

FUKUSHIMA'S ONLY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR ALL FOREIGNERS

あくしま LIFE

(財) 福島県国際交流協会
Fukushima International Association

Fukushima Life January, 2009

Kagami
Mochi
(translation:
Mirror
Rice
Cake)



Fukushima Event of the Month Nanoka Do Hadaka Mairi

Every year on January 7th, people from all over Fukushima gather in the small town of Yanaizu in northern Aizu to watch (and photograph) the Hadaka Mairi.

Hadaka Mairi, literally translated as “Naked Praying”, is a traditional festival in which men wearing only a loincloth around their waists race up 113 stairs to a temple on top of a hill. Once there, they then climb up a rope to the upper level of the temple to pray, all the while pushing and shoving over each other.

Originating from a legend in which peasants chased away an evil dragon that

lived in a local river, people participate in the Hadaka Mairi to purify themselves and bring good luck in the new year. After racing and climbing the rope, participants then go to an onsen to warm up their freezing bodies.

Since this event is done in January, it is usually snowing in the area making it that much more harsh on participants and entertaining for watchers. The racing begins at 20:30, so its best to be there by 20:00 to make sure you have a good spot to watch and take photos!

Word of the month:

成人式

Sei Jin Shiki

Sei-jin-shiki is the Japanese coming of age party. It is annually held on Seijin-no-hi, the coming of age day, which is on the second Monday of January. People who are either turning 20 years old or have turned 20 years old during the current school year (April-March) are invited to a special ceremony in a prefectural hall or a local city office. Traditionally, participants wear kimonos to the ceremony, with females wearing a special kimono called a Furisode.

WELCOME TO FUKUSHIMA LIFE

This newsletter is created, written, and provided for by the Fukushima International Association (FIA). The FIA is located in Fukushima City, and provides free multilingual counseling and information in English, Chinese, Taglog, Portuguese, and Korean to all foreigners living in Fukushima. This newsletter can also be read on our website, www.worldvillage.org/life_new/fukushimalife.html

FIA TRIO-PHONE SERVICE

Do you ever have trouble communicating at venues that do not speak any English? At the FIA, we offer a free, 3-way interpretation service that can solve this problem. All you have to do is call 024-524-1316, and you will be connected to an interpreter who will then connect you, the interpreter, and the person you wish to speak to, all on the same line. English and Chinese are available Tuesdays to Saturdays, 8:30am to 5:00pm. Other languages are available Wednesdays, 1:00pm to 5:00pm. **THIS PAPER IS WRITTEN IN EASY ENGLISH FOR ALL READERS TO ENJOY**

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Earthquake Safety 101

As you are all probably aware, Fukushima has been experiencing frequent earthquakes recently. Experts predict that a large-scale earthquake is due to hit our region within the next 20 years, so being prepared for such a catastrophe is very crucial, especially after the tragic earthquake in China last month led to over 100,000 casualties. Over the next few volumes, Fukushima Life will go over some crucial steps for ensuring your own safety after a large scale earthquake hits.

Point 2) Know where your evacuation centre is



After an earthquake happens, each neighbourhood in Fukushima will have a designated evacuation centre for those in need of assistance. (Highschools or community centers are usually designated as such centers) At an evacuation center, you will be given free food, water, blankets, and medical treatment, and city workers will be present to update you with news on aftershocks and possible damage. Evacuation centers are available to all residents regardless of their nationality, and are ideal locations for finding multi-language support. To find out where your local designated area is, contact the city hall or the international association to ask for assistance.

OUTREACH

Earthquake Warning System

From October 2007, the Japanese government will begin an earthquake warning system that will warn you of an incoming earthquake 10-30 seconds before it hits your area. These warnings will be made through TV, radio, and PA systems of businesses and local attractions. Once these warnings are issued, you are expected to remain calm and take cover immediately.

To hear information on Earthquake safety, please access our website at www.worldvillage.org. Safety Information is provided in 5 different languages.

Free medical advice in foreign languages

If you are feeling ill, but do not know how to contact a foreign language speaking doctor, call **AMDA International Medical Care Information Centre**, at 03-5285-8088. They will give you information on the nearest doctor who speaks English, or any other foreign language, over the phone. AMDA is available Mon-Fri, 9am to 5pm.

Website Renewed!

The FIA is proud to announce that it has renewed its English website to include more practical information such as medical, legal, and everyday life issues. Check it out, at: www.worldvillage.org/e_index.html

What's On Fukushima?

Calendar of Events

January 1, 2009

にしかた みずかけ まつり

Nishikata Water Fight Festival, Miharu Town
Shiogama Shrine

Contact: Miharu Town Office, 0247-62-3960

December – February 1, 2009

びっぐつりー ペーじえんと ふえすた

Big Tree Pagent Festa, Koriyama City
West Exit, Koriyama Station

Contact: Aizu Shinsen Gumi Matsuri Board 0242-24-3000

January 7, 2009

なのかどう はだかまいり

Nanokado Naked Praying, Yanaizu Town

Enzo Temple

Contact: Enzo Temple, 0241-42-2000

January 10, 2009

たかだ おおたわらひき

Takada Ootawara Hiki, Aizu Misato Town
Mebiki Street, Aizu Misato

Contact: Aizu Misato Tourism Office, 0242-56-4882

January 12, January 17, 2009

きたかた くのいち

Outdoor Warehouse Festival, Kitaka City
Fure-ai Street, Kitaka City

Contact: Kitakata Chamber of Commerce, 0241-24-3131

For questions and comments, call 024-524-7375

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