

Sai-ka-Sai, the Asaka City festival

Introduction of Sai-ka-Sai

Sai-ka-Sai

Sai-ka-Sai, the Asaka City Festival, is held every year on the first Sunday of August and the preceding two days, Friday and Saturday, in Asaka City, Saitama. The beginning of Sai-ka-Sai, the Asaka City festival, was in 1984, Showa 59. It was started by those people who worried about the society that was losing the attachment for local community gradually just like losing human relationship as well because it was the time when urbanization and information technology growing too big. They had Bon dance and fireworks therefore the festival was simple and small at first. Then the festival becomes bigger with each time, and now, the number of visitors is more than 650,000. It is a indispensable summer specialty when you talk about Asaka City.

The nickname “Sai-ka-Sai” was chosen from the public at the 12th Asaka City festival in 1995, Heisei 7. The first “Sai” means colorful, varicolored, beautifully colored, or vivid. “Ka” means another reading of one of kanji that means summer. The second “Sai” means a festival which has the same pronunciation with “Saitama.” Since Saitama

prefecture has a nick name “Sai-no-Kuni, Saitama,” which means Saitama is a beautifully colored country. So they are making a special meaning together.

After all, the featured events of “Sai-Ka-Sai” are “Kan-Hashu Yosakoi Fesuta” and fireworks. “Kan-Hashu Yosakoi Fiesta” is a Naruko Dance festival. It was started for the first time in Honshu, the largest of the four main islands of Japan, in 1994, Heisei 6. Also, the fireworks are famous for 7,500 fireworks within one hour in the urban area. In addition to this, we have various events and food stands. Those events are; festival of commerce and industry, flea



market, music, Japanese drum performance, sport ... etcetera. There is still a lot items to help you make happy memories.

“Sai-ka-Sai” hatches various kinds of festivals, connect people to people, cheer the local community up, though it’s a festival held here in Asaka. With the principal aim to foster the growth of regional community and human relationship, we will hold “Sai-ka-Sai” as ever, to be your hometown festival

Saika-Chan, Saika-Chan is the mascot of Sai-ka Sai.

“Saika-Chan” is the mascot of Sai-ka-Sai. It was chosen from many applications in 2001, Heisei 13, at the 18th Sa-ka-Sai when we had a public competition. She is a cute girl with her hair done of the shape of a letter “Sai,” and its design reminds the fireworks. She is dancing joyfully with two Narukoes flipping in her hands. And the color combination she is wearing is blue and green that describes the clean rivers running through through the town and lush greenery.



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Kan-Hashu Yosakoi Fesuta

Introduction to Yosakoi Fesuta.

Introduction to Yosakoi Fesuta.

“Kan-Hashu Yosakoi Fesuta” is a festival held at “Sai-ka-Sai.” which is the oldest Naruko Dance festival in Honshu, the largest of the four main islands of Japan, in 1994, Heisei 6. This festival was started from 1994, Heisei 6, at the 11th Asaka City Festival. Back then, Sai-ka-Sai was so-called common festival with Bon dance and fireworks, we picked Naruko dance as an event so that wider generations can join more freely.



From that time, in the climax of the summer in Asaka, all the visitors come to join the Naruko dance teams and go nuts in the fantastic space.

What is Kan-Hashu ?

Kan-Hashu means a former name of Kanto region in Edo period.

In those days, there was a barrier station at Hakone, at the westernmost edge of Kanto region. From Hakone barrier station toward east, there were eight provinces in Kanto region, so called Kan-Hashu together. These were Sagaminokuni, Musashinokuni, Kouzukenokuni, Shimotsukenokuni, Awanokuni, Kazusanokuni, Shimousanokuni, and Hitachinokuni. Kuni means province.

We named this event “Kan-Hashu Yosakoi Fesuta” to express our wish to make it become one of the biggest festival along with Yosakoi Festival in Kochi and Yosakoi Soran Festival in Hokkaido.

What is Yosakoi Naruko Dance ?

History of Yosakoi Festival

“Yosakoi Festival was born in 1954, Showa 29, to work toward economic revitalization and regional activation in Kochi prefecture in the age of the stagnation continuing after the war. And now, sixty years later, this festival is known as one of the eminent festivals in Japan and many Yosakoi fans gather from all over Japan.



“Dance with a Naruko in either hands,” this unique style and its free atmosphere is the heart came from the original festival in Kochi. This freedom and spirit in the Naruko dance fascinate many people and now, people dance Yosakoi Naruko dance all over the country.

Naruko

Naruko is a necessary tool for Yosakoi Naruko dance. You use it as a pair. In your dance, you flip Narukos to make clatter sounds, like tap tap or pitter patter. You have a pair of Naruko in your hands as a musical instrument to make clatter sounds to dance.



Originally, Naruko was “a bird repellent gadget,” and was used by hanging in the fields of rice and other crops to scared the birds and animals away. It is said that the style of dancing with a familiar tool in Kochi, Naruko, in their hands was born when the festival was started. “Black and vermilion wooden clappers attached on the both side of a flat, rice scoop shaped, vermilion, ooden base” is the most orthodox type of Naruko, but you would find various types of arrangements on colors or shapes for each team using.

Musical Composition

There is one basic rule; you need to bring an original phrase from a distinctive music of Kanto area, like common songs, festival music, child’s songs, or popular songs” If you are from outside of Kanto area, it’s OK to use your local songs.

Otherwise, you are free!

Teams dance by various original compositions, such as orthodox songs, rock, samba, jazz, reggae, and dance music. Of course, we have ready-made songs for you to dance such as “Asaka

Ondo – Come together! Dance people –” “Asaka Ondo – Dance and bounce ! “ – We want you to feel their emotions through their original music and dance less than 4min. 30secs.

Outit

Japanese style, rock, ethnic style, stage costume style --- those free styles and unique dressings are brilliant or cool! Dancers dressed in elaborate costumes express team concepts and their themes. You must be completely spellbound.



Jikatasha



Team leading Jikatasha is also essential features to strolling dance. Brightly decorated track goes slowly with the festival music on. On the Jikatasha, there are people who shout to team to encourage and singers sing a song as if she or he is in a live house.

In Japanese dancing, people call dancers to Tachikata and musician to Jikata.

Ground Self Defense Force Asaka garrison provides this Jikatasha and also drive them. They decorate a heavy duty truck gorgeously. The troopes have a big smile on each faces. We could see their different aspects while on duty. This is also main feature of this festival.

Whole Dancing

This “Whole dance,” any of you can join to dance. If you feel so ---- dance, you can join to this whole dance. With “Asaka Ondo – Come together! Dance people,) Asaka-Ondo, Naruko Dance version” on whole the visitors unite into one.

Now, if something rocks you, come to join Whole Dance booths. Put all the complicated matter away! You don’t have to pack your belongings up. Nothing is needed to join the Whole Dance.

Let’s provide big smiles and energy from Asaka together.

