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The Candle Night Newsletter--#18

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Candle Night Committee

Candle Night Summer Solstice 2007 is from June 22 to 24.

Over 700 events have been registered on the webpage as of June 17, 2007. We hope more and more
people, worldwide, will share the feeling of peace in the candlelight.

Topic

- *Candlescape on the globe is now open--Post your messages!
- *NGO's will hold a Joint "Lights Down" event-- Seoul and Tokyo
- *Announcement of Candle Night events--Taipei (Taiwan) and Seattle (US)
- *Black Illumination 2007--Japanese Environment Ministry
- *Lights in terraced paddy field--Minamata, Japan

Candlescape is displaying messages from the world

On the Candle Night website, a "Candlescape" displays messages
in many languages from participants around the world.

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

*NGO's will hold a Joint "Lights Down" event-- Seoul and Tokyo

On June 24, 2007, a Candle Night event will be held by Japanese and South Korean
non-governmental organizations. At 8:00 p.m., the lights in Tokyo Tower will turn off, and candles
will be lit across Shiba Park. At 9:00 p.m. the N Seoul Tower will turn off the lights, and a candle

performance will be held there. The South Korean event will be seen live on a solar panel screen set up at the event site in Tokyo.

Event Information

Japan

Time: June 24, 2007 (Sun) 15:00~21:10

Place: Shiba Park, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Organizer: Contact: Daichi-O-Mamoru-Kai (The Association to Preserve the Earth)

Co-hosted by: Japanese Ministry of the Environment

<http://www.daichi.or.jp/> koho@daichi.or.jp

<http://event.candle-night.org/detail.php?id=1371>

South Korea

Time: June 24, 2007, 19:00~21:30.

Place: N Seoul Tower

Organizer: Korean Women's Environmental Network

<http://www.candle-night.or.kr/>

<http://www.ecofem.net> Kwen7944@hanmail.net

Event Information outside Japan

*US--Seattle

A Candle Night event will be held on June 22, 2007, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., at Makas Café in Seattle. If you are interested in joining this event, please contact the event organizer at events@luminuscreations.com

<http://event.candle-night.org/detail.php?id=1432>

*Taiwan--Taipei

On June 23, 2007 (Sat), from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., a Candle Night event will be planned during the 2007 World Press Photo exhibition at the Eslite Gallery in Taipei. For more information on the event, please visit <http://www.candle-night.org.tw/> or send an e-mail to candlenight.tw@gmail.com (Mandarin/Japanese)

Please send us information on Candle Night events in your community. Registered events can be viewed on a google-map based event information page:

<http://event.candle-night.org/>

MOE's 'Lights Down Campaign'--Black Illumination 2007

Japan's Ministry of the Environment (MOE) will hold a nationwide "Lights Down" and CO2 reduction campaign from June 22 to 24, 2007.

The campaign aims to reduce CO2 emissions, a major cause of global warming. Under the title of "Black Illumination 2007," the ministry calls for major "lights-up" facilities, businesses and homes across Japan to turn their lights off for two hours from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on the evening of June 24.

Major department stores, TV stations, banks, citizen's centers, office buildings, hotels, museums, churches and hospitals have joined the campaign since it started in 2003. In the first year, 2,278 facilities and landmarks turned their lights off, and about 5 million people participated in the campaign. In 2004, 6,088 facilities and an estimated 6.4 million people joined, followed by 22,716 facilities and about 6.64 million in 2005. In 2006, the number of facilities increased to 39,845, which translates to 812,508 kWh of electricity. This is equal to the annual CO2 emissions of 52 to 92 average Japanese households.

For the 2007 campaign, 61,682 facilities all over Japan have confirmed their participation as of June 13. Major department stores, schools and municipal governments are promoting the campaign. During this time of raising awareness for global warming and environmental issues, more and more people and facilities are expected to join the campaign.

<http://www.wanokurashi.ne.jp/act/campaign/>

(Japanese)

(Keiko Hoshino)

Stories about lights:

Lights in terraced rice paddy field--Minamata, Japan

Have you ever heard the story about Minamata City, Japan? It is located in Kyushu, the western part of Japan, with a population of 30,000. Minamata City faces the ocean and is surrounded by mountains. The weather is moderate.

Minamata has become famous for "Minamata disease," which is mercury poisoning. From the 1950s to 60s, environmental pollution caused diseases all over Japan. Minamata was no exception. Factories released liquid waste material containing organic mercury into the sea. People who ate fish from that area suffered from mercury poisoning. Over 2,200 people are certified by the government as suffering from this disease. Unfortunately, there are many more who are suffering and not yet certified for the government compensation. People have not forgotten the incident at Minamata over these past 50 years.

In the past, Minamata City has been haunted by the reputation of being a "town of pollution-causing diseases." However, Minamata City is currently creating a new image as a "City of Environment," an environmentally-conscious city. The city is putting forth a lot of effort on the separation of collected household waste, recycling, and producing safe agricultural produce under the "Minamata" brand.

Minamata's water source, the Minamata River, is managed by citizens of the district with the Minamata Kugino Furusato Center Airinkan playing a central role. This facility is run by Minamata city, and offers a variety of services to help citizens revitalize their hometown. Conservation of forests surrounding the river and the restoration of abandoned terraced rice paddy fields are among its priorities.

On May 19, 2007, an event was held titled, "Lights in terraced rice paddy field." It was the third event organized by Airinkan and citizens of the district. They made about 1,300 torches from bamboo and straw and made bio-diesels from waste cooking oil. Citizens put torches along the paths. Small lights were lit on the road to prevent people from falling onto the field since it was so dark with only a crescent moon lighting the sky. Mr. Sawahata, director of Airinkan, said, "Flickering flames of torches, shadow of the sky and mountains reflecting on the surface of the paddy fields--the scenery was so beautiful."

The lit torches sent a message to the ancestors who created and protected the terraced rice paddy fields. "People made a bonfire to welcome back the spirits of the ancestors during a Buddhist festival. If we light torches around the paddy fields, the spirits of ancestors may know their fields are being well preserved," Mr. Samukawa, a resident of the district said.

Volunteers across Kyushu, not only Minamata City, gathered for several days to prepare for the event.

Minamata, once known as "the city of the pollution disease" is now presenting new attractive

features, thanks to many people's efforts.

(Yuko Kishikami)

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

We released the 2006 Activity Report on the following URL. Please take a look to see the whole picture of our initiative.

http://www.candle-night.org/english/news/200611_candle_night_summer_solstice_2.php

Please send emails to: eninfo@candle-night.org

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We welcome your comments. Please send them to:

eninfo@candle-night.org.

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