

Chiisai Shinbun 2023-3Q

This is a quarterly newsletter of the Japan-America Society of Vermont describing what we have accomplished during the third quarter of the year of 2023 (July, Aug and Sept) and a forecast of our activities in the near future.

1. July 3rd Independence Day Parade Participation--- Canceled

Every year we have been participating in the July 3rd Independence Day Parade, but we had to cancel this year due to participants shortage. Although, the weather was partly rainy anyway. Hopefully we will have enough participants next year and a beautiful day!

2. Japanese Language Classes for Adults

From early September we have been working hard to recruit students for the language classes from Level-1 to 5, which will start from Oct 4th. We had 7 Level-1 students, 2 Level-2 students and 3 Level-5 students. Thank the teacher Ms. Linda Sukop very much for her big efforts to recruit students. The classes were advertised on the JASV's Website and Seven Days Newspaper. Thank you very much for our Webmaster Steve Gorman for the Website advertisement.

3. Japanese Language Class for Children

Children's class will start Oct 7th. JASV Board Masako Carter and Steve Gorman started to advertise also on our Website from the early September. We got 6 students. Thank you very much for Masko-san's and Steve's great efforts. The teacher is Ms. Maki Farnham.

4. Moon View Meeting on Sep 30th

The Full Moon on September was Sept 29th and we had the view meeting on Saturday, Sept 30th. We had a beautiful day, but it could be too beautiful. Number of participants wasn't great. We planned to have three events, but we did two events.

4-1. Invitation of Middlebury College Students

The students who are interested in Japanese culture in Middlebury College will research about the **Japanese sustainability** for this fall semester in the Professor White class. Prof. White would like to give her students some opportunity for her students to start with discussion about their topics with the JASV members assuming that we know Japan better.

Prof. White brought three students, Joel, Charlia and Shirk and each gave us an overview of his and her topics to research further during the fall semester which has just started.



(Prof. White introduced us her three students)

Joel would like to research about Japanese **Mottainai** (no waste) **culture**, which is indeed Japanese traditional culture although it is getting faded due to luxurious life style.



(Joel: Mottainai culture)

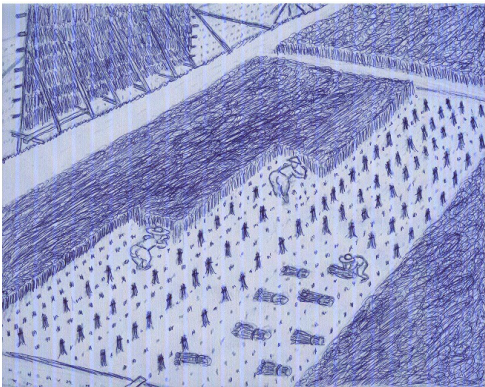
Toshi presented the difference of rice farming process between now and when he was very young which is very close to Edo period (1600 – 1868 AD) and has **no waste culture**. He was born as a son of a farmer. When he was young, cultivating the field, planting rice plants, harvesting rice and drying rice were done by hand. Only separating plants and rice and removing rice shell were done by machine when he was very young.

Cultivation: Toshi's father owned a **cow** to cultivate his field. This was changed when Toshi was in later middle school. It was switched to a cultivator and then a tractor afterward.

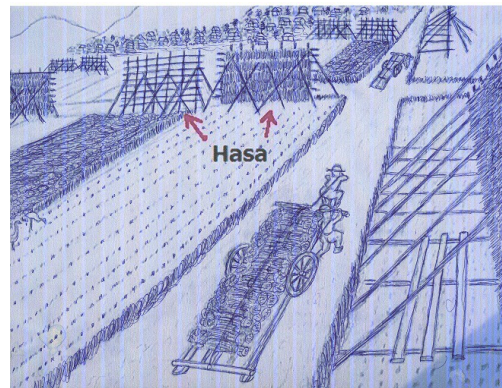
Planting: It was done hand. Then it was switched a two row planter you operate behind it, then 6 row planter you will ride on.

Harvesting: It was done by hand. (This was switched to a Combine later.)

Drying rice: Every one made **Hasa** to dry rice plant and rice itself. After rice plant and rice were dried for several days you will bring them to your home(work place) by **two wheel carrier**.



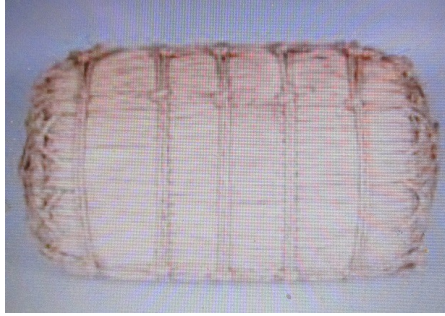
(Rice plants were harvested stems by hand)



(Hasa to dry rice plants (rice and stems) and two wheel carrir]

Separate rice and Rice Plant: We used a primitive machine run by electricity.

- Dried Rice plants were used for **Tawara** (rice bags) and **Rice Straw Rope**.



(Tawara)



(Rice straw rope)

- Rice shell was removed by a primitive machine run by machine.
- Rice shell was used for **cooking fuel**.
- Ash ash was used for **fertilizer**.

Then **Combine** started to be used for harvesting. This changed farming operation tremendously. You will bring home(work place) rice with shell only. The rice stems were chopped off and left them in the field. (**no more rice straw rope business**) But you must dry rice with shell at home. **Large Dryer for rice with shell** was invented and installed at work place, which uses oil and electricity.

Then **Propane Gas** became popular in life at home and **rice shell became no use**.

As of today most of rice farming will use machines and farmers have to suffer from the machine expenses. Many lost farming job. (The pictures below are a part of machines a farmer have to own nowadays.)



(Tractor)



(Planter)



(Combine)

Charlia would like to research about issues of plastic bag and waste of rapping paper of Japan. In the US, they started to use paper for

shopping bags (bags for shopping). Whereas people are still using plastic bags in Japan. Although, the difference is highly related to their recycle system. Japan started recycling much earlier than the US.

In Japan almost all plastic bags have the following mark on them and are instructed to put them into recycle bins. The recycle system in Japan is more complicated than in the US.



(Charlia will research plastic and wrapping paper usage.)

Plastic bags are more useful in Japan since it rains more in Japan than in the US. Plus Japan is a bicycle or walking country if you live near stores whereas the US is car country. It is hard to carry around glossary after shopping in a paper bag in a rainy day.

Prof. White suggests to use **Furoshiki** since it was once a Japanese traditional culture. Toshi used to carry eggs in Furoshiki on his back to sell eggs stores to store everyday in his junior high school.



(Furoshiki rapping: Top: carry holding top(left), carry holding bottom(right))

Regarding plastic policy, here is a little complicated example. A drinking bottle usually consists of three parts, body, cap and ad label. After you finish drinking the liquid inside, the bottle body will go into recycle bin and cap and ad label will go to burnable bin and burnt into the air. It doesn't cause any toxic pollution. Can American follow this instruction?



(Instruction on label)



(Remove label and cap)



(After cleaning bottles and containers bring them to recycle bins.)

All the shopping plastic bag must follow this instruction (sent to a burnable bin).




(プラ **sign**: All the plastic bag with this sign must be sent to burn garbage bin.)

Shik suggests **Zen style life** where people will live with minimum necessity. I like the idea, but it is hard to keep it.



(Shik suggests a Zen style life.)

Prof. White brought a copy of a well known words (below) written on basin, which describe the idea.

| | | | |
|---|-------|-------------------------|---|
| 吾唯足知 | | |  |
| "I understand enough" "I only need enough" | | | |
| ware tada taru o shiru | | | |
| • 吾れ | ware | one, I, | |
| myself | | | |
| • 唯 | tada | simply, only, solely | |
| • 足る | taru | sufficient | |
| • 知る | shiru | know | |

[Ware tada taru wo shiru (I know what just enough is)]

JASV has a basin donated by one member of the Vermont Bonsai Society when he moved to south.



(A Basin JASV owns)

There are four Kangi letters on the basin. It starts 12 o'clock, then 3 o'clock, 6 o'clock and 9 o'clock. 吾(ware:myself), 唯(tada:simply), 足(taru:enough), 知(shiru:know). All those Kanji letters have 口 and shared one in the middle square of the basin commonly. The square hall in the middle keeps water to purify your hand, but it must be running water. Otherwise mosquito baby easily grows.

Very unfortunately people want more than enough. Even the biggest country in the world wants more land. Never enough for them.

All the students brought wonderful subjects for their further study, but unfortunately they could stay at the party for only one and a half hours and we didn't have enough time to discuss more.

4-2. Shamisen Music

Taro-san's uncle is a Shamisen professional in Okinawa. Taro has been learning Shamisen from his uncle and really a semi-professional as of today. In fact, he played Shamisen at our Matsuri twice in the past and also at the Vermont International Festival when VPAL was running it. In Okinawa, Shamisen is called Sanshin and slightly different from the mainland Shamisen.

He played 4 musics and Toshi requested another one named "Asatoya Yunta" and Toshi had an opportunity to sing the song with the song. Taro-kun, thank you very much!!!



(Taro played 5 beautiful Okinawa music.)

4. Moon Viewing

It was a beautiful day. We could see a beautiful moon. Interestingly left edge and right edge of the moon is slightly different. This could be it was one day after full moon? A discovery?



(Moon taken on Sept 30th, 2023)

5. Next Event

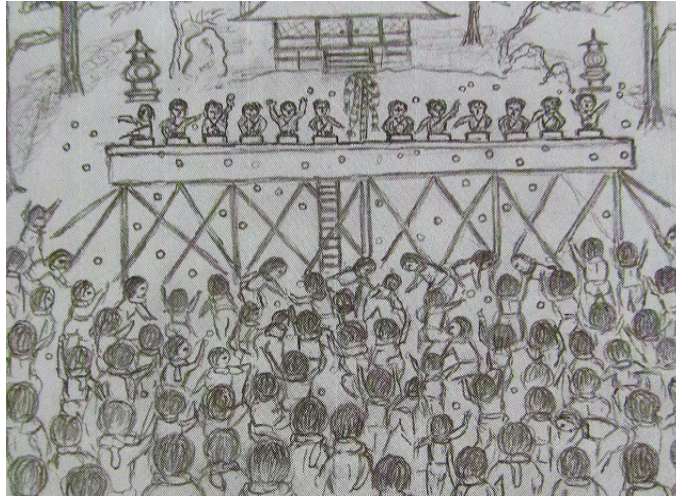
Next event is the New Year Party in January, 2024. At the party we would like to do a very interesting event we haven't done yet. We will make **Mochi** together.

Japanese usually eat Mochi at the New Year day. Mochi rice is different from the usual rice. When you pound the cooked Mochi rice, it will stretch and become very sticky. You will have fun with experiencing this.

There are many different ways of eating Mochi. Most common way is to make soy bean pasted soup with Mochi (called **Zouni**). Or sweetened red bean soup with it (**Zenzai**). Or Mochi with sweetened red bean inside (**Abekawa or Daifuku Mochi**), or Mochi with sweetened soy bean flour around (**Kinako Mochi**), or even Mochi with soy-sourced grinded radish around (**Oroshi Mochi**), etc, etc.

For your information! In my town where I was born they still have a historical event for the men who reached 24 years old which takes place in front of their shrine to give Mochi to the people, called **Mochi maki**, on Feb

11th every year. Historically Mochi was very precious food and not many people could afford it.



(Mochi maki when Toshi was 24 years old:
drawn by Toshi through his memory.)

Also next year is **our Matsuri year**. We would like to practice some performances and to present them at Matsuri so that we can save the Matsuri expenses.

Toshi reserved the usual clubhouse in South Burlington on **Saturday, 1/20/2024**. When the date gets closer he will send a detailed agenda.

Please come and join us!!!

JASV