

CULTURAL NEWS

May 2016

Appreciating Japanese traditions



Kumamoto Castle viewed from the Ninomaru Ground. The sign of "Announcement. Off Limit. Due to Earthquake" is displayed. (May 1, 2016. Cultural News Photo)



Kumamoto native Toshihiro Iida, left, shows Cultural News editor Shige Higashi around disaster sites on May 1. (Cultural News Photo)

Sleepless in Kumamoto

People are experiencing normal lives and emergency situations at the same time

By Shige Higashi

I visited Kumamoto from April 29 – May 3 to find the fact of the earthquake aftermath. I met more than 20 people in four days, and all people I met except one case told that they slept in their cars at least a few nights after the major quakes.

My impression was that more people chose to sleep in their cars than to go to shelters.

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Devastated stone walls of the Kumamoto Castle, viewed from the Ninomaru Ground. (May 1, 2016. Cultural News Photo)

Kumamoto in one month after quake: over 10,000 in shelters

Two major earthquakes in Kumamoto, center of Kuryu region, on April 14 and 16 forced over 180,000 people for seeking shelters and left a total of 49 people dead.

As of May 15, roughly 87,000 buildings had been recorded as damaged and or destroy, with some 10,000 people having yet to return home. In Kumamoto prefecture, over 14,000 buildings were declared as unsafe to enter, and numerous people stay over nights at their own cars due to fears of the aftershock which has been recorded more than 1,400 times for one month.

More people died after the second quake on April 16 with a magnitude-7.3 than the first quake on April 14 with a magnitude-6.5 because many people returned home from shelters on April 15. The National Meteorological Agency had initially downplayed the chances of another major quake striking the same area within three days of April 15. It said the odds of this occurring were just 20 percent.

Construction of more than 1,000 temporary dwellings has already began, with the Government of Kumamoto Prefecture securing a budget for 2,100 units and local municipalities separately

earmarking funds for an additional 800 units.

After the Eastern Japan Great Earthquake in 2011, the national government and local municipalities set up emergency plans to send staff and equipment to damaged municipalities in case of disaster.

The National Police Agency coordinated to send 1100 policemen from 18 prefectural police agencies on April 15 and other 1300 policemen on April 16. At the end of April, 500 policemen were dispatched from 30 prefectural police agencies as a supplement force to the 2,200 personnel of the Kumamoto Prefectural Police Agency.

The City of Kumamoto has participated in the 20-member Major Municipalities Association of Japan which prepared emergency plans to help member cities. On April 15, this emergency plan was activated. Cities of Hiroshima, Okayama, Kitakyushu and Fukuoka sent their stuff to Kumamoto to set up the field headquarters. Eventually 19-member cities have sent over 200 stuffs every day for over one month to assist administration of evacuation centers, building safety checks, and issuing disaster documents.

With the coordination of industrial associations such as electricity, gas, and departments of water, repair stuff of life lines were dispatched from all over Japan. By these relief efforts, the electricity shortage was resolved completely by the end of April, and gas supply has been recovered to nearly 80% by the same time. As of April 28 in Kumamoto prefecture, the operating

rates of local business were 99% for convenience stores, 88% for supermarkets, and 92% for gas stations.

Despite near 100 departments of water has sent personnel to the disaster areas, numerous houses are not supplied with water yet.

(Source: Kyodo News, The Japan Times, and other Japanese daily papers)

Call for 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake Donations

The Government of Kumamoto Prefecture is currently taking donations to help those affected by the earthquakes that started on April 14. Donations will be accepted until June 30.

Kumamoto Earthquake Relief Account

Bank Name: The Higo Bank, Ltd
SWIFT Code/BIC Code: HIGOJPTJ
Branch Name: Kencho Branch
Transfer Account Number: 1639261
Account Holder: Kumamotojishingienkin

No fee will be occurred on receiving side of the Higo Bank, however, transfer fee at sending side will be sender's

responsibility. For those who require a receipt for the donation, the following information is asked to send Kumamoto Prefecture: name of group or individual, postal mailing address, date of transfer, amount of transfer

The above information should be email to: kokusai@pref.kumamoto.lg.jp
The subject line of email should be spelled as "Call for 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake Donation Receipt."

The international earthquake donation campaign is handled by International Affair Division, Kumamoto Prefectural Government, 6-18-1, Suizenji, Chuo-ku, Kumamoto City, Zip 862-8570, Japan. Phone, +81-96-333-2159.

The Getty Center, Los Angeles

Cave Temples of Dunhuang: Buddhist Art on China's Silk Road

Exhibition

May 7 – September 4, 2016

Related Events

May 19, 7 pm

Dunhuang as Nexus of Silk Road during the Middle Ages. Lecture by Victor H. Mair

May 20-21

Symposium / Cave Temples of Dunhuang: History, Art, and Materiality

May 20, 9 am – 5:30 pm at Getty Center

May 21, 9:30 am – 4:30 pm at UCLA

May 20, 7:30 pm

Concert / East and West of Dunhuang: Music Carried on the Wind

June 5, 4 pm

The Diamond Sutra: A Story of Printing, Piety, and Preservation on the Silk Road. Lecture by Susan Whitfield

June 11, 10 am – 5 pm

Family Festival celebrating the Silk Road

June 19, 11 am

Storytelling and Book Signing / Cornelia Funke's Voyage into the Cave of the Thousand Buddhas

June 26, 4 pm

Heaven and Hell on the Silk Road. Lecture by John Keischnick



A wall painting from Dunhuang Cave Temples (Courtesy of the Getty)

July 17, 5 pm

Dunhuang Inspired: An Evening with Tan Dun

July 24, 4 pm

The World in the Year 1000: The View from Dunhuang. Lecture by Valerie Hansen

Aug. 10, 7 pm

Dunhuang Cave Art: Hidden Illumination in Dark Times and Secret Ambrosia of Great Compassion. A conversation with Peter Sellars and Robert Thurman

Aug. 24, 7:30 pm

Film / The Cave of the Silken Web (1927)

Aug 28, 4 pm

The Care of Time and the Dimensions of Conservation at Mogao Grottoes. Lecture by Neville Agnew

Japanese garden in Pasadena chosen home of Hiroshima Camellia

The Storrier Stearns Japanese Garden in Pasadena has been chosen as the home of a sapling that descended from one of the trees considered lost after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

When an atomic bomb destroyed the city of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, it was predicted that nothing would grow in the ruins of Hiroshima for 75 years.

The trees were scarred and blackened, like all of the landscape in and around Hiroshima. When green shoots were found on the burned trunks of some 170 trees, the people were encouraged beyond measure, gaining hope and strength for recovery.

Green Legacy Hiroshima, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Tokyo Yoneyama Yuai, is taking this inspiration beyond Hiroshima by spreading the seeds and saplings of the "Hibaku Jumoku" or "A-bombed trees" throughout the world.

Already growing in 27 countries, they represent the resiliency of the human spirit and offer a powerful message of peace and symbiosis.

As the home of a Hiroshima Camellia — one of only two A-bombed trees in



Over 100 guests honor a sapling planting ceremony at Storrier Stearns garden on May 8. (Photo by Richard Fukuhara)

the U.S. — the Storrier Stearns garden joins other ambassadors around the world in the hope that everyone who learns of the Hiroshima Camellia and its history will be inspired to promote its message of peace.

On May 8, over 100 guests at the Storrier Stearns garden celebrated a sapling planting ceremony of Hiroshima Camellia with tea ceremonies and a remark of 88-year old Mr. Jiro Kawatsuma who witnessed the aftermath of the bombing in two days later.

On the last Sunday, May 29, visitors will receive camellia seeds to plant in their own gardens. Reservations for Open Day may be made on the website at:

www.japanesegardenpasadena.com

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Cultural News Editor & Publisher Shige Higashi visited Kumamoto in May 2016

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May 16

58TH ANNUAL **Zenshuji**

OBON Carnival

JULY 9TH & 10TH, 2016
11AM - 8PM
OBON SERVICE AT 1:30PM BOTH DAYS

Cultural Activities
Bon Odori
Tea Ceremony
Flower Arrangement

Eat & Shop
Farmer's Market
Produce/Flowers
Food & Drinks
White Elephant
Raffle & Prizes

Entertainment
Children's Games
Taiko Drumming
Folk Dance & Music
Shorinji Kempo

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