

# FESTIVALS

## **DOGO-ONSEN YEAR-END CLEANING**

The Dogo bath buildings are cleaned at the end of the year so that everything will be fresh for the New Year. Big bamboo brooms used on the outside are about 6 meters long and 2 meters wide.

The baths are closed on the following days for cleaning.

5<sup>th</sup> Dogo-onsen Honkan (Main Bath)

*Ashiyu* (foot bath)-till noon

6<sup>th</sup> Dogo-onsen Bekkan (Bath Annex) Asuka-no-yu 飛鳥乃温泉

Tsubaki-no-yu 椿の湯

(Tel. 089-921-5141)

## **Dec. 6 HARI-KUYO 針供養 (Memorial Service for Needles)**

*Hari-kuyo* started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to give women a break in those days of *danson-johi* 男尊女卑 (predominance of men over women). Broken or old needles were placed at a small altar and people gave thanks to the needles' faithful service. Women did not do needlework on that day. This traditional event has been handed down as an annual event of schools for tailors, dress and *kimono* makers. In Matsuyama it is observed at Matsuyama Business College in 1-bancho 1-chome 4, where teachers and students of fashion-beauty course stick about 1,300 needles used in dress-making classes into large *konnyaku* (devil's tongue) cakes at an altar, giving thanks to them and praying for better sewing skills. The priest of Shoji-ji chants a sutra. Later the needles are put in *Harizuka* (a burial mound for needles) at the temple.

## **Mid Dec. SUSUHARAI 燐払い (Soot Sweeping) Temple Cleaning at Ishite-ji**

This is not only a thorough cleaning, but it also has the religious significance of purification. The faithful of Ishite-ji and temple staffs will clean the temple to prepare for welcoming the New Year.

## **Dec. 14 The 57<sup>th</sup> GISHI MATSURI 義士祭り (Faithful Retainer Festival)**

A memorial service will be held at Kosho-ji temple 興聖寺, in Suehiro-machi about 100m south of the city station. After taking revenge for their master's death, the famous 47 *roshi*, masterless warriors of Ako fief, were caught, divided and sent to four fiefs. Ten of the *ronin* were sent to Nakayashiki (Annex house) of Matsuyama fief in Edo. In those days it was forbidden to take revenge for their master's death so their only honorable alternative was to commit ritual suicide (*seppuku* 切腹). One samurai of Matsuyama fief helped two of the *ronin*, Otaka Gengo and Kimura Okaemon, to kill themselves (*kaishaku* 介錯) in 1706. The samurai brought back hair that had been cut from their topknots and a monument with their hair in it was built at Kosho-ji. A ceremony for the ten departed souls has been held every year since 1945. (Tel. 089-941-4471)

10:00 *Gishi* parade

11:00 *Uchiiri-soba* (revenge buckwheat noodles) ¥ 300

12:00 Memorial service, dedication of haiku, and *shigin* (recitation of Chinese poems)

Otaka Gengo was known as a haiku poet and his dying poem was as follows,  
*ume de nomu*                      梅で飲む                      drinking *sake* viewing *ume* blossoms  
*chaya mo arubeshi*              茶屋もあるべし              there should be a tea house  
*shide no yama*                      死出の山                      in the other world

**Mid Dec. HO-ONKO 法恩講 (The memorial service for St. Shinran 親鸞聖人)**

**At Enko-ji temple 圓光寺 on Gintengai Street near Matsuyama City Station**

**Furofuki-daikon no Osettai ふうふき大根のお接待 (Service of Daikon simmered in kelp broth with yuzu (citrus)-flavored soybean paste sauce)              10:00 Fare: Free**

St. Shinran (1173-1262) was a Buddhist monk of the Kamakura era (1185-1333), who founded the True Pure Land Sect (Jodo-shinshu 浄土真宗).

Enko-ji was built about 350 years ago. In the precinct stands a circle stone slab with a haiku carved on it:

*Furofuki wo*                      風呂吹を                      in order to eat *furofuki*  
*kuini ukiyo e*                      食ひに 浮世へ                      come to *ukiyo*, the transient world  
*hyakunenme*                      百年目                      for the first time in 100 years.”

This haiku was composed by Masaoka Shiki on the 100<sup>th</sup> memorial service of Meigetsu-Shonin 明月上人, the 7<sup>th</sup> priest of the temple, in Meiji 29 (1896). When Matsuyama City was established in 1889, the city office was placed at the temple for about two years until the new office was built. In the precinct stands a stonemonument on which “the Birthplace of Matsuyama City” is written. Now there arebenches and swings for children, giving people a place to rest. Why don't you go and try*furofuki-daikon*?

**Mid to late Dec. SHIWASU 師走 (The year-end rush)**

*Shiwasu* was the name used for December in the old days when Japan followed the lunar calendar. It is still being used today to mean the last month of the year, when everybody is very busy trying to tidy up loose ends. *Shi* in “*shiwasu*” means a teacher or master in education or the arts, or a religious leader, such as a priest. *Wasu* means to run. In other words, *shiwasu* is the time when even the teacher, who is ordinarily calm and dignified, runs around trying to get everything done.

**Dec. 22 TOJI 冬至 (Winter Solstice)**

*Toji* is the shortest day of the year. It is said that you won't get a cold or paralysis if you eat pumpkin or *azuki-gayu*, porridge with *azuki* beans, or take a bath with *yuzu* peel (citron) on this day.

**Dec. 31 OMISOKA 大晦日 (New Year' s Eve)**

On this day people finish doing the yearly house cleaning and prepare *osechi-ryori*, the New year's food. Late at night people eat *toshikoshi-soba*, buckwheat noodles, and visit a temple to ring out the evils of the past year and pray for health and happiness in the coming year.

**Dec. 31 JOYA-NO-KANE 除夜の鐘 (The watch-night bell)**

*Joya-no-kane* is the ringing of temple bells just before midnight on New Year's Eve. The

bells are struck 108 times to relieve the human suffering caused by men's earthly desires, which amount, according to Buddhist belief, to 108. In Matsuyama, one of the most popular temples to visit at midnight is Ishite-ji. There you ring the bell, and rub smoke from the large incense burner over your body to ensure good health. Be sure the smoke is from the incense that you purchased or it will have no effect.

***Closed on the last few days of the year***

Government offices: Dec. 29 to Jan. 3

City service centers: Iyotetsu Takashimaya: Dec. 29 to Jan. 3

Fuji Grand Matsuyama: Dec. 29 to Jan. 3

Banks: Dec. 30 to Jan. 3

Post offices: Dec. 30 to Jan. 3

City libraries: Chuo, Mitsuhamama, Hojo, Nakajima: Dec. 28 to Jan. 4

City passport center: Dec. 29 to Jan. 3 (Fuji Gran Matsuyama Annex 2F)