

最近の石川県は、五月晴れが続く、すっかり初夏らしい陽気に包まれています。13日には県内9地点で夏日が観測され、県庁でもノーネクタイ・着なしのクールビズが始まりました。初夏の候、本誌をお読みの皆さまはいかがお過ごしでしょうか。

ところで、石川県の平均気温のように、最近の日本通貨は日増しに対ドルレートで上昇しています。そんな円安の影響か、今年のGWは国外より国内旅行が盛況だったようです。石川県では、先月号で無料化をお知らせした「のと里山海道」を通じて、例年以上に多くの旅行者が奥能登地域を訪れました。また、円安は、金沢港に寄港した大型客船と相まって、金沢の観光地と商業施設に特需を生んだようです。12日、サン・プリンセス号から800人規模の外国人客が金沢に上陸し、観光や買い物を楽しめました。外国人の方々の間でも、九谷焼などの石川県の伝統工芸品は人気のお手頃ですね。

さて、五月は田植えの時期ですが、世界農業遺産に登録された能登地域の「白米の千枚田」でも、苗が植えられました。千枚田は過疎化の影響で、一時は1004枚の水田の4割近くが耕作放棄されましたが、ボランティアの方々のおかげによって、現在では967枚が耕作されています。多くの人々が汗を流し、1枚1枚の田に苗を植えることで、石川県が世界に誇る美しい景観は維持されています。

本誌をご覧のみなさまも、機会があれば、「のと里山海道」をドライブして「白米の千枚田」の景観を楽しまれてはいかがでしょうか。

### 今回の新聞情報

- (1) 歓迎、クールビズ 石川県内9地点で夏日  
<http://www.hokkoku.co.jp/subpage/E20130513002.htm>
- (2) 奥能登にどっと 連休中の人出  
<http://www.hokkoku.co.jp/subpage/H20130508101.htm>
- (3) 客船+円安=金沢に特需 外国人800人上陸  
<http://www.hokkoku.co.jp/subpage/H20130513102.htm>
- (4) おいしい米、育て 石化の名勝・白米の千枚田で田植え  
<http://www.asahi.com/national/update/0512/OSK201305120034.html>

※次回は6月末にお届けする予定です。

\* The next edition is scheduled to be issued at the end of June.

I hope you have all spent these first days of spring well. The typical sunny days of May have continued in Ishikawa Prefecture for quite a while and we are rapidly approaching the summer season. On May 13, record high temperatures were recorded at nine locations in Ishikawa and the no-suit-no-tie "Cool Biz" dress code was in full swing at the prefectural government office because of the heat.

By the way, just like to the higher temperatures, recently the Japanese yen has also continued to climb upward against the dollar daily. Probably a result of a weakening yen, this year's Golden Week season saw more domestic trips than overseas trips. In Ishikawa Prefecture, there was a greater number of visitors to the Okunoto Region and Noto's Satoyama and Satoumi than in previous years, a result of the Noto Yuryo Toll Road being made free as reported in last month's newsletter.

The weak yen combined with the arrival of a cruise ship that disembarked at Kanazawa Port led to an increase in the number of purchases at tourist spots and commercial facilities. The cruise ship "Sun Princess" brought about 800 foreign visitors on May 12 who enjoyed tourism and shopping in Kanazawa. It seems that Kutaniyaki porcelain (a traditional craft of Ishikawa) has a lot of popularity among foreign visitors. May is the rice-planting season in Japan, and workers labored to plant rice in the rice fields of Senmaida, located in the Noto, a region that was recently registered as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System. Due to the declining population, at one time, 40 percent of the 1004 rice paddies in Senmaida were abandoned, but with the help of many volunteers, 967 rice paddies are now in use. Many people labor and sweat to carefully plant seedlings in each rice field, proudly making efforts to maintain this beautiful and internationally-famous treasure of Ishikawa.

If you have a chance, go for a drive in Noto's Satoyama and Satoumi and enjoy the Senmaida Thousand Terraced Rice Paddies landscape.

### Recent News

(1) The high atmospheric pressure above Ishikawa Prefecture provided clear weather on May 13. The temperature started to rise in the morning and the high until mid-day was 28.4 degrees Celsius in Komatsu and 27.9 degrees Celsius in Kanazawa. Among the 11 sites under observation in the prefecture, nine locations reported record highs for this year so far.

At the Ishikawa Prefectural Government Office, the summer "Cool Biz" dress code was in full swing, and visitors to the government office could see staff working with in short-sleeved shirts and no ties. The staff said, "If we can come to work wearing clothing appropriate for the summer, even on a hot day like today, you can work comfortably."

(2) Thousands of tourists flocked to the Okunoto Region of the Noto Peninsula this Golden Week (April 27 to May 6) as the Noto Yuryo Toll Road became the toll-free Noto Satoyama Kaido. The number of tourists visiting Wajima's Morning Market saw an increase of 11,000 persons from the previous year, and other regions also saw considerable increase in the number of tourists. The secretary-general of the Wajima Morning Market Association, Mr. Haruo Ohtsumi, reported, "A large number of people came from the southern Kaga area because the road became toll-free."

(3) Tourist spots and businesses in the central Kanazawa area enjoyed a financial bump as about 800 foreign tourists disembarked from the jumbo cruise ship Sun Princess which arrived at Kanazawa Port on May 12. Vendors rejoiced at the synergetic effect produced by the weaker yen and the arrival of the cruise ship. The yen has dropped to the level of more than 100 yen per dollar for the first time in four years, allowing foreign visitors to actively buy local merchandise such as Kutaniyaki ceramics or Kinpaku gold leaf products.

(4) On May 12, about 350 rice paddy owners and volunteers from all over Japan took part in planting rice at the Shirayone Senmaida Thousand Terraced Rice Paddies, which is a nationally designated spot of scenic beauty. The participants worked together while enjoying the view of the rice paddies filled with cute little tadpoles. 1004 rice paddies, small and big, lie terraced a steep slope overlooking the Sea of Japan. At one point, the number of farmers working the soil dropped from 18 to 3 due to age and a decrease in the local population. This led to abandonment of 40 percent of the rice fields. However, since 1992, volunteers have worked hard to reduce the number of uncultivated rice fields to just 37 (out of 1004).

詳しい情報のアクセス先 For more information, please access the following links:

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) 財団法人石川県国際交流協会 IFIE (Ishikawa Foundation for International Exchange)                | <a href="http://www.ifie.or.jp/index.php">http://www.ifie.or.jp/index.php</a> |
| (2) ほっと石川旅ねっと Hot Ishikawa Tabi-Net (Ishikawa Prefecture Tourism Guide)                | <a href="http://www.hot-ishikawa.jp/">http://www.hot-ishikawa.jp/</a>         |
| (3) 石川県 Ishikawa Prefectural Government Official Website                               | <a href="http://www.pref.ishikawa.lg.jp/">http://www.pref.ishikawa.lg.jp/</a> |
| (4) 首相官邸 Prime Minister of JAPAN (Countermeasures for the Great East Japan Earthquake) | <a href="http://www.kantei.go.jp/">http://www.kantei.go.jp/</a>               |

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IFIE (Ishikawa Foundation for International Exchange)

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