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The Candle Night Newsletter #32

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Candle Night Committee

Candle Night Summer Solstice 2009 ended with many comments. In 2009, NHK, a Japanese public broadcasting company, featured Candle Night, along with other environmental activities, which brought us new awareness.

Candle Night is not just for reducing carbon dioxide emissions and energy use. Our focus varies. The broadcasting gave us an opportunity to think about the meaning of our activity more deeply.

Topics

- Candle Night with Turban Shells and Waste Cooking Oil
- Message Sent from Antarctica--Candlescape
- Brief Report on Candle Night Summer Solstice 2009

Candle Night with Turban Shells and Waste Cooking Oil

A Candle Night event was held at the Global Environmental Information Centre in Shibuya, Tokyo on June 20, 2009. The candles were handmade by participants in the afternoon, using turban shells and waste cooking oil. In the evening participants enjoyed a live music performance in the "turban shell" candlelight.

The "Environment Volunteer Fair" was held on the same day. Among the many booths, the eco-candle workshop using waste turban shells and waste cooking oil attracted 40 participants. It was jointly organized by the Tokyo Oil Field 2017 project of U's Corporation, a student organization "wakk-AHO-lic" (a pun of "circle" and "workaholic" in Japanese) of Nihon University and the

"No-dai Oil Field Project" of the Tokyo University of Agriculture.

The Tokyo Oil Field 2017 (U's Corporation) runs a project where they collect waste cooking oil from homes and restaurants, and tries to recycle all collected oil into bio-diesel fuel, raw material for paint, and soap. They promote the idea of recycling waste cooking oil into resources, and aim to recycle all of the waste cooking oil in Tokyo by the year 2017.

Handmade candles are one form of recycling. To do this, put some waste cooking oil into a pan and warm it for a while. Add solidified material to it and add color with sliced crayons. Add two or three drops of aroma oil. Wait for a while and you will enjoy eco-handmade candles from waste cooking oil

One key part of the workshop was to use waste turban shells. The idea was brought by students of Nihon University. Hiromitsu Terauchi, chairman of the group, said that the group is named "wakk-AHO-lic", meaning to connect "wakka", or circles, of people and to get involved in the process like a kind of "workaholic". The group's focus is on food. When they had a candle night event in December 2008, they used waste cooking oil that came from a school cafeteria and poured it into aluminum containers. After the event, they discussed better ways to make the candles. One of the members introduced the idea of using waste turban shells. They could get them at seafood restaurants and food stands around Enoshima, a seaside town close to the Metropolitan area.

Usually, seafood shells are discarded as waste at restaurants and inns. They used the waste shells for candle containers at the event. The workshop was a result of connecting waste cooking oil and waste turban shells. It also connected people from Tokyo Oil Field 2017, students of Nihon University, and Tokyo University of Agriculture, as well as people who came and enjoyed Candle Night.

In the evening, turban shell candles were placed in a circle. The shapes of the shells varied in nature. They were no longer waste, they were candles. As they were lit, the light of the circles gradually spread. Participants enjoyed the candlelight with calm and peace.

(Taeko Ohno)

Message Sent from Antarctica--Candlescape

Messages are now being sent to Candlescape, our globe-based online message board, from Japan and all around the world. When you post your message on Candlescape, a drop of light appears at

that point on the globe. Drops of lights are now found in some places of Europe, Asia and even Antarctica. A message was sent from Japanese Antarctic Syowa Station.

"A light of heart is lit from Syowa Station. Here in Antarctica, we experience "polar night", where we don't see daylight at all on May 30. While Japan, in the northern hemisphere, is on the summer solstice, here in Syowa Station, which is near the south pole, we are on the winter solstice. On this day, every year, we have the Mid-Winter Festival." (Handglobe)

Currently, the 50th Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition team is staying at the station. As a special commemoration at the Mid-Winter Festival, an event is planned to observe the aurora while the lights are off. This event will correspond with the Japanese Candle Night Summer Solstice. In Japan, it will be 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. on June 21 and in Antarctica it will be 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. where they will turn off their room lights and spend the time under dim LED lights. They have to use LED lights because the winter weather of Antarctica is too dry to use fire and candles.

On Antarctica, at 2 p.m. in the afternoon, it is totally dark outside. At the Syowa Station, observation of the aurora is not for its beauty but for the study of earth science. At the station, they are careful not to affect the aurora by preventing light from shining outside.

Spending the same time under common conditions will give people a chance to connect with each other. The members of the Syowa Station team may think about their families left behind in Japan. At the same time, all of us can feel connected to people in Antarctica during mid-winter.

Spending Candle Night at the same time as others on the opposite side of the world may reassure us that we are not alone, and we are connected to people around us.

It was slightly cloudy with some sun, but the wind blew strong in the morning, more than 10 meters per second. If the weather conditions were better, each person would have lit an ice candle. The start was delayed until 16:00 and held at the central area of the station.

Even though the weather was harsh, freezing temperatures of 15 degrees below zero Celsius with strong winds, the captain of the 50th Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition team and chief of the camp lit candles on behalf of the expedition team, thinking of their family members in Japan.

A member of the team, Hiroshi Tatsumi said: "The Candle Night event reminded us of how severe the nature of Antarctica is. With strong winds, it was really freezing. Even five minutes outside may

have frozen my fingers and toes.

Antarctica, where we are stationed, shows us the great beauty of nature. At the same time, according to the weather, it turns into a severe environment. It also shows us how human beings are small and weak.

The Candle Night event on the winter solstice there was like what Antarctica really is. The lights of ice candles appeared in the darkness of the polar night. The small and warm lights of candles will continue to shed light on the hearts of members at the Syowa Station.

(Yuko Kishikami)

●Brief Report on Candle Night Summer Solstice 2009

Candle Night Summer Solstice 2009 was held from June 20 to July 7. More than 720 events were registered at the Candle Night website. Along with Hong Kong's "Dim It", there were events held around the world, including those in Europe, North America and on boats heading to Iceland.

Our partner initiative, "Black Illumination 2009" was held on June 21 and organized by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). It was joined by 76,648 facilities. On July 7, "Lights Down at Star Festival," also organized by the MOE, included 85,580 facilities that turned off their lights for two hours from 8 to 10 o'clock..

Candle Night gained nationwide attention in Japan in 2009, due to media coverage. On June 20 and 21, NHK, a Japanese public broadcasting company, released a program "Save the Future". It featured Candle Night along with other environmental initiatives.

During the program, some Candle Night events held all over Japan were featured, which attracted public awareness on our initiative. We received comments saying that burning candles may release more carbon dioxide emissions than conventional lighting.

It is not what Candle Night intends to promote. As we mentioned in our Candle Night Newsletter #29, Candle Night is a cultural environmental initiative, encouraging people to spend some quality time in the candlelight away from our everyday busy lives. We hope more and more people join us and spend quiet time after turning off the lights, thinking about what really matters to us.

Editor's Note

On July 22, 2009, the total solar eclipse was observed on the southernmost islands of Japan. Many people flew to the islands to observe it. On these islands, people's lives are closely related to nature. They gave me new insights. I'll fly to a southern island this summer, too, although not in time for the eclipse. (KY)

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

Candle Night Committee

This newsletter is funded by the Japan Fund for Global Environment.

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