

# 前橋瓦版

## Maebashi Kawaraban

*Monthly newsletter for foreigners*



*Summer fireworks display in Maebashi*

# August 2010



前橋瓦版

**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](mailto:cir@city.maebashi.gunma.jp)

**Web site:**

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

**Editor:**

**Dario De Leo**

### **Editor's note**

You all everybody! You all everybody!

How are you dealing with summer fatigue besides listening to Drive Shaft's only single while watching an old picture of me and my friends trying to guess which one is me? That tiredness that hits you in summer and makes you feel like wanting to lie in bed for ages has its own word in Japan, and it spells *natsubate*, which is a mix of the word *natsu* (summer) and part of the verb *bateru* (being exhausted). This problem affects me particularly here, because even though the climate may be similar to Italy, Japan is very humid, and way more air conditioned. Full power air conditioning seems a great idea at first, but science says that temperature differences between outside air and inside air higher than 5 degrees will just make *natsubate* worse, and probably rip to shreds the fabric of space and time I would add. The best advice I received about coping with summer fatigue I want to share here with you, and it is to drink something hot, as it will help your body balance its heat. I know it is a bit counterintuitive but I assure you it works magic!

## Mount Akagi Summer Festival



Why don't you get away from summer heat by going to Mount Akagi Summer Festival during on the first weekend of August? This festival will be held on the shores of Ōnuma Lake on August 7 (Sat) from 10:00am to 08:00pm, and August 8 (Sun) from 9:30am to 4:30pm. The venue can be easily reached from Maebashi station with a one hour bus ride, and the festival schedules different events. On Saturday there will be many dance performance son stage, a tasty spinach udon eating contest, and much more, with the main event starting at 7:00pm, and being an impressive fireworks show that will be reflected on the lake's

beautiful surface. The following day will feature the "Akagiyama Big Band Jazz Festival 2010", where numerous jazz bands will perform on an open stage surrounded by nature.

## Takasaki Matsuri



The Takasaki festival is one of the biggest summer events in Gunma, featuring a full two days of portable shrines shaped like giant daruma dolls, floats carrying Japanese drums that will be played throughout the city and traditional Japanese performances. The festival falls on the first weekend of August, which means August 7 (Sat) and 8 (Sun) this year. Most of the

performances take place between 2:00pm and 8:00pm in the area nerby Tamachi-dōri, with the climax consisting in a massive display of about 15000 fireworks that will be popped on the shores of the Karasu River on Saturday from 7:40pm to 8:30pm. I'm not missing that, what about you?

## Yagibushi Matsuri



The Yagibushi is a popular folk song and dance performed at festivals in Gunma and Tochigi prefectures. I personally like to think that the Yagibushi is as close as you can get to hip hop being performed during a local folk festival while being respectful of traditions. Sure there are a few differences, no one is wearing kilos of shiny

metal and the artists are quite getting on in years but they are some innovative octogenarians who definitely know how to freestyle rap! The Yagibushi festival is held from the Friday to Sunday of the first week end in August every year in Kiryu City, and it falls on the the 6-7-8<sup>th</sup> this year. Held since 1964 it was originally named “Kiryu Festival” then switched to present name in 1988. The festival is famous as the most gorgeous festival in the Kanto region. It features a lot of events such as children’s portable shrines parade, the “Yagibushi Dance” contest, and the Jumbo Parade. Show up and see for yourself what these names stand for! During the festival you’ll be able to enjoy the National Yagibushi Song Contest that features performers from all over the country, and the atmosphere will be further livened up by many people who will get

together on temporary stages throughout the city and perform original dances to the rhythm of Yagibushi folk music!

## *Maebashi Fireworks*



Maebashi fireworks festival is scheduled for on August 14 (Sat), and will feature about 13000 fireworks to be set off popped between 07:00pm and 08:45pm from the banks of Tone River. The best location to enjoy this display would be the Tone riverside of Shikishima Park, where you can have a picnic on the grass while waiting for the event to begin, or just enjoy food from the many open air stalls that lined up in the area. That’s also a great spot to appreciate the

Niagara fireworks, easily the highlight of this festival and consisting of a series of fireworks that, hanging from the nearby Ōwatari bridge, will resemble a waterfall. It is impressive to watch, and I’m looking forward to the Maebashi Fireworks this year too!

## *Ōhinata Fire Festival*



On August 14 (Sat) and 15 (Sun), the largest remaining fire festival in Gunma prefecture is being celebrated by the by the people of Ōhinata in the Nanmoku village. Also known as *hitoboshi*, or fire-lighting festival, this event’s dates coincide with *Obon*, a festival honoring dead ancestors, while the festival itself celebrates the village’s victorious alliance with the Takeda

clan during a period of military turmoil historically known as the “Warring States” that upset the whole Japan from the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During the festival villagers take turns twirling up burning bales of hay over Ōhinata bridge throughout the evening.

## Chiyoda Matsuri



If I could choose only one fireworks show to go this year, I would definitely go for the Chiyoda festival in Ōra-gun, Chiyoda-machi, Akaiwa, nearby the small ferry wharf. This hidden gem falls on a weekday, August 18 (Wed), and the venue is a bit far from Maebashi but I

think it is really worth it. The atmosphere is cozy and the fireworks are spectacular. 7000 are scheduled to go off between 07:00pm and 09:00pm from behind a hill which is very close to the crowd for maximum effect. Most of the sets are different from each other, and they will be reflected on the Tone River, that will be illuminated by hundreds of floating paper lanterns, a sort of memorial service for the repose of drowned souls.



## Maebashi Robocon

This is not a summer festival, but I consider it an interesting event nonetheless. The 11<sup>th</sup> Maebashi Robocon will be held at the Gunma Lifelong Learning Centre in Bunkyōchō

2-20-22 on August 21<sup>nd</sup> (Sat), at 10:30am. This robot contest has been held in Maebashi every year for the past 10, featuring different themes and challenges for its participants. This year theme, “Let’s cook ton-ton soup!”, derives its name from the pork soup typical of this area. The participating teams will maneuver their robots through a field filled with vegetables and toy pigs trying to gather the ingredients for pork soup by put them into a basket before completing the course. The access to this event is free, and I am sure that you will find fascinating the robots that each team will build to pursue victory, so don’t miss this contest if you are around!



# The 9th JAPANESE SPEECH CONTEST FOR FOREIGNERS CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Time and date : November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010 Wednesday (Culture Day) 13:00~  
Place : Gunma Kaikan 1F Hall  
Maebashi-shi Ote-machi 2-1-1 Tel.027-226 - 4850  
Sponsored by : the Maebashi-shi International Association

## 1. OBJECTIVE

- a. Enhance international exchange and understand cultural differences.
- b. Motivate desire toward the learning of the Japanese language.
- c. Present the achievements accomplished in learning Japanese.

## 2. SPEECH SUBJECT AND FORM

Any subject that meets the objective. Audio/visual aids are allowed.

## 3. DURATION OF SPEECH

The standard duration of speech is about five minutes.

## 4. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Residents of Maebashi city and its neighboring districts who are not native Japanese speakers.

## 5. OTHERS

There will be no ranking, but participants will be given participation awards and a selected few will be given special awards.

General questions will be accepted after the contest to deepen the exchange experience.

If there are too many applications, participants will be selected based on the speech contents. Selected participant will be notified in advance.

## 6. HOW TO APPLY

The applications should be mailed or brought in person to  
Maebashi International Association by September 27th, 2010.

The address is as follows :

Maebashi-shi Hon-machi 1-5-2, Maebashi-shi Kenshu Kaikan 1F, 371-0023  
Tel. 027-243-7788

**Maebashi International Association**