

ロス・アン・シエルス統



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Japan Screen Topics

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SAPPORO SNOW FESTIVAL

112 feet 3 min. 8 sec.

1. (STEAM SHOVEL, STATUES) Every year in February fantasy comes to the northern Japanese city of Sapporo.

The Snow Festival is the social event of an otherwise bleak season. The winters on the island of Hokkaido are long and cold --- snow falls almost every day for 5 months!

2. (SDF TROOPS, STATUES) But the people of Sapporo have turned their most plentiful commodity -- snow -- into a wonderland of beautiful sculpture.

The young troops of the Japan Self Defense Forces spend the preceding month creating mammoth statues of every description. This year's festival featured 205 of them.

3. (SAPPORO, SPECTATORS) Sapporo is a bustling place, population: almost 1 and a half million.

And this February, for the five-day Snow Festival, the population more than doubled ... two million people came to town for the event!

Actually, Sapporo isn't the only place in Hokkaido that puts on a celebration of winter. Over 26 towns throughout the island hold snow festivals!

4. (SLIDE, CHURCHES, OPERA HOUSE) One attraction in particular had more than its share of fans, a slide made entirely of ice. Great fun for the kids.

The snow in Hokkaido is just right for making snow sculptures--- it's heavy and very sticky. This year there wasn't as much of it as in other years. The temperatures were unseasonably warm, so for the first time in memory snow had to be brought in from the surrounding mountains.

But that didn't keep the festival from being a hit.

5. (E.T., SPACESHIP) Fantasy was given free reign in the choice of exhibits. There were plenty of creatures from outer space--- and other figments of the imagination!

The 34th annual Sapporo Snow Festival -- a celebration of winter and the joys of childhood.

ROBOT LUMBERJACK

51 feet 1 min. 26 sec.

1. (TREES, WORKERS) The noble cedar tree -- the heart and soul of traditional Japanese architecture.

It's vital that these fast-growing trees are trimmed of unnecessary branches, to ensure a high-quality woodgrain, free of knots.

2. (ROBOT CUTTING TREE BRANCHES) Climbing up to the top of an evergreen tree is no mean feat -- but now there's a robot that can zip right up there in record time.

His name is "Yosaku", named after the lumber jack in a popular Japanese song.

This lumberjack robot shinnies up the trunk of a giant tree at 2.8 meters a minute and trims away the unnecessary branches.

Doing this of course makes felling the tree later on -- a much safer job.

3. (ROBOT UP TREE) Before Yosaku came along, human workers used to have to climb up and prune the tree. Risking life and limb. Not any more. Yosaku is operated by remote control. There's even a timer that sends him back down to the ground.

Best of all, he tackles the work of 3 men, quickly and safely.

NOTE The Yosaku robot, officially known as Lopper Robot 439, is selling well, at an attractive price of \$1300. Its manufacturer says he's sold nearly 1400 of the machines in the past six months. There are 2 other models of tree-pruning robot, both similar in design to Yosaku. The Yosaku robot can cut branches up to 8 cm. in diameter.

SETSUBUN Bean-Throwing Festival

93 feet 2 min 36 sec.

1. (MASKS, CHILDREN) In this kindergarten, the children play at being little Demons -- with a few gods of happiness mixed in.

This game is played on the day called Setsubun, the spring equinox. In the traditional lunar calendar, spring arrived on or around February 3rd. And it was believed that on this day the forces of both good and evil converged.

Each of children get a cup of dried beans to throw to drive the demons away. Some of the kids prefer to eat their portion of the beans!

2. (PARADE OF CHILDREN IN CIRCLE) On February 3rd, in practically every Japanese household, you can hear a rather blood-curdling cry: "Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!". Or, "Demons get out! Happiness, come in!".

To celebrate the end of the cold season, the head of the household goes from room to room throwing handfuls of beans -- yelling "Demons get out!".

Legend has it that the first bean-throwing exorcism took place over a thousand years ago in the reign of Emperor Uda. Seven wise men were ordered to kill a Demon who was making trouble in the countryside.

So they took care of him by pelting him with handfuls of beans.

3. (SUMO WRESTLERS, TEMPLE) On this day there are bean-throwing ceremonies held at temples and shrines all over Japan. Famous sumo wrestlers and other celebrities do the honors, throwing not only beans but also grab bags of candies of the like.

Catching the beans is considered good luck so there's always a mad scrabble below!

NOTE The bean-throwing ceremony (Mamemaki) is not a religious ritual, but it might once have been. 1300 years ago, after a terrible plague and famine, the Emperor is said to have ordered Buddhist monks to conduct special ceremonies to exorcise the evil spirits that had brought such distress upon the land.

COMMUNICATIONS STELLITE In Orbit

89 feet 2 min. 29 sec.

1. (ISLAND, SPACE CENTER) Tanegashima Island off southern Kyushu, the place where centuries ago Japan was introduced to the explosive power of guns and gunpowder.

Now another kind of explosive power is being used.

On February 4th, Japan's National Space Development Agency succeeded in launching its satellite, the CS-2, entirely on its own.

2. (LAUNCHING AREA, SCIENTISTS) The CS-2 is 2.2 meters in diameter lifted by a three-stage rocket. The satellite itself weighs 340 kilograms.

The satellite will be used primarily for telephone and television reception between the mainland and remote outlying islands.

3. (CONTROL ROOM) Once in space the satellite joins 169 satellites of other nations. In fact, it's so crowded up there that Japan was asked to move its CS-2 over a couple of degrees. No problem. Anything to avoid a galactic traffic jam.

4. (LAUNCHING, CONTROL ROOM) The satellite carries 2 microwave and 6 revolutionary new ultra-microwave relay amplifiers. This is the first time such ultra-high frequency radio waves will be in practical use.

The CS-2 satellite also has a transmission capacity of 4,000 telephone circuits.

The Age of Satellite communications will change the Japanese lifestyle --- with the introduction of space-relayed facsimile and TV telephone services.