

4 Ichinomiya Tanabata Matsuri

< 一宮七夕まつり >

A : What a crowd! I can hardly move forward! What's this all about?

B : Well, this is the Tanabata festival. The Tanabata festival in Ichinomiya is said to be one of the greatest in Japan. This is the most exciting summer event in Ichinomiya.

A : Ok, but what is Tanabata?

B : It is a seasonal festival held in summer. It comes from an old legend in China. Two stars, the Herdboy Star and the Weaver Star, were in love, but they could only meet once a year. If it rains on that particular day, the Milky Way floods and prevents them from meeting. So we pray for lovely weather by decorating bamboo branches. Then we also pray for good fortune to God for the sake of those two lovers and wish upon a star.

A : Japanese culture has been influenced by Chinese culture in many ways, right?

B : Yes, it has had a great influence on the Japanese culture. But the Tanabata festival was named after a Japanese mythological goddess who was very good at weaving.

A : Look at those strips of paper. What is written on them?

B : They are called *tanzaku*. Children write their wishes and hang them on bamboo branches.

A : How cute! Here comes a children's parade! And girls in kimonos!

B : Well, to be precise, they are in *yukatas*. *Yukatas* are an informal cotton kimono for the summer season. Girls like to go to summer festivals and fireworks in *yukatas*. *Yukatas* are much less expensive and easier to handle than traditional kimonos.

A : I see.

B : Oh, there is a rule about wearing kimonos, including *yukatas*.

A : What's that?

B : Women have to wear them so that the left lapel covers the right one, and vice versa for men.

A : Oh, I see. I'll remember that.



Tanabata Matsuri Guide

Ichinomiya city is famous for its textiles, especially for its woolen fabric. Ichinomiya Tanabata Matsuri is the festival for the people to show their gratitude to the God of textiles.

In Ichinomiya city, there is a big shrine called Masumida Jinja (真清田神社). It is located near Ichinomiya station and is very popular among people in Ichinomiya. "Amenohoakarinomikoto" (天火明命), who is the god enshrined in Masumida Jinja, is also worshipped as the guardian deity of Ichinomiya citizens. His mother, "yorozuhataotoyoki-tsushimenomikoto" (萬幡豊秋津師比売命) is known as the goddess of textiles, and it is said that Ichinomiya developed in textiles with blessings from her.

The Ichinomiya Tanabata Matsuri started in 1956. It is held in the end of July in relation with the Weaver Star. Though Tanabata, the Star Festival is July 7th, it was decided by the city that Ichinomiya Tanabata Matsuri should be held for 4 days, and its last day should be the last Sunday of July. In some rural areas, for festivals like this, people sometimes use lunar calendars.

The shopping arcades that lead to Masumida Jinja are all decorated gorgeously and street peddlers set up their fair stalls. More than 1.3 million people visit this festival. It is said that the Tanabata Matsuri in Ichinomiya is one of the three greatest Star Festivals in Japan, the other two being: Sendai in Miyagi and Hiratsuka in Kanagawa. There are a lot of events throughout the festival period. Textile Fair, Bon Dance Fair, and many parades by various groups, such as Miss Tanabata and Miss Textiles in open cars, are held. Among them, "Onzohoukendaigyoretsu" (御衣<おんぞ>奉献大行列) is the grand parade to bring woolen fabrics, which is the speciality of Ichinomiya, to Masumida Jinja. The parade is about 500 meters long.



-----<WORDS & PHRASES>-----
textiles 繊維 enshrine ~を祭る guardian deity 守り神 fair stalls 露店
lunar calendars 旧曆

EXERCISES

1 COMPREHENSION CHECK

文の内容に即して，以下の設問に英語で答えなさい。

(1) Does Chinese culture have much influence on Japanese culture?

(2) What is the legend of Tanabata?

(3) What happens when it rains on the night of Tanabata?

(4) What do children write on *tanzaku*?

(5) What are the good characteristics of *yukatas*?

(6) What is the rule about wearing *yukatas*?

(7) What is Ichinomiya city famous for?

(8) When did Ichinomiya Tanabata Matsuri start?



(9) Name all three cities in Japan that are famous for its great Tanabata Matsuri.

(10) What memories do you have about Tanabata?

2 USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

文中の表現を参考にして，次の日本語を英語にしなさい。

(1) 彼の言葉は私に多大な影響を及ぼした。

His words () a great ()() me.

(2) 彼女はアップルパイを焼くのが得意だ。

She ()() () baking apple pies.

(3) 下呂は温泉で有名だ。

Gero ()() () its hot spring.

(4) 彼女は無実だと言われています。

() () () () she is innocent.

(5) 彼は祖母にちなんで娘をアリシアと名付けた。

He () his daughter Alicia () his grandmother.

(6) 私はケーキやチョコレートといった甘いものが好きだ。

I like sweets ()() cakes and chocolates.

3 COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS

ペアを組んで会話してみよう。

A: I'd like to see Mr. Green.

B: He's not on duty today.

A: Again? I couldn't see him last time. When can I catch him?

B: He's available only on Monday morning and Wednesday afternoon.