

■FESTIVALS

Canceled Events

Setsubun Yakuyoke (Warding off evils) Festival at Henjo-in in Imabari City

Setsubun Yakuyoke Festival Kagura-mai (traditional Shinto dance) at Izumo-taisha shrine

Matsuyama Bunshi in Matsuyama City

Feb. 3 SETSUBUN

Setsubun literally means the parting of the seasons and is the eve of the first day of each season (Rishun spring, Rikka summer, Rishu autumn, and Ritto winter). Gradually it came to indicate only the eve of Rishun. It was said that "bad air" rises at the changing of the seasons, so people would pray to avert trouble (yakuyoke). This custom was introduced from China in ancient times and became an annual event in the Japanese Court in the Heian era (8th -12th century). Scattering roasted beans, mame-maki, on Setsubun became popular among people in the Muromachi era (14th -16th century). People scatter roasted beans at oni (devils) to drive them away from their houses. Beans have been used as a charm against demons since ancient times. A "praying the devil away ceremony" is held at many temples and shrines.

Yaku-doshi

According to a popular Japanese belief, a person is apt to fall ill or to experience other misfortunes at certain ages called yaku-doshi during his/her life span. The common saying is that men enter these critical stages in their 25th, 42nd, and 61st calendar years and women in their 19th, 33rd, and 37th calendar years, and the most critical year in a person's life (tai-yaku) is said to be age 42 for men and 33 for women. They may pray at temples and shrines to avoid an evil spirit. The years before and after the yaku-doshi are called mae-yaku and ato-yaku and precaution is called for.

Feb. 3 SETSUBUN-SAI Ishite-ji temple

(Tel. 089-977-0870)

Details of the event have not been announced yet.

Feb. 5-March 31 The 7th EXHIBITION OF KAMABOKOITA-NO-E

(Paintings on kamaboko boards) Collaborating with Shiki's Haiku 9:00-17:00

Shiki-kinen

Museum 3F

About 100 elected paintings are on exhibit from Gallery Shirokawa collaborating with Shiki's Haiku. Admission: Free (Tel. 089-931-5566)

Feb. 3-13 TSUBAKI-MATSURI (Camellia festival) 8:00-17:00

Iyozuhiko-no-mikoto-jinja (Tsubaki-jinja)

Tsubaki-matsuri is held for 11 days on a smaller scale than usual due to the pandemic. It is held at the coldest time of the year at Tsubaki-jinja, in the southern part of Matsuyama City just off Route 33. In Matsuyama, it is said that spring won't come until after this festival. The patron of prosperity and good luck is enshrined here in Tsubaki-jinja, so it is popular with merchants and

businessmen who wish for better luck in business. Beside the offering box at the main building, there is a place where you borrow a little money, 20 yen, which is called mamori-gane (protective money) in a small paper bag from the shrine during the festival. The next year you must come back to the shrine for thanks and pay back double the money by working hard for a year. This ritual custom is called kashi-zeni (lending money). There will be no street stalls this year. (Tel. 089-956-0321)

3rd -13th Prayers for better luck in business, family's safety and good health and so on
8th 9:00- Spring Shinto ceremony

Feb. 8 HARI-KUYO (Memorial Service for Needles)

Hari-kuyo started in the 18th century to give women a break in those days of danson-johi (dominance of men over women). Broken or old needles were placed at a small altar and people gave thanks to the needles' faithful service. Women did not do needlework on that day. This traditional event has been handed down as an annual event of schools for tailors, dress and kimono makers. In Matsuyama it is observed at Matsuyama Business College where teachers and students of the fashion-beauty course stick about 1,300 needles used in dress-making classes into large konnyaku (devil's tongue) cakes at an altar, giving thanks to them and praying for better sewing skills. The priest of Shoju-ji chants a sutra. Later the needles are put in Harizuka (a burial mound for needles) at the temple.

Feb. 11 KENKOKUKINEN-NO-HI (National Foundation Day) National holiday

This holiday was formerly called Kigensetsu, which started in 1872 (Meiji 5) to commemorate the accession to the throne of Emperor Jimmu who is said to be the first emperor of Japan. At that time this day was recognized as the birthday of Japan, but after World War II the name Kigen-setsu was banned due to its nationalistic connotations. In 1966 this holiday was revived as Kenkokukinen-no-hi.

Feb. 23 TENNO TANJOBİ (Emperor's Birthday) National holiday

The Reiwa Emperor was born on Feb. 23, 1960. We celebrate this day in hopes of his longevity.

NOTES: Events might be canceled or postponed to prevent spread of the novel coronavirus infection. Please check the latest information.