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The Candle Night Newsletter #30

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Candle Night Committee

Candle Night Summer Solstice 2009 is near.

We encourage people to spend some slow and quality time away from everyday life, when it gets dark.

Topics

*Candle Night Summer Solstice 2009

*Event Registration Started

*Stories related to lights and darkness--Report on Dialogue in the Dark event

Candle Night Summer Solstice 2009 will be held from June 20, the day before the summer solstice to July 7. In 2009, we will extend Candle Night week, like we did in 2008. In Japan, lights-down events will be held on June 21 and July 7, supported by the Japanese Ministry of the Environment.

You can always enjoy Candle Night whenever you want. Just turn off the lights and spend some quality time in the candlelight--it will be your own Candle Night.

Event Registration Started!

If you plan an event to enjoy Candle Night with other people, please register it on our online event information page.

<http://event.candle-night.org/formen.php?new=1>

If you need our help to make an entry, please contact eninfo@candle-night.org

Dialogue in the Dark

Yuko Kishikami

Stories related to candles, fire, lights and darkness

Streetlights, neon signs and moonlight--when it's dark, it takes a while for your sight to adjust, then everything is visible with just some dim lights. Total darkness without any light, when you can't see your hands right in front of your eyes, is totally different. Have you ever been in such utter darkness?

"Dialogue in the Dark" is an entertainment activity to experience total darkness. Darkness and entertainment are two different things--they seem to have nothing in common. However, to experience something different from everyday life is well entertaining.

This initiative started in Germany in 1989 by Dr. Andreas Heinecke. The exhibitions have been held in about 100 cities in 25 countries.

I joined one of the events held in Tokyo last April.

Eight people met in the basement of a modern building at a specific time. Before entering a completely dark room, we were led to a room with dimmed lights to stay for a while. Here, a blind guide explained to us how to move in the utter darkness and how to be cautious.

"In the total darkness, everyone should help each other. Stumbling could lead to a serious accident. Whenever you want to move, you need to announce to others, 'Kishikami is sitting down.' or 'Kishikami is standing up.' You need to identify yourselves by name, because we can't tell who you are in the darkness. Since your voice is the only means of communication, please let others know if you find something by saying, 'Here's a door' or 'Here is an orange.'"

Then, it was our turn to get into the "dark" rooms. I could see nothing. The only thing I could find was the floor. When we got into the first room, I could feel soft fallen leaves that had been placed on the floor. When I dared to extend my hand, I could feel bamboo. I said, "I found bamboo." Others also told what they found in the room. Following the voices, every participant felt the objects others found to confirm for themselves.

We also crossed a log bridge. The guide held my hand, and then I was crouching down to touch the log, sizing up what it was like, and then stepped onto the log. Then it was my turn to guide the next person. I held his hand and led him to the log. Without seeing each other, we talked and used our hands, searching for what was going on. Finally, all of us safely passed the log by using sound and feeling.

Also in the room were herbs that released their good smells. We also enjoyed swings, which was totally different than when we do in the light, with our eyes closed. It was totally a new experience.

In the utter darkness, sound, feeling and smells were important information. Fully using these senses, all the participants who were total strangers, made their way helping each other. Through the event, I found how much the floor tells us--it was more than I had imagined. The blind guide told us that sound information is a lot of fun. "Without eyesight, it is fun to listen to the difference in the sounds. Umbrellas sound different depending on what material they are made of."

The members of the group who first met in the dark room had an image of each other by just their voices during the 90 minute experience. When we came back to the room with lights, we looked at each other to confirm what they were like.

We used our senses to experience how we can gather information around us even in the darkness. I realized why this event has been recognized around the world. It was a new experience for me. I used senses that I didn't have to in the light.

We released the 2008 Activity Report on the following URL.
Please take a look to see the whole picture of our initiative.
http://www.candle-night.org/english/pdf/candle_report2009_en.pdf

Editor's Note

Calendars do not tell the time and season like what we used to experience in the past. The climate has been changing gradually and its effects are found in many places. The Third Summit of the C40 Large Cities Climate Leadership Group was held on May 18, 2009, to discuss measures to cope with climate change as well as adaptation plans. Often times, members involved in international negotiations have difficulty reaching an agreement, but some cities started to take concrete steps. How about in your city? (YK)

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

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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http://www.candle-night.org/english/news/news_letter.html

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

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