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(This newsletter is published once a month)

It has been almost one year since the East Japan earthquake. Please take a look at the current scenery of Fukushima prefecture. You can also view and download this newsletter in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Tagalog and French versions on our website.

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Scenery of Fukushima



**Chinese New Year Gathering
(1.22.2012, Fukushima city)**

Chinese citizens in Fukushima city and Date city got together and celebrated Chinese New Year. The participants enjoyed their time with Chinese dumplings and theatrical performances.



**Snowboarding
(2.5. 2012, Inawashiro town)**

There are approximately 20 ski resorts in Fukushima prefecture. Families from other prefectures often bring their children to the ski resorts and enjoy skiing or snowboarding as there are a variety of courses for them to choose from and the quality of the snow is considered to be one of the best in Japan.



**Shinobu Sanzan Akimairi Festival
(2.10. 2012, Fukushima city)**

This festival started nearly 300 years ago when people believed that the gigantic "waraji" (a type of traditional straw sandal) would bring good luck so they placed it in Haguro shrine on Mt. Shinobu and prayed for abundant harvest and the safety of one's family. This year too, people carried the gigantic "waraji" around the city and to the shrine.



Voice of Fukushima

Meguro Akane (Female, Iwaki city)

I am currently in my third year in Fukushima National College of Technology. In order to minimize the harm from radiation, the school installed air conditioning system in every classroom. However, I felt very lonely knowing that some of my classmates and teachers left the school and went somewhere else. The quake gave me a chance to think deliberately of what kind of future I want and how to go about it. Before the quake, there were often times when I felt bored and did not care much of what was happening around me. Yet, after the quake, I realized that I need to treasure my time and work extremely hard to achieve my goals. With myself included, I feel that the quake has reminded us the importance of helping one another and that we are all connected to each other. I have a feeling that a new way of life is ready to begin.

Satou Jun (Male, Fukushima city)

I am currently a sophomore in Fukushima University. After the earthquake, I went back to Saitama prefecture and stayed for a while as it was also spring break. I came back to Fukushima prefecture in May as school was about to resume. Many things came to my mind after the quake and one of them is to act quickly and make the right decisions. In the past, I would always think too much before I took any actions and I thought it was not very effective. Therefore, my theory now is that I will take actions before I think too much. In addition, although I have never thought about what I can do for Fukushima, I want to make an effort to help this prefecture. At the moment, in cooperation with local companies, we are planning a relay event in hope to revitalize Fukushima prefecture.

Ahmed Bahloul (From Egypt, Male, Fukushima city)

I was in Egypt when the earthquake struck. Although I asked my wife who had returned to Fukushima a bit earlier to come home, she wanted to stay and make contributions to Fukushima so I respected her decision. Starting in April, I started living in Fukushima city with my wife. In Egypt, the media only showed the clips of the explosion of the power plants and therefore, I did not know what the exact situation looked like. I take photos as my hobby and post them online because I believe through these photos, people overseas will get to know what a beautiful place Fukushima really is. A few days ago, I saw snow for the first time in my life. I thought it was a kind of white flower falling down from the sky and I was very touched by its beautiful shape. I have uploaded the pictures of snow on to the website as well. I hope people will start coming back to Fukushima prefecture after they see my pictures.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/66419698@N07/sets/>

Nagata Lise (From Tonga, Female, Iwaki city)

After the earthquake, I was busy looking after elders who lived alone and volunteered at different evacuation centres with other Tongans for a month. My husband, who was in Tonga due to job transfers, called me numerous times and asked me to evacuate immediately. Nonetheless, when I thought about the people who took great care of me, my students from the English school and my close friends, I could not leave them behind. The English school reopened in May and the life here has returned to normal. I have been in Fukushima prefecture for 35 years, this is my home. Right now all I can do is to think positively and move forward.

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