

The Machida Tourist Times

Vol.18

FEBRUARY ISSUE, 2012

FREE Paper

Cultural Note Setsubun and mame- maki

Some Japanese may not know the cultural background for events held in Japan. How about you?

Some Japanese may confuse the meaning of “setsubun” and “mamemaki” and some may even consider them to be the same thing.

In fact, *setsubun* is about the time of the year, and *mamemaki* is the act of throwing roasted beans.

Setsubun originally signifies the day to separate seasons, thus there are technically 4 *setsubun* days throughout the year.

The image of having only one *setsubun* day became common in the Edo period. Nowadays, we refer to *setsubun* as February 3rd, one day before the beginning of Spring.

It was believed that evil spirits will appear between seasons, therefore, people wanted to get rid of bad luck.

The event of throwing beans originally started among aristocrats. In modern days, commoners adapted the idea, and in this way, shrines and

Kitataiki is coming to Sugawara Shrine for Setsubun Festival

The only sumo wrestler from Tokyo is coming back to his hometown, Machida City on February 3rd to bring good luck!



It is nice to have celebrities in your town. Machida has quite a lot of famous people who have roots here.

A sumo wrestler named Kitataiki is one of such celebrities that Machida City has produced.

He has ranked up to *maegashira*, just below *komusubi*, and he is the only sumo wrestler from Tokyo.

The games of the January *basho* in 2012, however, became one of the most bitter memories for him, as his score was mostly covered by “black dots” or “losses”.

In Japan, there is an event in this season to get rid of bad luck: *mame-maki* on *setsubun* day.

Local celebrities gathered at Machida Tenmangu for Setsubun festival. (The picture was taken last year)

We throw *iri-mame*, simply roasted beans to get rid of the bad luck from the last year.

At several shrines in Machida, the *setsubun* festivals are held.

On February 3rd this year, Sugawara shrine (Honmachida) will hold the *mamemaki* event at 10am.

At Machida Tenmangu (Haramachida) will hold it three times, at 1pm, 2:30pm, and 4pm.

Also please note Kitataiki will appear only at the Sugawara shrine this year.

At the Machida Tenmangu, however, there will be a lottery where you can win prizes.

Why don't you come and enjoy *mamemaki* event with Machida's local celebrities and wish for good luck?



temples began to host the event.

Another interesting fact is that the beans have to be roasted, due to the reason to prevent new “buds” of bad luck from springing out.



Machida's “Tourism Photo Contest” is Accepting your Photos until the End of February.

MTCB is accepting applications and photos that will promote tourism in Machida City. Those who are nominated will receive awards!

If you are a photographer, either professional or amateur and live nearby Machida City, here is good news: Machida City Tourism & Convention Bureau (MTCB) is currently holding a photo contest.

The theme of the contest is “tourism”, meaning anything that

directly references or promotes the concept of hospitality or uniqueness of the tourism of Machida City.

The photos have to be taken sometime between Jan. 2009 to Feb. 29th, 2012. The status of the background of the photo should still be the same today.



The application form is downloadable from the official website of the MTCB. There is a memorandum for offering on the form as well (Japanese only).

Published by
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