

Hyotan

No.143

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Hitachi Kokusai Bunka Matsuri 2003

The Hitachi Kokusai Bunka Matsuri 2003 was held on November 22 at the Hitachi Civic Center to foster deeper understanding of foreign cultures. There were many panels and exhibitions showing the activities of volunteer groups and performances such as playing piano, singing songs and dancing. The following are some photos and reports by the Hyotan editorial staff.

1st Floor: Exhibition and Performances

Performances began with a Korean gentleman and a Chinese lady in the chairs. The audience enjoyed listening to their favorite pieces of music played on the piano and admiring the hula dancers costumes one after another. The hula dancers were members of the UNESCO Hula club who were very popular as they looked so joyful and graceful.

That afternoon, We were charmed by looking at beautiful Indonesian dances in which a dancer expressed her emotion or will by motions of her hands.



graceful hula dance



a traditional Indonesian dance

There were also booths where various volunteer groups were introduced. Panels for introductions and public relations of many volunteer groups such as the "Sakura" were exhibited. At one booth this paper the "Hyotan" was introduced, displaying back issues of the paper and a real gourd (a hyotan in Japanese).

Meanwhile, in the gallery, "Let's Pass on Treasures in Our City to the Future via Paintings" was held including as much as 15 paintings of the monument of "Sakura zuka" (the cherry trees memorial mound) by children painters. It impressed us that the origin of the proud cherry trees in Hitachi was well recognized even by children. Also exhibited valuable articles, dolls and musical instruments brought back from abroad.



What is Koma-Inu (狛犬) ?

The New Year's visits to shrines and temples are called "hatsumoude" (初詣). The fresh air of the precincts in the New Year will refresh you. What do you pray to God? Don't you notice statues of four-footed animal which stand right and left at the shrine gates ?

◆ It's guardian dogs

Koma-Inu are a pair of guardian dogs. They are placed to guard the shrine against all kinds of evil. Usually, the right-hand (facing the gate) statue is a lion with his mouth open and the left-hand statue is a dog, with his mouth closed. The dog's features (open/close) originated from "a-hum" in Sanskrit, the literary language of ancient India. Most of their looks are ferocious to threaten an evil spirit, but some of them are lovely. There are four kinds of shapes, such as sitting down, bending forepaw down to rise his haunches, holding a ball under his foot, and having a baby at his feet. Koma-Inu is an ancient Egyptian lion originally. An image of a lion went over to India, and became Buddha's protection beast. Then, it was introduced into Japan from the Korean Peninsula via China through the Silk Road.

At the present, there are 49 shrines in Hitachi City, and 25 pair of Koma-Inu are placed at 20 shrines. As for the dedicatory date, Kashima Shrine's (鹿島神社) Koma-Inu of Okubo-cho is the oldest one in Hitachi, it was dedicated in 1916, and the second is Tenman Shrine's (天満神社) of Orikasa-cho in 1920, and Kamine Shrine's (神峰神社) of Miyata-cho in 1922. It's said that a pair of stone-carved Koma-Inu in Nikko Toshogu (日光東照宮) is the oldest one in 1636, to the west of Kanto district. It was dedicated in front of the tomb of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Koma-Inu are not only a lion and a dog but can also be monkeys, foxes, wolves, cows and deer. They are also believed to be the familiars of the gods. They seem to us to be a strange creature.



Omika Shrine's (大甕神社) Koma-Inu



Hand Standing Koma-Inu, Kyoto Munetada Shrine (京都、宗忠神社)

◆ Shrine Guardian Dogs hobbyist in Hitachi



Mr. Terada

Mr. Makoto Terada of Suehiro-cho started to study about Koma-Inu since he got into the charms of them, such as their interesting figures, forms, and looks, when he happened to visit a shrine about 26 years ago. While working for a company, he made time to visit shrines, and continued to investigate the location of Koma-Inu, material used to build them and the different types of Koma-Inu, as well as the historical background in each shrine. "I gradually got an attraction for Koma-Inu and looked forward to visiting shrines," he said. Then, he went to see Koma-Inu in China and South Korea, and obtained precious books, materials on Koma-Inu through his acquaintance. He visited about 1000 shrines in all, and took more than 3000 of pictures of Koma-Inu until now.

In September 2003, he exhibited his works at the Hitachi Civic Center's gallery, titled "The World of Koma-Inu" which displayed many kinds of Koma-Inu photos and his comments on them throughout the country and a part of China and South Korea. Many people came to see his exhibition, because a

Koma-Inu exhibition was somewhat unique. In the future, he has a dream to visit more shrines inside Ibaraki prefecture and hold a Koma-Inu exhibition with local people, and appeal to the public to keep the grove of the village shrine like the old days.

This contents and photographs are provided by Mr. Terada.

(Reported by Imahashi)



Kumano Shrine's (熊野神社) Koma-Inu

2nd Floor: "Presentation of Aliens' Opinions in Japanese" Contest

This year there were 13 participants. The participants were from China, India, USA, Korea, Mongol, New Zealand and Kenya. They expressed their opinions on various experience in their daily lives, difference in culture and the issues of war & peace. A large audience (approx.180 people) participated this event and the judgment was made by the audience.



(Ms. Margaret Rudolph)

"さくら賞"(the most excellent prize) was awarded to Ms. Margaret Rudolph who is from Minnesota, USA and is now studying at Hitachi Second High School. In her speech, she pointed out a dangerous aspect to patriotism and emphasized the importance of loving one's country from a global point of view.

Before closing the meeting, Mr. Randall W. Voss, a guest speaker addressed the audience on significance of international exchange. Mr. Voss said, "We should have interest in different people and different countries to get correct information and show respect to different sense of values."



4th Floor: International Food Stalls

Many people enjoyed the taste of different types of food and drinks from China, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and Peru at an adjacent room to the stalls. "フォー" Vietnamese noodle was very popular and sold out soon because of the dish's tasty soup.

5th Floor: Bangladesh others

Bangladesh-Hitachi cultural exchange ceremony was held in attendance Mr. Hussain Ahmed a councilor from the Bangladesh embassy. After the ceremony, the participants were seemed to enjoy taste and flavor of curry dishes of a smorgasbord type seasoned.

Also an attractive sari and accessories worn by the wife of an international student who had arrived at Hitachi the day before were outstanding at the ceremony site.

In addition, a cultural experience section, a Halloween party and other events were also held at the festival.



Bangladesh-Hitachi cultural exchange ceremony



participants at the cultural experience section

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JAPANESE LANGUAGE CLASSES

NAME	LOCATION	DATE & TIME	Fee	Contact
Sakura	Shichokaku Center	Saturday 10:00-11:30	¥1,800/semester	Ms. Ryoko Mori Tel/Fax 53-6663
	Kyoiku Plaza	Thursday 10:00-11:30	¥1,800/semester	
Sakura (Kanji)	Kyoiku Plaza	Friday 10:00-11:30	¥1,000/semester	
Anzu	Shichokaku Center	Tuesday 19:00-20:30	¥300/month & ¥1,500 (text)	Ms. Kyoko Kamada Tel/Fax 33-3399
	Kyoiku Plaza	Friday 13:00-16:00	¥300/month & ¥1,500 (text)	

Movies in January

Theater	Day	Titles (Original Titles)
Cinefesta 1&2 Tel:21-7472	Dec 13-	Godzilla [J]
	Dec 13-	Hamutaro [J]
	Dec 20-	Subete ha Ai no tameni (Beyond Borders) [E]
	Dec 20-	Kochikame [J]
Hitachi Central Tel:21-1386	-	Finding Nemo [E]
Aigakan 1&2 Tel:23-2323	Dec 20-	Inuyasha [J]
	-Jan 16	
	-Dec 19	Bad Boys II [E]
	-Jan 9	Atashinchi [J]
	Jan 17-	Chakushin ari [J]
Theater Isejin Tel:22-1761	Jan 10-	Han ochi [J]
	-	Last Samurai[E]
	Dec 20-	Bruce Almighty [E]
	-Jan 23	The Matrix Revolutions [E]
	Jan 24-	Hollywood teki Satsujin Jiken(Hollywood Homicide) [E]

[E]: English with Japanese subtitle

[C]: Chinese with Japanese subtitle

[J]: Japanese

Emergency Doctors on Duty

Hitachi uses a system called "TOBAN-I". The doctors in the city take turns standing by for emergency patients from 9:00 to 16:00 on Sundays and national holidays. This system includes surgeons, physicians, pediatricians and dentists.

Be sure to bring your money and health insurance card

Surgeons

Dec	Hospital Name	Address	Tel
28	Sasaki Ichoka Geka	Orikasa-cho	43-0333
29	Hitachi Sakura Clinic	Tajiri-cho	43-2000
30	Hitachi Kita Clinic	Kawajiri-cho	43-6555
31	Kawasaki Ichoka Komonka Byoin	Sakuragawa-cho	36-1800
Jan	Hospital Name	Address	Tel
1	Koizumi Ichoka Geka Iin	Wakaba-cho	22-5960
2	Hitachi Seikeigeka Iin	Kashima-cho	21-0063
3	Sasaki Ichoka Geka	Orikasa-cho	43-0333
4	Hitachi Sakura Clinic	Tajiri-cho	43-2000
11	Hitachi Kita Clinic	Kawajiri-cho	43-6555
12	Inoue Iin	Taga-cho	33-1253
18	Imura Geka Iin	Omika-cho	52-2191
25	Owada Geka Iin	Okubo-cho	33-2367

Physicians, Pediatricians and Dentists

Seven days a week: Hitachi Medical Center

(Address: 5-1-1 Higashitaga-cho Tel: 34-2105)

Fax: 34-3718 E-mail: webmaster@hitachi-medical.or.jp)

Editor's Note

Thank you for reading the Hyotan. If you'd like to inquire about anything, please send us a letter, fax or e-mail. Any subject is welcomed. We are looking forward to receiving your letters!

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