

前橋瓦版

MAEBASHI KAWARABAN

Monthly newsletter for foreigners



June 2010



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Maebashi

Kawaraban

Maebashi City Office
Cultural and International
Affairs Division
371-8601 Gunma-ken Maebashi-shi
Otemachi 2-12-1
Tel.: 027-898-6516

E-mail: cir@city.maebashi.gunma.jp

Web site:

<http://www.city.maebashi.gunma.jp/english/index.htm>

Editor:

Dario De Leo

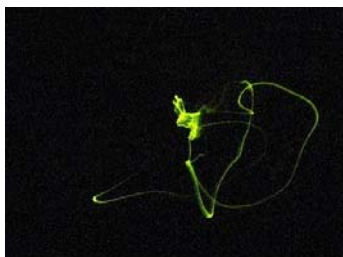
Editor's note

Ciao carissimi lettori,

Do you like this month's cover picture? I took it on the balcony of a mall in Odaiba, and it says something along the lines of "please don't throw things downstairs – and be careful not to fall down either". That's a wonderful piece of advice, which reminds me of a Japanese book called "Kawaisouna Pikutosan" (That poor stickman!). The book collects many signs from all over the world, in which the poor Mr. Picto has to face the most atrocious and improbable deaths. People felt so sorry for him that some good Samaritan even ended up making the "Japanese Society for Pictosan" website (www.pictosan.com), from which the image on the left has been borrowed. Writing of wonderful things also reminded me of the great story of "Mario Wonderful" and his father "Beautiful". Unfortunately that's not something that can be told on these pages, so let's just say that I mentioned it to fill the rest of this column.

Dario

FIREFLIES VIEWING



Fireflies have made early summer a special time for the Japanese since ancient times, when people in villages and towns used to observe and enjoy the little lights darting about in the night. Fireflies often appear in Japanese literature and poetry, and the brevity of their existence has made them a symbol of the transience and poignancy

of life. In the past they were taken to be the souls of the dead, and in 1945 they were identified with kamikaze pilots who were being sent to their deaths at the end of the Second World War. In the Edo period, one pastime was catching fireflies while enjoying the cool evening air. In the old days, people used to gather at viewing spots in different parts of the city, but the number of fireflies dropped as the city expanded. The affinity Japanese people have had for fireflies since ancient times is so strong that made Japan the only country in the world to have implemented legislations that protects

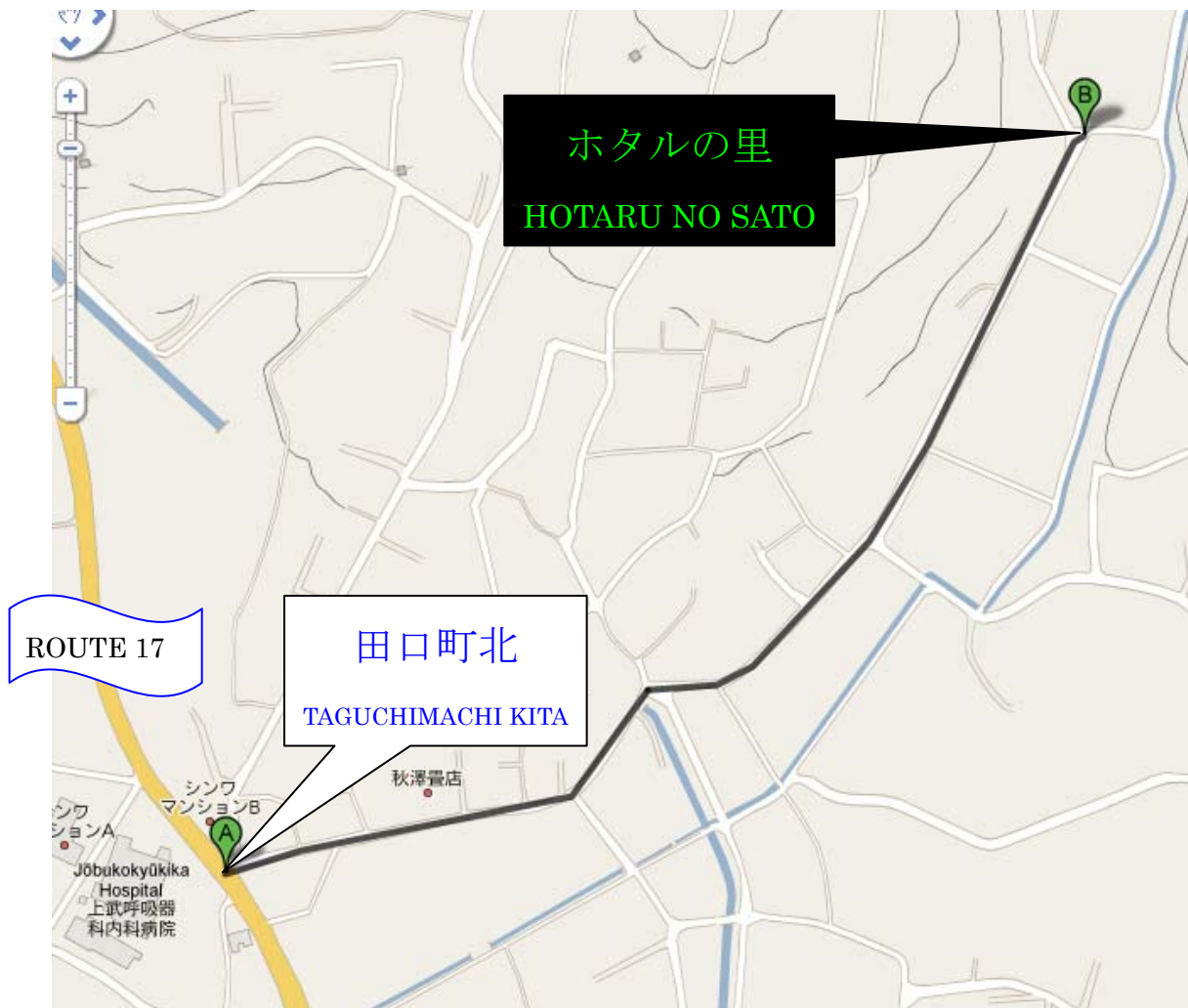
the glowing insects. To protect them is to preserve the natural world they live in, so their bright lights have come to symbolize a healthy environment. Taguchi town in Maebashi has been protecting fireflies for a long time, and every year a festival is held to celebrate their glowing beauty. Being the month of the year when it easier to spot those insects, the festival is held in June, and this year it falls on Saturday 12 and Sunday 13. Of course this doesn't mean that you can't go check them out even during the weekdays. There are two different species of fireflies that



can be seen in Taguchi: Genji and Heike. In their larva form, both species prey on small freshwater snails. Genji firefly larvae live in clean flowing water, while the Heike species dwells in rice fields and other places where water is stagnant. The first kind can be spotted throughout the whole month of June, and the latter one stay around a little longer, until the middle of July.

The venue where to enjoy fireflies viewing is called “Hotaru no Sato”, which means “Village of Fireflies”, and the best time to go would be on calm evenings between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. Despite its fancy name, the “Village of Fireflies” is a small field located in Taguchimachi, and it can be pretty difficult to find without directions. To get there from Maebashi centre,

you need to ride route 17 up towards Shibukawa direction until you get to the “Taguchimachi Kita” intersection, on whose left side you should be able to spot the Jobukokyukika Hospital. Turn right at this intersection and drive straight for a few minutes. You will then reach the fireflies viewing spot, that will be easy to recognize once you are near to it.



Potluck Party



Maebashi International Association is throwing a potluck party on Sunday the 6th of June, starting from 11:30. Everyone will gather on the green area in front of the Prefectural building, then they'll move to Maebashi Park, to have a great picnic in the area beside Sachi Pond. Please join in flocks, as there will be games, presents, and lots of interesting people to chat and have fun with! Of course potluck party means that everyone brings a dish to share with the others, so don't forget to make one. Here's a list of what else to bring: plates, cutlery, drinks and leisure sheets. The event will be cancelled in case of rain. If you are 100% sure

of joining the potluck party, it would be nice of you to inform the Maebashi International Association so they can get a rough idea of the number of participants. Here's their number: 027-243-7788.

Taiko!



Would you like to give Japanese traditional drums (*wadaiko*) a try but don't really know where to start? Well, the Maebashi International Association (again) has just organized an event that is perfect for you! Saturday the 3rd of July from 3 p.m., you can experience an amazing 2 hours workshop that will help unleash your inner musician through active hands-on participation on Japanese drums, performed under the supervision of a local



group of drummers, the Mebashi *Karyu Daiko* team. The workshop will be held at the Owatari Gym (Owatarimachi 2-3-11), and the participation fee will be 500 yen. Since only the first 40 applications will be accepted, you better start reserving your spot right now! You can apply by sending an e-mail at mia@peach.ocn.ne.jp, with "*wadaiko*" as the object field, or by calling the Association directly: 027-243-7788. What to bring: indoor shoes (barefoot is ok too), towel and drinks. Participants will be admitted to the venue from 2:30 p.m.



Don, Doko Don!

Aconselhamento para Estrangeiros

PORTUGUESE

- Local : Segundo andar da Prefeitura de Maebashi, outro lado do setor No.37
- Horário : Segundas-feiras das 13:00~17:00hs
Quintas-feiras das 9:00~13:00hs
- Telefone: 027-898-5965 (direto, só nas segundas e quintas feiras)

Consultorio para los Extranjeros

SPANISH

- Lugar : Segundo piso de la Municipalidad de Maebashi, mostrador del otro lado de la Ventanilla No.37
- Horario : Lunes de las 13:00~17:00hs
Jueves de las 9:00~13:00hs
- Teléfono: 027-898-5965 (directo, sólo en el horario arriba mencionado)
-

Counselling Service for Foreigners

ENGLISH

- Place : Maebashi City Office 2F, counseling corner
(the other side of No.37 counter)
- Hours : 13:00~17:00 on Monday
9:00~13:00 on Thursday
- TEL : 027-898-5965 (directly, only during the hours mentioned above)

中文咨询窗口

CHINESE

- 地点 : 前桥市役所 2 楼 外国人咨询窗口 (37 号窗口对面)
- 時間 : 每星期一 13:00~17:00
每星期四 9:00~13:00
- 电话 : 027-898-5965 (直拨。只限于上述时间内)