

awa life

January 2015

294

2015

Year of the Sheep



New Awa Life Design for
the New Year!



TOPIA

Awa Life is a Monthly Publication of the Tokushima Prefectural International Exchange Association

Happy New Year everyone! We hope you enjoyed the holidays with your family and or friends. We want to thank you for reading Awa Life and we hope you stay with us for another year. For 2015 we are making a couple of changes concerning the design of Awa Life. We hope you like it and that this will also encourage you to write more articles for our little publication. Every article you send us is appreciated so please consider becoming a writer! A few rules will apply though so please look below to see what content we encourage you to write about and what kind of stuff we cannot publish.

You can totally submit articles about concerts, lectures, and other event information, cultural, sporting, and other community group information, etcetera.

BUT, the following will not be posted: Religious, political, or commercial activities, businesses searching for clients or employees, things the Awa Life editors deem inappropriate.

If you have something you would like to share with the Tokushima community, email the editors at:

[awalife@gmail.com!](mailto:awalife@gmail.com)

Tokushima Prefectural International
Exchange Association (TOPIA)
Clement Plaza 6F
1-61 Terashima Honcho Nishi
Tokushima City 770-0831 JAPAN

<http://www.topia.ne.jp/>
topia@topia.ne.jp
tel: 088.656.3303
fax: 088.652.0616

Download a PDF file of awa life or view the online version by going to TOPIA's website!

あけましておめでとうございます！



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Editors:

Jenifer Tanikawa & Till Dumke

Contributors This Month:

David C. Moreton, Lance Kita, Yoko Aoki, Kazue Inoue, Melissa Palsenbarg,
Jenifer Tanikawa

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Wander-ful Tabi: Breaking Bad...Luck: My Yakudoshi Year

By Lance Kita

3, 42, 61... not the combination to my locker or some cryptic numbers from a Hawaii-based TV series, but some seriously unlucky years according to Japanese belief.

The dreaded yakudoshi (厄年) are a series of years that are supposed to be plagued by bad luck and misfortune. For women, they are 19, 33 and 37,

and for men it's 25, 42 and 61. In some regions, 61 is also a yakudoshi for women. For each gender, the middle number is the most significant age.

As my 41st birthday arrived in October, so did my yakudoshi. No, my math is not wrong... here's where things get a little complicated. The Japanese also believe that you are already

one year old when you are born, having spent most of that year in your mother. So according to this practice of kazoe-doshi (数え年), this is technically my 42nd birthday and therefore my main yakudoshi. Just minus one from the years above to get your actual yakudoshi age. Confused? So are many locals, so just consult your nearest temple or shrine, which often has a chart of the yakudoshi years posted somewhere.

So how is one supposed to greet this period of impending doom? Simply pray the bad stuff away. Luckily, Yakuoji Temple (薬王寺) (Temple #23 on the Shikoku 88 Pilgrimage) specializes in yaku-barai (厄払い), the rituals and ceremonies to get rid of bad luck. The temple, near Hiwasa (日和佐) Station in Minami Town, is built on a hill accessible by three stone staircases. The first has 33 steps, the second has 42, and the third



The Hondo offering area for Yakuoji Temple. Bow, drop your coin, shake the rope to ring the gong, bring hands together in prayer, then bow again.

Breaking Bad...Luck: My Yakudoshi Year

By Lance Kita

has 61, corresponding to the women's, men's, and combined yakudoshi. With a handful of one-yen coins in my pocket, I ascended the second staircase, placing a coin on each step as is the custom for this temple. Bending down to do that as you go up is trickier than it looks (or am I just getting older?). With the final coin I found myself in front of the Hondo (本堂), where I offered a yakuyoke (厄除) (dispelling bad luck) candle before offering a more substantial coin at the altar and putting my hands together in prayer, desperately wishing for better days and better circumstances. Since this is one of the Shingon sect temples, I repeated the same at the Daishido (大師堂) hall.

You can make an appointment with a priest to perform a yakubarai ceremony for a nominal donation, but I contented myself with purchasing a yakuyoke o-mamori, a protective amulet

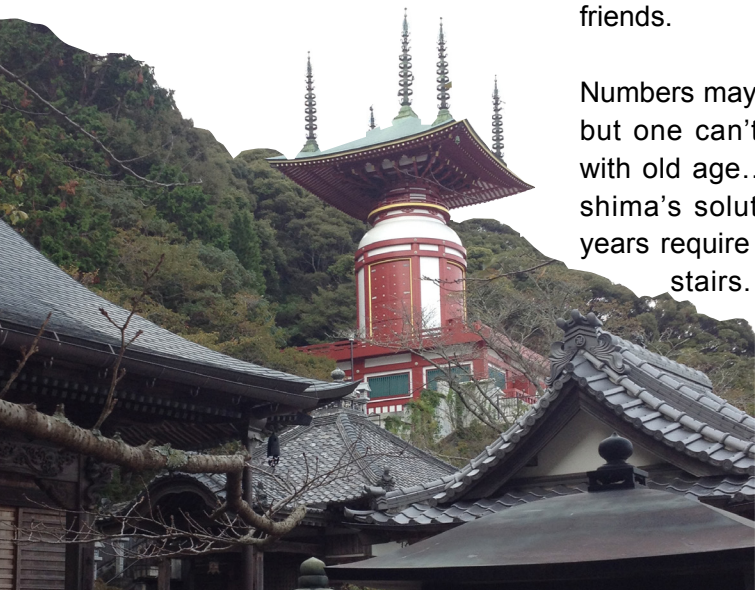
that I attached to my bag to guard me for the coming year. The landmark building at Yakuoji is the large pagoda (admission to go inside) at the top of the hill, but that's where the 61-step staircase is, and...one unlucky staircase at a time, please.

Hawaii's large Nikkei population somehow adopted a totally different approach to yakudoshi. Our unique tradition involves throwing a big party for men's 42nd birthdays, to gather enough good luck to cancel out the bad stuff. I mean, any excuse for a party, right? So after a quick onsen footbath (free!) at the Michi no Eki roadside stop in front of the station, I hopped back on the train for a night of karaoke with friends.

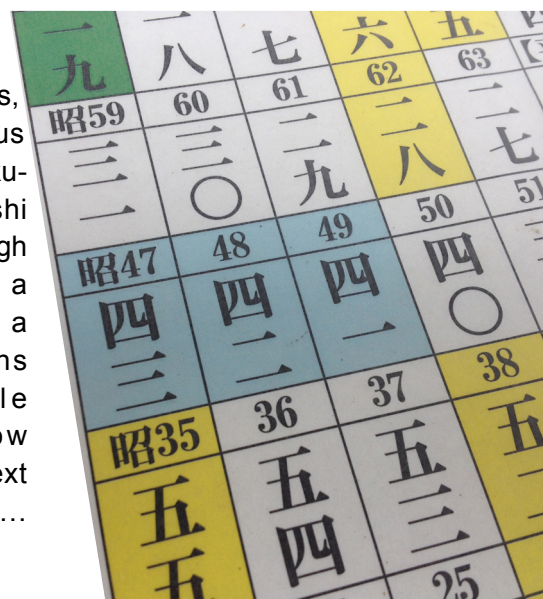
Numbers may be just numbers, but one can't be too cautious with old age...how ironic Tokushima's solution to yakudoshi years require one to climb high stairs. I guess life is a journey, and a journey begins with a single step...I'm now starting the next climb to age 60... wish me luck!



Yakuoji Temple is a 5 minute walk from JR Hiwasa Station. It's about 60 minutes by the JR special express Muroto from Tokushima Station, or about 90 minutes by local train. Its Japanese homepage is yakuouji.net/index.html (no English).



The most visible part of Yakuoji Temple from the road is the vermilion pagoda at the top of the complex.



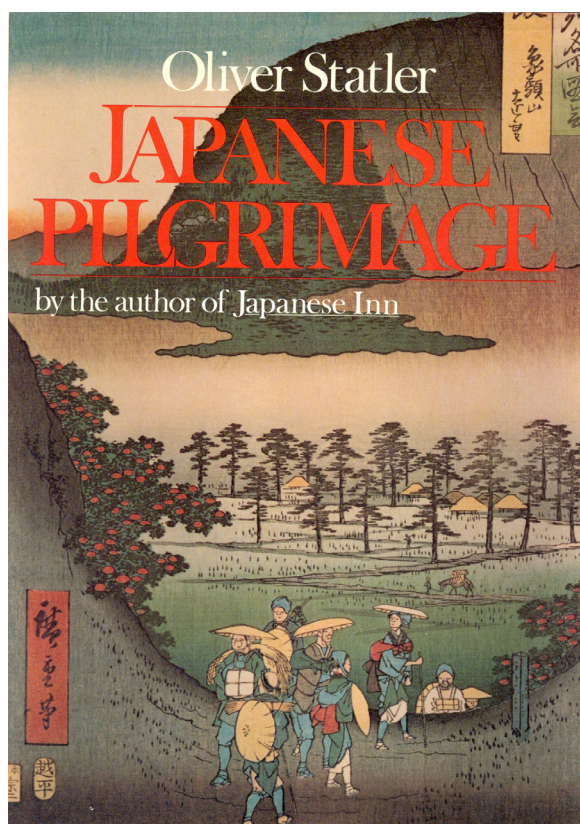
Almost any temple or shrine will have a yakudoshi calendar.

A 100-year History of Foreigners and the Shikoku Pilgrimage – Part 2

By David C. Moreton

It is hard to believe that a new year has arrived. 2014 has gone forever and 2015 lies ahead. Have you made any New Year's resolutions? In this second article on the history of foreigners and the Shikoku pilgrimage I will examine the period between the 1960s and 2014, and in doing so, hope that it will lead to an increased interest in this pilgrimage route and make you want to get out and experience some or all of it this year.

Oliver Statler (1915-2002), a researcher of Japan from the University of Hawaii, was very influential in promoting the Shikoku pilgrimage to the West. During WWII, he worked as military personnel in the Philippines and New Guinea, and between 1947-1954 worked in Tokyo and Yokohama. Later, while staying in Shimoda City (Shizuoka Prefecture) in 1960-1961, he visited Shikoku for the first time and thought that he would like to write about the pilgrimage someday. In 1968, he returned to Japan and stayed in Matsuyama City for three years. During this time he made the pilgrimage several times on his own, but then during the 1970s and 1980s often led "pilgrimage tours" for groups of students from Hawaii and Kyoto. In one article he wrote, "The Shikoku pilgrimage draws on the roots of Japanese culture and the study of it cannot help

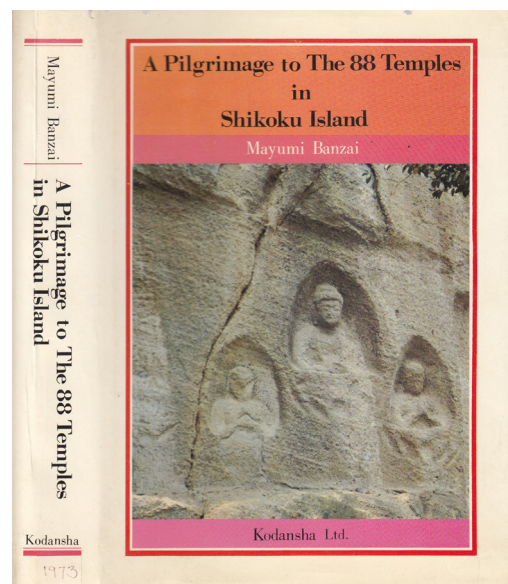


but illuminate that culture" but also stressed that "the temples punctuate the pilgrimage, they do not constitute it" (Matsuyama Univ. of Commerce Review, 1975). He also strongly felt that "going around in a bus or a car may be meritorious, but it is not ascetic exercise and it is not performing the pilgrimage" (letter written by Statler, 1979). In 1983, Statler published a book, Japanese Pilgrimage, in which he intertwined stories from the history of the pilgrimage and his own experiences as a pilgrim. However, unlike Bohner's book, Japanese Pilgrimage was distributed throughout the West and, as a result, allowed people to learn about this historically and culturally rich journey in English.

Some Japanese people also

published books in English, which helped to promote the Shikoku pilgrimage. For example, Mayumi Banzai wrote A Pilgrimage to the 88 Temples in Shikoku, Japan, based on her pilgrimages around the island in 1971 and 1972. In the Preface she wrote that she wants "to explain as much as [she] can to foreign visitors in the hope that they will agree with [her] conclusion that Kobo Daishi was the purest and most hardworking priest who ever lived in Japan" (Banzai, p10).

Another, and perhaps more widely known, book was A Henro Pilgrimage Guide to the 88 Temples of Shikoku Island, Japan published by Bishop Taisen Miyata in the United States in 1984. After graduating from Koyasan University, Miyata went to the US and in 1959 took over the Koyasan Betsuin Temple in Los Angeles. He made the Shikoku pilgrimage seven times



A 100-year history of foreigners and the Shikoku Pilgrimage – Part 2

By David C. Moreton

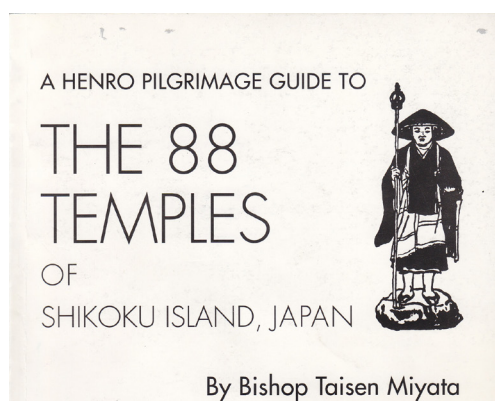
between 1955 and 1992, and last year at the age of 82 guided a group from California on his last “pilgrimage tour.” In his book, which has gone through four editions (latest 2006), he includes explanations on how to make the pilgrimage and describes the history of each temple and the major deities seen at the temples. Miyata knew about Statler and wrote, “I am thankful for his work and effort to introduce the Shikoku henro to the Westerners”

made and descriptions included in guidebooks to Japan. For example, the 2005 Lonely Planet recommends that, “If you have time and the inclination the best way to see and experience Shikoku is to journey around the 88 Sacred Temples. Shikoku is a very special place, but a lot of people rush through and leave without really understanding what it has to offer” (p569). However, until the widespread use of the Internet information on the pilgrimage could be difficult to acquire. In 1999, David Turkington from the US used this new form of communication to share his pilgrim experience in almost real time by uploading his diary every few days on to his website via public phones. Actually it was Statler’s book that he found at a bookstore in Tokyo in the 1980s that triggered his curiosity in the pilgrimage so much that after reading the book he knew that someday he would travel

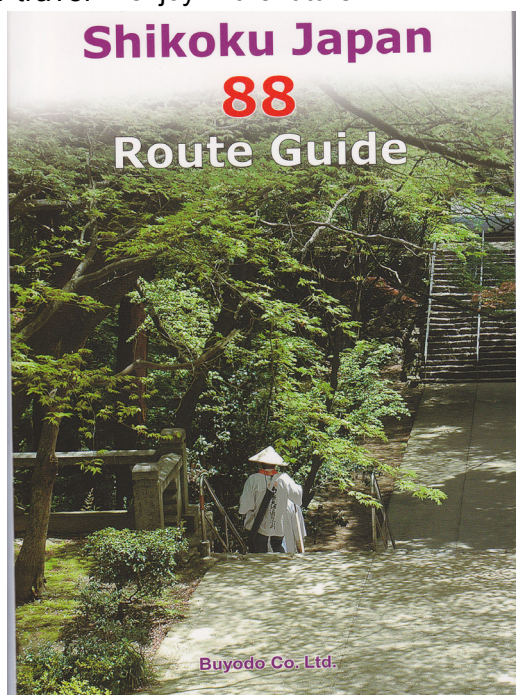
to Shikoku and walk the pilgrimage. Presently Turkington’s website is the best in English with lots of practical information regarding the Shikoku pilgrimage and also includes a forum where people can post questions and answers about the journey. (www.shikokuhenrotrail.com) Yet with even more and more material in printed form and explanations and descriptions on the Internet, foreigners

still had problems getting around because there was no guidebook in English until 2007. However, with the publication of the Shikoku Japan 88 Route Guide people could now read the maps for the route without knowing any Japanese. In fact, the popularity of the book has been so great that more than 3500 copies have been sold in seven years!

No one can deny that the number of foreigners making the Shikoku pilgrimage are growing due to a dramatic surge in the amount of information on the Internet and exposure via the mass media. Yet what will the future be like regarding this part of the pilgrimage? People like Starr, Bohner and Statler and many others in the past have greatly enjoyed this pilgrimage, so perhaps during 2015 get out and experience it for yourself, and then help to preserve it for people from around the world to enjoy in the future.



(Miyata, 157). Unfortunately, unlike Statler’s book, both of these books are almost impossible to obtain nowadays. From the 1970s onwards other people from around the world who embarked on the Shikoku pilgrimage have written articles or books about their experience. As well, various documentaries have been



Sodo Kimono Contest

By Melissa Palsenbarg



Kimono can be extremely intimidating to someone who doesn't have any experience with them. There are multiple layers of clothing and lots of ties and clips to hold it all together. It can take an extremely long time to get dressed neatly and properly. And there seems to be countless rules and guidelines to follow. All of this can make kimono an intimidating mountain to climb for anyone. The high standards of a properly worn kimono is something that all practitioners hope to achieve.

The Sodo Academy, the largest kimono school in Japan, holds an annual contest to give kimono enthusiasts from across the country a chance to show off their skills in kitsuke (the art of dressing in kimono), and this year's preliminary round for Shikoku and Chugoku was held in Tokushima.

Contestants were divided into women's furisode (a formal kimono for unmarried women),

women's tomesode (a formal kimono for married women), women's casual kimono, men's kimono, a children's category, a foreigner's category, and a team category (with three contestants per team co-operating to get everyone dressed).

For each category, participants came out with all the undergarments already on and the kimono lightly tied around the waist. Once the signal was given to start, participants had seven minutes (eight for foreigners) to get properly dressed and tie the obi before presenting themselves to the judges. Participants were judged on their speed, smoothness in their kitsuke, and how close they came to the ideal look.

Some of the participants worked incredibly fast. The fastest kitsuke of the day was the winner of the men's category. His final time was 2:13. He's a 16 year old junior high school student who practices three

hours a day. Even the children did well. The first child to finish dressing was five years old, and she finished in less than five minutes.

While Japanese participants were judged in their own separate categories, all the foreigners were in one category. The eight participants included six participants in furisode, one in a casual kimono, and one man wearing hakama.

The participants dressing in a furisode had an added challenge! There are certain obi knots that can only be completed with the help of another person. All the obi knots that are appropriate to wear with a furisode fall into this category. However the Sodo Academy has developed a tool called a biyousugata that lets you tie the obi yourself on the floor before wrapping it around your waist and securing it. Participants had about three minutes to tie the obi, three minutes to put on the kimono, and two minutes to secure the obi and check that everything was still in place. And nobody was eliminated for going overtime!



Sodo Kimono Contest By Melissa Palsenbarg

The top two contestants in the foreigner's category this year were both from Tokushima (congratulations!).

They'll go on to the national competition in Tokyo next spring. Seeing a foreigner dress themselves in kimono in around five minutes makes that kimono mountain seem a little easier to climb. If you are interested in learning for free, please join our Tokushima Kimono group on Facebook. Also, for more information on kimono, or if you want to see more photos from the contest, please check out www.readysetkimono.com

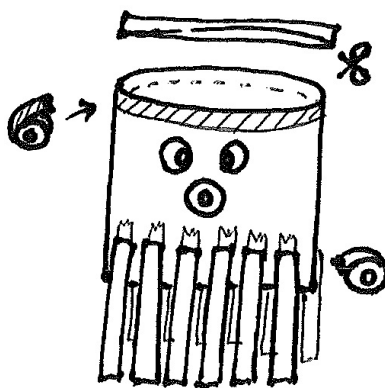


Letter From Suketo Hoikuen By Kazue Inoue

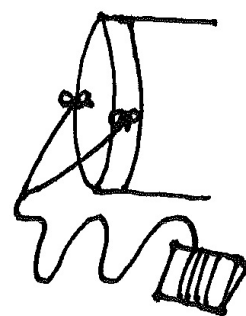
Happy New Year! Every year temples and shrines around Japan will be filled with families wishing for everyone's health and luck, in a tradition called hatsumode.

Whether it is God, Buddha, Santa Claus, and so on, people will believe in and pray to an invisible being. By the time children reach the age of 1 ½, they will begin to pretend play, including pretending to eat food when playing house or using various objects as different things. This is evidence that their imagination skills are increasing. As their imagination skills develop, so will their thinking skills, which will foster flexible thinking. As well, it will help them become more empathetic and able to properly assess other's feelings, and will also help children have a better sense of self.

①, ②



③



Imagination skills will show significant growth between the ages of 1 ½ and 4 years old so let them engage in various pretend play to help foster their imagination. For example, (1) Use items with simple shapes and colors, (2) things that are easily malleable by children (such as water, sand, dirt,

mud, modeling clay, origami, newspaper, and building blocks) and so on. The better the imagination and the more open their mind are, they will be able to get along with more people and will be able to make more friends not only at an early age but also later on in life.

Letter From Suketo Hoikuen

By Kazue Inoue

This Month's Craft
Handmade Kite

String
Cardboard

Materials

Plastic bag

Vinyl tape

Scissor

Tape

Paper masking tape (or strips of paper)

Construction paper

Glue

Directions

(1) Cut open the bottom of a plastic bag and then wrap the top with electrical (vinyl) tape.

(2) Tape strips of paper masking tape to the bottom of the bag (you can also just cut up strips of paper and tape it on as well).

Then create the eyes and nose

with construction paper and stick it on.

(3) Tie a string to the top of the bag (refer to diagram). Make sure you have about 1-2m left of the string so you can let the kite fly and then wrap the rest of the string onto a piece cardboard.

*Enjoy flying your kite in opens areas like parks.

Japanese Lesson

By Yoko Aoki

あけましておめでとうございます。

今年も“Japanese Lesson”で楽しく日本語を勉強しましょう。

Happy New Year! Another new year means another fun year of learning Japanese.

今月のことは「～てみます」です。練習をして使ってみましょう。

This month we will be learning how to use “～てみます”. We will practice using it a few times then you can try using the word yourself.

【会話】このコートを 着てみる てもいいですか。 May I try this coat on ?

マリア：すみません。そのコートを見せてください。

店員：どうぞ。

マリア：このコートを 着てみる てもいいですか。

店員：ええ。試着室は こちらです。

いかがですか。

マリア：着てみました。ここが ちょっと きつい です。

店員：では こちらのサイズを 着てみる てください。

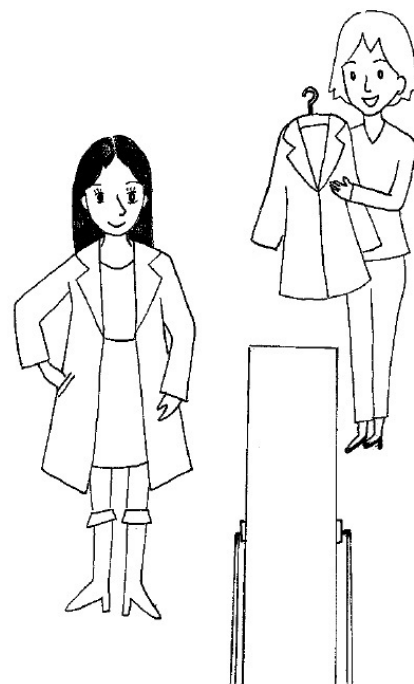
少し大きいサイズです。

マリア：これなら ゆったり しています。ちょうど いいです。

店員：よくお似合いですよ。

マリア：そうですか。じゃ、これにします。

店員：ありがとうございます。



< 動詞 でフォーム + みます > try to do ~

～てみます

Try to do ~

着ます → 着てみます

くつをはきます → はいてみます

食べます → 食べてみます

使います → 使ってみます

～てみてください

Please try to do ~

着てみてください

はいてみてください

食べてみてください

使ってみてください

／ ～ててもいいですか

May I try to do ~?

着ててもいいですか

はいててもいいですか

食べててもいいですか

使ってもいいですか

Japanese Lesson

By Yoko Aoki

ほかに「～てみましょう／～てみませんか／～てみたいです／～てみたらどうですか」もよく使います。^{つか}
The following are often used as well: “～てみましょう／～てみませんか／～てみたいです／～てみたらどうですか”.

【練習】(例) デパートで すてきなコートを見つけました。買うまえに着たいです。
すみません。このコートを着てみてもいいですか。

- ① このくつをはきます ② このスマートフォンを使^{つか}います

- ③ この^{くるま}車に^の乗ります

④ 4.5.2.1.1.7.2.4.2.5.4

♭ 2 1 1 7 2 4 2 C 00 ③ ♯ 4 ♭ 2 1 1 7 2 4 2 C 4 C ② ♯ 4 ♭ 2 1 1 7 2 4 2 1 1 ①

Osechi Recipe

By Jenifer Tanikawa

Every year when New Year comes around, colorful and elaborate looking dishes will line the tables of Japanese households. These traditional New Year's food is called osechi ryori (御節料理) and are eaten to celebrate the new year and to wish for happiness, health and prosperity for the upcoming year.

This tradition is said to go back hundreds of years to the Heian Period, finding its roots in Chinese customs. Back then, to mark the changing of the season and to give thanks to god for the food they harvested, they would leave offerings for god called osechiku (御節供). They would then use the offerings to create a meal called osechiku ryori (御節供料理), which was eaten to express thanks and to wish for success in both agriculture and fishing. And this osechiku ryori is said to

have been the very start of the
osechi ryori tradition.

During the Heian Period, the Imperial Court began to celebrate the five important seasons in an event called the sechie (節会), where they gave offerings to god and had meals prepared to celebrate this major event. This custom of celebrating these five special days was introduced to Japan from China.

It wasn't until the Edo Period, where commoners begin to eat festive meals to celebrate the new year. Originally osechi was not limited to New Years, but as it was one of the most important days of the year, the meal they had at New Years came to be called osechi ryori.

Osechi ryori are traditionally served in special boxes called the jubako (重箱) and the boxes are stacked on top of



Osechi Recipe

By Jenifer Tanikawa

each other, to symbolize the many layers of happiness. Each jubako are filled with food that all hold a symbolic meaning.

Black Soybean
Kuro mame (黒豆)

The black soybean has two meanings, both of which are play-on words with the word mame or beans. The first meaning is “mame ni kurasu (まめに暮らす)”, which means to lead a healthy life and the other “mame ni hataraku (まめに働く)” means working hard.

Shrimp
Ebi (海老)

The shrimp symbolizes a wish for long life. The arched shape of the shrimp is compared to

that of an arched back of the elderly, basically meaning, live long enough that your back will become arched.

Herring Roe
Kazunoko (数の子)

The herring roe consists of many eggs, which symbolizes fertility and the hope that the family will be gifted with many children.

Red and White Kamaboko
Kouhaku Kamaboko (紅白蒲鉾)
First of all, the half circle shape of the kamaboko, or the fish cake, is said to look like the rising sun. Secondly, the red color is said to ward off the evil and the white is said to represent purity. Both of these

colors are associated with good luck.

Seaweed
Konbu (昆布)

The seaweed is said to represent happiness, as it is associated with the word, “yorokobu (喜ぶ)” which means joy or happiness.

Red Sea Bream
Tai (鯛)

Tai is associated with the word “medetai (めでたい)”, which symbolizes an auspicious event.

Lotus Root
Renkon (蓮根)

As the lotus root has many holes, it symbolizes a clear view into the future.

Events & Memoranda

平成 26 年度 国際理解支援フォーラム

徳島県在住外国人のみなさんと一緒に「多文化共生」について考えませんか？

日時：平成 27 年 2 月 8 日（日）13:30 ~ 16:00

場所：（公財）徳島県国際交流協会 会議室（徳島駅ビル 6 F）

内容： 第一部 蓮井孝夫氏による講話

（NPO 法人 香川国際ボランティアセンター代表理事、元 RNC 日本放送アナウンサー）

第二部 協会登録在住外国人講師による国際理解プレゼンテーション

第三部 意見交換 交流会

* 第三部では在住外国人の方のパフォーマンスや心ばかりのお茶やお菓子もあります。
すてきなひとときを過ごしませんか？ふるってご参加下さい。

* 入場料は無料

申し込み・問い合わせ：当協会 Tel. 088-656-3303 FAX 088-652-0616

E-mail: coordinator3@topia.ne.jp

詳細については、当協会のホームページをご覧ください。

<http://www.topia.ne.jp>

当日参加も大歓迎ですが、できれば事前に電話か FAX またはメールでお申し込みください。



Events & Memoranda

Awa Folk Performing Arts Forum あわ民俗芸能フォーラム

Every different region will have their own different history and characteristics, and so every region will have their own unique traditional arts. Come down to Cosmo Hall to spend the day reveling in the past while watching the passionate performers and experience the joys and depth of folk performing arts.

When: January 18 (Sun), 12:30 – 16:00
Where: Cosmo Hall (Anan City, Hanoura-cho, Nakanosho, Kaminakare 16-3)
Admission fee: Free
Info: Tokushima Pref. Board of Education, Education and Culture Policy Division
TEL: 088-621-3267

「民俗芸能」は、歴史や風土の異なる地域に暮らす人々の生活の中から生まれ、伝承されてきた伝統文化です。コスモホールで徳島県の民俗芸能の面白さや奥深さ、演じる人たちの熱気を感じとり、みなさんのところにあるふるさとの風景が懐かしくなる時間を一緒に味わいませんか？

日時： 1月18日（日）
12:30 – 16:00
場所： コスモホール
阿南市羽ノ浦町中庄上ナカレ 16 – 3
入場料： 無料
問合せ： 徳島県教育委員会教育文化政策課
TEL： 088-621-3267

Taisan-ji Temple Mochi Carrying Competition 大山寺の力餅

This gathering happens every year on the third sunday of January inside of the Taisan-ji temple. The main event is a competition of who can walk the furthest carrying a heavy pot filled with mochi-rice cake. For men it is 169kg, for women it is 50kg and for children it is a 10kg heavy keg. Even observing will invigorate you and before you know you will shout and cheer for the contestants.

Address: Inside Taisan-ji, Itano-gun, Kamiita-cho, Kanyake taisan 4
Date: January 18 (Sun)
Entry: Free
Information: Taisan-ji
TEL : 088-694-5525
URL : http://taisanji.jp/?page_id=10
Access: 1 hour by car from Tokushima station

正月の初会式の行事として毎年1月第3日曜日に大山寺境内で行われます。男 169kg・女 50kg・子ども 10kg・幼児 5kg の餅をかつぎ、歩いた距離を競います。見物する方も思わず力が入り思わず歓声を上げてしまう程の名物行事です。

基本情報
開催地 大山寺境内 板野郡上板町神宅字大山 4

開催日
1月18日（日）
料金 無料
お問い合わせ：大山寺
TEL : 088-694-5525
URL : http://taisanji.jp/?page_id=10
アクセス：JR 徳島駅 → 車で1時間

Counselling Service at TOPIA トピアの相談窓口

TOPIA offers a counselling and advisory service to all foreign residents to help with issues involving accidents, working conditions, housing, visas, international marriage, and more. Counselling is available in English and Japanese. Please note that although every effort will be made, we may not be able to deal with all cases.

Everyday, 10:00 - 18:00 (closed during the New Year's holidays)
Tel: 088-656-3303 or 088-656-3320 (allows three-way conversations with an interpreter)