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The Candle Night Newsletter--#9

April 30, 2006, Copyright (c) 2006

Candle Night Committee

Are you busy every day? Why not take a break for a while and think of something that lies far away--the other side of the world, somewhere in the galaxy and 5,000 years into the future.

Turn off the lights and take it slow. Imagine, as people enjoy Candle Night, the "wave of darkness" moving as the earth revolves--isn't it exciting? Please enjoy Candle Night together.

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What's New!

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\*The Candle Night Summer Solstices 2006 will be enjoyed on the evenings of June 17 to 21, from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p. m

\*Website for Candle Night Summer Solstice 2006 is now open.

<http://www.candle-night.org/> (Japanese)

<http://www.candle-night.org/english/> (English)

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In this issue, you will find the following articles and information:

\*Messages from Promoters of Candle Night--#1

Junko Edahiro

\*Mauritius will have the 1st National Candle Night on June 5, 2006--  
Website Opens!

<http://www.freewebs.com/ncnm/>

\* Candlescape on the globe is coming soon!

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Messages from Promoters of Candle Night--#1

Enjoying the moment and the place--the "Here and Now"

Junko Edahiro

Environmental Journalist

Co-Founder, Co-Chief Executive, Japan for Sustainability

It was the second year into my master's courses when I decided to find work right after finishing my master's degree instead of pursuing a doctorate.

I worked very hard to get into a university when I was in high school. When I was an undergraduate, I worked hard again to enroll in a master's program and then succeeded in going on to graduate school. However, I found that the fulfillment and happiness that I expected at that moment never came, despite all of my efforts.

I thought that I would have to continue putting off living and enjoying "the moment" while striving to enter a doctorate program, preparing to climb the ladder of success in the academic field. I would start as an assistant, then become a lecturer, then an assistant professor, and finally a professor. I decided step off that ladder realizing that the future I was working toward would eat away at the precious moments that I could enjoy otherwise. I couldn't bear such an idea.

Since then,--(I'm sure it was actually well before then) "Here and Now" have been my important keywords. I had lived to prepare for the future. I spent 90 percent of my time preparing for it and 10 percent living for the moment. I remember the feeling I had when I completed graduate school. I thought, "I am now using 30 percent of my time preparing for the future, and spending 70 percent of my time enjoying "the current moment." I was deeply relieved to realize that fact.

It is difficult to stay in and enjoy every moment with 100 percent energy and attention. During our daily activities, we can't help but think about such things as the next day's meetings and responsibilities or feel anxious about the

future. It is difficult to give full attention to whoever we are with, as we are thinking about the next person we have to meet. There are also those rude (or should I say busy?) people who talk on cellphones, perhaps preparing for their next meeting or setting up an appointment..

Facing the Here and Now, enjoying every moment and occasion in our lives means paying full attention to ourselves and people who are with us. Sometimes it is tough. You may avoid facing the Here and Now by doing mindless things, such as keeping the TV on to divert your attention from reality.

I believe, however, enjoying every moment and occasion--the Here and Now--leads us to a happy and enriched life. You can feel close and connected with people around you. You can be who you are. You can listen to the soft flow of air, slight sounds and faint scents. It is a moment when you think about people living far away from you and feel connected with the past--people, animals and plants. The past lies among the current.

Instead of living in a diluted "moment" for a "better tomorrow" and "some day's happiness," I can enjoy and live in the "here and now." I became an organizing member and promoter of Candle Night for the purpose of providing such an opportunity for everyone.

During Candle Night, some children may light matches for the first time in their lives. Some men might use Candle Night as an opportunity to enjoy a wonderful moment with his family. He might say, "Someone told me about Candle Night. How about doing this together?"

It is, of course, still important to discuss the current issues and problems we face and to fight for what we believe. However, to feel a passionate burst of energy for "enjoyable things" seems much more effective than being "non-" or "anti-" something.

Some people appreciate the concepts of "acting is better than thinking," "feeling is better than considering," and "being immersed is better than discussing." Some are excited to watch the Candlescope on the web, finding the possibility of IT technology satisfying to the human imagination.

So far, "lighting up" has been appreciated. "Lighting," "using up," and "working hard," were concepts related to desired things. However, when you try to "dim the lights," "turn off the lights," "not to use anything," and "not to work hard," do you feel you are using less energy to do so? (In a real sense, this is saving energy!)

A candle is an independent object. It sheds light every moment, in the Here and Now without being supported by electric power, and then it burns out. When we face up to lighting a candle on a quiet night, I believe we may stand up to the entrance of the world of the Here and Now.

After spending a Candle Night on the evening of the summer solstice, I have since enjoyed three personal Candle Nights. I think the next Candle Night will be on the night of the winter solstice or the next summer solstice. However, we can enjoy a Candle Night anytime. It is not meant to be just an annual or biannual event. I would like to have time to rethink the fast-paced life and to slow it down under the candlelight.

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Mauritius will hold the first nationwide Candle Night!

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The following are excerpts from the message sent by Mr. G. Raj Chitaram, who is inspired by the idea of Candle Night in Japan, and has been working hard to hold the first national Candle Night in Mauritius.

<http://www.freewebs.com/ncnm/>

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. . . During my visit in Japan (Ship for World Youth Program), I was particularly impressed by one of my JPY colleagues who was talking about Candle-Night activities in her prefecture. I was very fascinated by the idea, especially as I am myself an ardent environmentalist and involved in many civil society enterprises, NGOs etc. Thus, germinated the idea to organize Candle-Night in Mauritius.

I started talking about Candle-Night to my friends and everyone laughed at me as it made no sense to them but this further inspired me to go ahead with the project. I then took contact with the Japanese Candle Night Committee (JCNC) that supported me in my endeavour to organize Candle-Night in Mauritius. Being the Secretary General of a reputed Mauritian NGO, Association Civique Midlands, and the Chairman of the

Global One Foundation hugely played to my advantage to take a major decision to take up the challenge of such an initiative.

An Organizing Committee was constituted and slowly we have been spreading the virtues of Candle Night across the island. In Japan and other countries (Northern Hemisphere), Candle-Night is organized during the Summer and Winter Solstices. The World Environment Day is celebrated annually on the 05th of June and this led our Organizing Committee to associate NCNM with Environment Day celebrations. It was decided to earmark the 1st Friday of the month of June to celebrate Candle-Night in Mauritius, hopefully on an annual basis.

The "Official Press Presentation" of NCNM was held on Wednesday 05th April 2006 @ "Le Cafe du Vieux Conseil", Port-Louis; many important personalities were present in that occasion. The NCNM logo was designed by Mr. Victor Chui Hom Lap. The logo symbolizes the Mauritian community holding hands, united around a warm candle light in the dark and enjoying the event. The colours of each figure represent our national flag and the overall flower shape of the logo is a symbol of harmony. In a nutshell, the logo symbolises the essence of "National Candle-Night Mauritius" . . .

I also invite you all to visit our website  
<http://www.associationciviquemidlands.com>

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Candlescape on the globe is coming soon.

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In June, a new Candlescape will be available on the web. Click your location on a global map and a message form will appear. Send your message and e-mail address via the form. Then your message will appear from that point on the globe. It will show the "wave of darkness" on a global scale. Please encourage your friends and family to send their messages, too. Stay tuned!

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About Summer Solstice

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In Japan, the solar year was divided into 24 periods which were used as guides to help farmers schedule their crop planting. The idea originated in China with

each period having it's own name. One of them is the summer solstice called "geshi" in Japanese. The summer solstice has the longest day of the year, which means it also has the shortest night of the year.

Let's spend a slow time together under the candle light on that night.

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Please send us information on Candle Night events in your community. We also invite your local stories, festivals and events related to candles and fires. Please send emails to: [info@candle-night.org](mailto:info@candle-night.org)

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We hope you enjoyed this issue of the Candle Night Newsletter.

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We welcome your comments. Please send them to:

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