

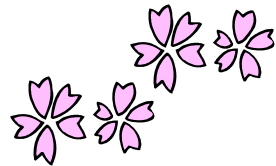
Chigasaki Breeze

P 1

Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget.

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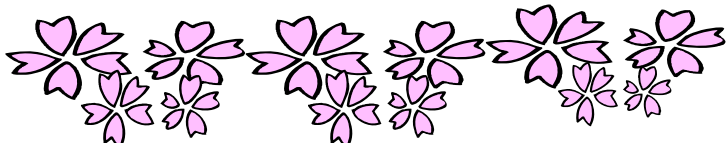
CHERRY BLOSSOMS and “OHANAMI”



From the later part of March through early April, the cherry blossoms start to bud and come into full bloom. People get together under the cherry trees and enjoy looking at them, eating and drinking *SAKE* or any other liquor, and singing and dancing lively. The cherry blossoms are short-lived and their color is not as bright as many western flowers, but they capture the Japanese heart, which is why it's the National Flower!

The petals of the cherry blossoms reflect the light of paper-covered hand lamps in the night look very beautiful. The scenery is televised all over Japan around this time. Also the tune of *SAKURA* often played on the *KOTO*, a Japanese harp, in this season captures the atmosphere of spring. In old days, when passed or failed the entrance examination for university, it was expressed in reference to the cherry blossoms like *SAKURA-SAKU* or *SAKURA-CHIRU*. I.e., your success was celebrated as if *SAKURA* is in full bloom while your failure was expressed as if *SAKURA* or cherry blossoms are gone.

You can enjoy seeing cherry blossoms at the Chuo Park near the city hall or at Hamami-daira housing development area in the city, but those at the approach to Kamakura Hachiman-Guh Shrine or at Odawara Castle Park are the most beautiful and you will fully enjoy *SAKURA* as well as the gatherings under the trees. Bring back your garbage, however!



OHOKA ECHIZEN-SAI FESTIVAL

Ohoka Echizen-Sai Festival is one of major annual events in Chigasaki. It is performed in memory of a powerful magistrate, **Ohoka Echizen-no-kami Tadasuke**, in the **Tokugawa Shogunate from the Edo era**.

He is historically known not only for his fair judgment in the court but also for his intelligence and great achievement as an administrator. He passed away in 1751 at the age of 75 and his graveyard was kept in *Jokenji* temple located in the northern part of the city. The Ohoka family had its territory in Chigasaki in the Edo period. In 1911, he was awarded the Fourth Order of Merit and on that occasion, the city held the Ohoka Echizen-Sai Festival to recall his achievement. The parade is scheduled on April 23 (Sunday) from 13:00 inviting various musical bands including the American navy band from Yokosuka, high-schools inside and outside of the city, a local dance group, etc. and also many foreigners participate in the procession wearing costumes from the Edo government officials and maids of those days.

The parade starts from the Chigasaki elementary school ground at 13:00, marches through both south and north sides of the Chigasaki station, and finally arrives at the area where Ito-Yokado and Yamada Denki are located. There will be thousands of people lining the streets to see the parade.

CHILDREN'S DAY

May 5 is Children's Day. In Japanese it is called *Kodomo-No-Hi*; a day to celebrate children in general. Originally, the day was called *Tango-no-Sekku* or Boy's Festival as it was for celebrating boys to grow up in good health and spirit.



On the day, families who have boys display *Gogatsu Ningyo* or May Dolls

for the *Boy's Festival*, patterned after warriors and heroes, and put up **KOI-NOBORI** or carp streamers. The *KOI* or carp is believed to have the ability to climb up waterfalls; going up against the rapid stream of the waterfall fighting all the obstacles. They are thus taken as a symbol of strength, courage and patience of achieving major goals.

For such reasons, there is a custom in Japan to wish for boys to be like *KOI* or carp and live their strong lives by hanging out carp-shaped streamers on May 5. The day also features the practice of taking a bath with *SHOBU*, or sweet flag reputed to have medicinal virtues. Because of this, two types of sweets are typical for this season; *CHIMAKI*, rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves, and *KASHIWAMOCHI*, rice cakes wrapped in an oak leaf. You may like them too!

GOLDEN WEEK

April 29 is Midori-no-hi or Green Day. This day ushers Japan into "Golden Week", a series of holidays. May 3 is Constitution Day, the 4th is a National Holiday and the 5th is Children's Day. When these holidays are followed by Saturday and Sunday, the week has more holidays in a series than any other week except for the New Year Holiday and summer vacations.

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CONSULTATION FOR FOREIGN RESIDENTS

The consultation for foreign residents by the city used to be held only on the 3rd Wednesday every month, but from April onward, the **BUNKA SUISHIN-KA** will be receiving phone calls at any time so they can arrange, based on the reservation, either interview or consultation after a week or so depending on the availability of interpreters. Visitors should be able to consult not only in English but also in Portuguese, Korean, and Chinese. (Tel: 0467-82-1111 extension: 3309)