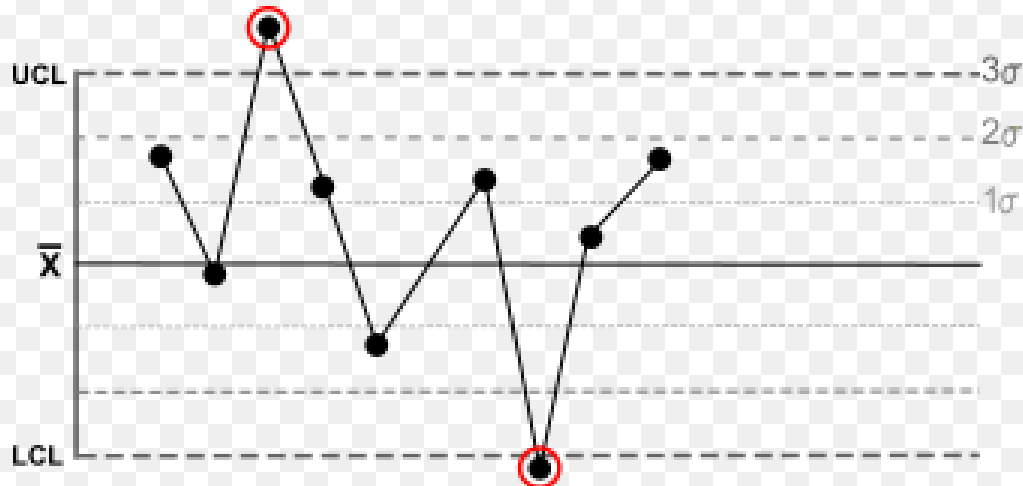


前橋瓦版

Maebashi Kawaraban

Monthly newsletter for foreigners

Rule 1: One point is more than 3 standard deviations from the mean



April 2010



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Maebashi

Kawaraban

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Editor's note

Today I tell you the story of many. I read it in a book titled "The Peaceful Warrior", and I think it perfectly represents a behavior people tend to adopt one time to often during the course of their lives. I have been guilty of doing this myself, and believe that by simply being aware of an unhealthy attitude, we can make a conscious effort to improve ourselves, so here you go with some food for thoughts: *On a construction site in the Midwest, when the lunch whistle blew, all the workers would sit down together to eat. And with singular regularity Sam would open his lunch pail and start to complain. "Son of a gun!" he'd cry, "not peanut butter and jelly sandwiches again. I hate peanut butter and jelly!" Sam moaned about his peanut butter and jelly sandwiches day after day after day. Weeks passed, and the other workers were getting irritated by his behavior. Finally, another man on the work crew said, "Fer crissakes, Sam, if you hate peanut butter and jelly so much, why don't you just tell yer ol' lady to make you something different?" "What do you mean, my ol' lady?" Sam replied, "I'm not married. I make my own sandwiches."*

IT'S HANAMI TIME!



Hanami is one of the best Japanese traditions you will ever hear about. The literal translation means “flower viewing”, but a more realistic explanation would go along the lines of “to gather with friends early in the morning on the pretense of having a picnic while watching cherry blossoms, and get drunk instead, totally forget about the flowers, eat loads of food, harass the party on your left, get drunker, fall asleep, be harassed by the party on your right, wake up, drink some more, join party



next to you, find a guy with a guitar and transform all the small parties in a mega gathering by singing well known Japanese songs together and maybe playing a drinking game, then remember about the cherry blossoms and spend thirty seconds noticing how their evanescent beauty reminds us of the transient nature of all things, drink even more to celebrate the bittersweet sadness in knowing how beautiful things come and go in the blink of an eye because that is what makes them touch our hearts, eat the leftovers, and pack your stuff heading home just in time for supper”. Cherry trees are expected to be in bloom between the beginning of and the middle of April, and to help you plan your own *hanami* event, I will now present you a list of the best spots to enjoy cherry blossoms in the Maebashi area:

Maebashi Park, in Ote-machi:



It's the main park in Maebashi, close to the Prefectural building, on the site where Maebashi Castle used to be. During the cherry blossoms period, the park will be lighted up from 6:00 pm until 12:00 am to let latecomers enjoy the evening scene as well, and there will be of course plenty of stalls selling food.

Shikishima Park, in Shikishima-machi:



This is the biggest park in Maebashi, with a lot of trees and a little lake. With almost 350 cherry trees, you can enjoy the beautiful view of the blossoms on the lake while riding on a boat, or

sit on the gardens and play games with your family or friends.

Senbonzakura in Mount Akagi (Maebashi-shi, Naegashima-machi):



The 1000 cherry trees of Mt. Akagi southern side is one of Japan's best 100 cherry blossoms viewing spots. The flowers there usually blossom a little later than the city due to temperature and altitude differences. During the cherry blossom festival, scheduled from April 3 (Sat) to April 18 (Sun), many attractions and food stalls will be open to the public from 9 am to sunset. Although there is no a bus route that would take you there, Akagi Taxi (Tel. 027-283-3122) offers a pick up service to and from Ogo station for a set fare of 200 yen, from 8 am to 6 pm.

Ogo Green Flower Ranch (Maebashi-shi, Takikubo-machi):



With more than 500 cherry trees, the ranch is a great place to have a good time just outside the city. There are cows and horses feeding around, making it the perfect to experience a natural environment. A cherry blossom festival is scheduled, for Sunday April 11, from 10:00 am to 2:40 pm. Under the park's characteristic windmill it will be possible to enjoy many performances such as traditional Japanese drums, dances, and songs. There will also be various shops selling flowers, local products and hand made goods, not to mention the numerous food stalls a respectable festival will would never lack of!

*Maebashi
City Marathon*



On April 25 (Sun) there is going to be the 11th Maebashi City Marathon. The opening ceremony will start at 7:50 am and the marathon from at 8:20 am, both in front of the Green Dome. The marathon has different routes, the main course being the one for the half marathon, which is scheduled to start at 9:30 pm, while the 10km marathon starts at 9:20. Before the main run starts, the 3km marathon and the 3km family run will allow its participants to have fun and enjoying a nice day skipping around the Tone river. Thousands of people are expected to be there! Also, five runners from Birmingham (Alabama, U.S.A.) are

coming to Maebashi to participate in the marathon. They will arrive on the 22th, me and my colleagues will guide them through Maebashi and Gunma's famous spots, plus a welcome reception will be held for them on the evening of the 25th after the run. Birmingham is one of Maebashi's sister cities and has a famous track and field's club. Its runners often come visiting Maebashi on the occasion of the annual city marathon, to celebrate the friendly relationship that bounds the two cities. If you are interested in joining the party, please contact the Maebashi International



Keep your beauty on duty!

Ass. (Tel. 243-7788) by Thursday April 15 to reserve. The admission fee of 4,500 yen and will give you access to 2 hours of the classy all you can drink banquet, that will start on Sunday April 25 at 6 pm in the Keyaki hall located on the 8th floor of the Maebashi Terrsa Hotel.



Ski Resort Review

Even though it's spring already, that doesn't sign the end of your ski season, dear Maebashi reader. There is in fact a great resort that will not close until the 23rd of May, and that being located not far from the Yuzawa exit of the expressway happens to be very accessible from Maebashi. I think I got there in about an hour and half, leaving from Maebashi centre. Of course riding the

expressway can be pretty expensive in Japan, and that's why I would suggest you getting an ETC card and reader set if you are staying for a while. That will get you many discounts, and you will be able to get back your money's worth after very little time even if you are not travelling so often. But let me go back to praising the Kagura ski resort. Just in front of the Kagura Mitsumata station, which is you are going to park your car before getting on the ropeway to the slopes, there is a cheap onsen called "Kaido no Yu" where you can relax for 500 yen before heading home. Anyway, you don't really need to have a car to enjoy Kagura ski resort, as you are able get a bullet train return ticket + lift ticket pack for less than 10,000 yen by look around for offers on the web, or just asking your local Japanese travel agency.

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

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Lugar : Segundo piso de la Municipalidad de Maebashi,
mostrador del otro lado de la Ventanilla No.37
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Jueves de las 9:00 ~ 13:00hs
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Counselling Service for Foreigners

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Place : Maebashi City Office 2F, counseling corner
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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
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