

# Chigasaki Breeze

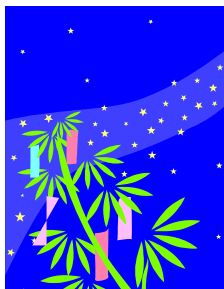
Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget.

No.0005

## THE STAR FESTIVAL

### “TANABATA”

#### 七夕祭



Do you know the two stars in the sky that love each other but are separated by the Milky Way and only allowed to meet on July 7th?

The legend that originated in China says that the Cowherd Star visits the Weaver Star on this day and the custom to celebrate the visit was succeeded by Japanese court nobility at the beginning, calling it *TANABATA*. Since the Edo Period (1603-1867), however, it began to be celebrated by common people at large.

People write their wishes and/or poems on oblong sheets of paper in various colors on the eve of the 7th, and hang them on a bamboo tree. This beautifully decorated bamboo is put out on the street or in the garden for the celebration.

In recent years, the two cities of Sendai and Hiratsuka have attracted tens of thousand of people from all over by decorating their shopping arcades with *TANABATA* decorations on a large scale.

Hiratsuka is the neighboring city, only five minutes by train from Chigasaki, and these decorations are kept there for about a week until July 9th. It would be a great fun to visit Hiratsuka during this period but be aware of the huge crowd.

The Cowherd Star and the Weaver Star may be seen high above in the sky too!

### CONSULTATION FOR FOREIGN RESIDENTS

BUNKA SUISHIN-KA section of the city hall will be receiving phone calls from foreign residents at any time, so either interview or consultation can be arranged based on the reservation. The timing depends on the availability of interpreters but the appointment will need a week or so to be arranged. Visitors should be able to consult not only in English but also in Portuguese, Korean, and Chinese.  
(Tel: 0467-82-1111 extension: 3309)

## HAMAORI-SAI

### FESTIVAL

#### 浜降祭



Photo by Yoshio Ishikawa

On Marine Day or *UMI-NO-HI*, about 40 *MIKOSHI*s or sacred portable shrines representing local shrines in Chigasaki led by Tsurumine shrines and Samukawa area get together at the Chigasaki seashore near Nango district in the early morning, between 5 and 7 o'clock. They are sacred as they hold the soul of the guardian god or *UJIGAMI-SAMA* in them. The festival is called *HAMAORI-SAI*. It's scheduled on July 17 this year when people in some particular clothing carry *MIKOSHI* on their shoulders to the seaside for a fairly long distance shouting "Dokkoisho, Dokkoisho" in a special rhythm.

It is said that in 1838, one of the *MIKOSHI*s was lost when there was a fight between parishioners of Samukawa shrine and the shrines of a neighboring town at a pier on Sagami-gawa river near Samukawa Shrine. The lost *UJIGAMI-SAMA* was found in the sea of Chigasaki by a fisherman of Nango about 10 days later. Then parishioners of Samukawa shrines visited the Chigasaki seashore to express their appreciation of the discovery. This is the origin of the festival at Chigasaki seashore. At around 7 o'clock, all *MIKOSHI*s go into the sea, purify the soul, and have a rite of Shinto praying for the fertility of grains and for people to have an honest and healthy life.

As soon as the ritual finishes, they all return to their original shrines, passing through their hometowns praying also for the well-being, good health and safety of the family. The role of *MIKOSHI* at the *HAMAORI-SAI*, therefore, is to be a vehicle for moving the soul of god to the sea from all the local areas.

After this Festival at dawn is over, a real summer comes to people in Chigasaki.

## CHIGASAKI-KAN AND YASUJIRO OZU



At Nakakaigan in the city, there is a typical old Japanese inn or *ryokan* called *Chigasaki-kan*. The existing building built in 1915 is of Taisho period architecture but there remains a functional bath room which was a part of the first original building built in 1899 in the Meiji period. The garden is nicely set up with old pine trees, and a lot of azalea flowers, etc., in quiet surroundings. It takes only two or three minutes on foot to get to the beach directly from the garden.

*Chigasaki-kan*, itself, is known as a *ryokan* where a world-famous film director **Yasujiro Ozu** stayed from fall to winter every year for 10 years to work out his scenarios. His favorite was room #2 which has been kept with special care in favor of his memory.

**Yasujiro Ozu** is one of the most famous film directors from the time of black-and-white movies. He was born in Kohtoh Ward, Tokyo but he spent his childhood watching many Hollywood films in his father's hometown, Matsuzaka, Mie Prefecture, south of Nagoya. After working as a teacher for a while, he joined one of the largest film companies in Japan: Shochiku Film. He directed 54 films during his life directing and displaying typical family life in Japan. His works include *Banshunn* (Late Spring, 1949), *Tokyo Monogatari* (Tokyo Story, 1953), and *Ukigusa* (Floating Weeds, 1959). He established his unique camera work of shooting the scenes from low angles and as such, he had a great impact on the film industry, so much so that it remains influential even today. His pieces also attracted many fans in foreign countries and finally *Tokyo Monogatari* or *Tokyo Story* gave him the Sutherland Trophy at the London Film Festival in 1958.

Even if you don't stay over night at *Chigasaki-kan*, you can have a good time by enjoying their first class food for lunch and by walking around their beautiful garden as well.

More information is available at: <http://www.chigasaki-kan.co.jp/>