watt light bulbs to 70 watt alternatives, and placing shades around outdoor lamps, for example.

Countless things lie in the darkness, and they can be found only by turning off the lights. On the night of a new moon, the stars can be seen more brightly than usual. If they are interested in having another event--they may put more focus on the shining stars next time.

(Taeko Ohno)

Korean Women's Environmental Network Published Candle Night Book

The Korean Women's Environmental Network, a non-profit organization that has held Candle Night events, published a book titled "A Small Book for the People Today." The contents of the book can be read at the following URL.

http://candle-night.or.kr/bbs/board.php?bo_table=news&wr_id=1

Click "PDF" on the left, and the file can be downloaded.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- 1) History of Candle Night in Korea
- 2) A slow life story from people who slow down (+Keibo)
- 3) Actions for a slow life - slow food, slow fashion, eco-tour
- 4) Books for a slow life
- 5) Day for a slow, eco life
- 6) People slow down for candles in Korea (organizations, schools, buildings, individuals)

Shin-ichi Tsuji, (Keibo Oiwa), one of the key promoters of Candle Night, also appears in the book.

The book is mostly written in the Korean language, but just looking at the many beautiful pictures can show us how people enjoy Candle Night in Korea. Please take a look at it.

(Yuko Kishikami)

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

Editor's Note

In Japan, in the past, building extensions onto a house was common to accommodate multiple family members. A large house or a mansion was a social status. However, the trend has been changing. Some older couples are choosing to reduce the number of rooms or the size of the house because they no longer need the space. People feel better when they live sufficient lives according to their life-styles. Expansion is not a criterion for people to feel happy or successful. (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 <http://www.candle-night.org/english/>

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

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