

## 5 The Hadaka Matsuri

<国府宮はだか祭り>



A : What is this red cloth, Ken?

B : Well, it's *naoi*, a sort of charm. In February, there is a festival, *Hadaka Matsuri* at Konomiya Shrine in Inazawa. My father took part in the festival and bought it there.

A : *Hadaka Matsuri*? *Hadaka* means naked, doesn't it?

B : Exactly. All the participants are wearing loincloths, *fundoshi* in Japanese, and only men can join.

A : What do they do during the event?

B : A man is chosen as *Shin-otoko* every year. He is a kind of scapegoat and is believed to absorb evils. They chase him through the streets to touch him.

A : I see. Did your father touch him?

B : He said he did, but I don't believe him. Finding *Shin-otoko* is very difficult, and it is even more difficult to touch him. There are about 10,000 participants, and in addition to this, *Shin-otoko* is guarded by strong men, so he couldn't have done it.

A : Can foreigners take part in the festival?

B : Yes, of course. Many foreigners also enjoy it.

A : OK. Is your father going there next year?

B : Yeah, he enjoys it every year, and I'm also going. Will you join us?

A : Yes, I'd love to. I'll touch *shin-otoko*.

B : OK. Give it a try.

-----<WORDS & PHRASES>-----

naoi 儼追 (なおい)

take part in ~に参加する

*Shin-otoko* 神男

couldn't have done したはずがない

# Hadaka Matsuri Guide

The Hadaka Matsuri is an old divine service to exorcize plagues, which was started by an Imperial ordinance in the Nara period. It begins on the 2nd day of the lunar New Year when the *Shin-otoko* (神男), who is the man burdened with all the world's calamity, is selected among the applicants by lot and prayer. He is given a *sakaki* (榊), a kind of plant offered to God in Japan, with a special mark which proves that he is the *Shin-otoko*. Then he must have all his hair completely shaved, even the hair on his body.

On the 7th day of the lunar New Year, *Oh-kagami-mochi* (大鏡餅), a large round-shaped rice-cake, is made from 50 bales of rice. *Shin-otoko* joins in the making of this *kagami-mochi* with *Guji* (宮司), the chief priest of the Shinto Shrine. On the 10th day of the lunar New Year at 5 pm, the *Shin-otoko* must begin his three-day confinement in a shrine, *Naoi-den* (難追殿), for devotional purposes. At 7 p.m. on the 12th day of the lunar New Year, a divine service is executed in a government office building.

At 5 p.m. on the 13th day of the lunar New Year, the *Shin-otoko* is prayed for, to be given the ability to carry out his important mission. When the prayer is over, a lot of men and women rush to the sanctuary to give a prayer for exorcism and to get *Naoi-kire* (難追布), a protective charm.

In the afternoon on this day, lots of naked men from the district around Inazawa city run into the shrine with *Naoi-zasa* (難追笹). A *Naoi-zasa* is bamboo grass and people who cannot be undressed write their names, ages and wishes on pieces of cloth and tie them to the bamboo grass. The naked men then wait for *Shin-otoko* in the cold winter weather.

At 3 pm, after *Naoi-shinji* (難追神事) is over, *Guji* and *Shin-otoko* worship and offer sake to God. *Negi* (禰宜), a Shinto priest, brings a huge *sakaki*, sacred branch, and he swings it above *Shin-otoko*'s head three times and says, "Go to the *Naoi-hojo* (難追捕場) from now on" in a loud voice. *Shin-otoko*, who is completely naked, then runs into the crowd of waiting men while *Negi* begins to swing *tetsuhoko* (鉄鉾) while praying for his safety. The naked men make a dash to touch him in order to exorcize plagues. Many participants drink much sake and get heavily drunk. They hit and jostle each other during the festival so quite a few people get injured. *Shin-otoko* comes into *Naoi-den* about an hour later and *Negi* makes sure he is safe.

-----<WORDS & PHRASES>-----  
the lunar New Year 旧暦正月      divine service 神事      exorcize (厄など)を追い払う  
plague 疫病      calamity 災害, 災難      sanctuary 神殿      exorcism 厄払い

# 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) What does "*Hadaka*" mean in English?
- (2) What is "*Shin-otoko*"?
- (3) Is it easy to find *Shin-otoko* during the festival?
- (4) What is "*sakaki*"?
- (5) Do many people get injured in the festival?

## 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) 彼はスピーチコンテストに参加した。  
He (            ) (            ) in the speech contest.
- (2) 彼女がうそをついたはずはない。  
She couldn't (            ) (            ) a lie.
- (3) ワインはブドウから作られる。  
Wine is (            ) (            ) grapes.
- (4) まり子は髪を切った。(切ってもらった)  
Mariko (            ) her hair (            ).
- (5) 彼が来るかどうか確かめてください。  
Please (            ) (            ) whether he is coming or not.

## ACCESS

It takes about 12 minutes from Nagoya to Konomiya Station by the Meitetsu limited express train. The Konomiya Shrine is about 5 minutes' walk from Konomiya Station.



地図提供 [http://www.pref.aichi.jp/koho/feeling/hadaka/hadaka\\_a.html](http://www.pref.aichi.jp/koho/feeling/hadaka/hadaka_a.html)