

Hello everyone.

I want to send articles about what is happening around myself in Japan. Please enjoy my article, My English is not so good though.



December 3. I went to Ryogoku station to see my old friend. I have never been to Ryogoku station before. Ryogoku is famous for Japanese Sumo wrestling. As soon as I exited from the station gate, I could see many objects of Sumo wrestling on the wall, such as a ground champion of sumo wrestlers pictures and handprint. Even if a bending machine there is a sumo art. Sumo wrestling is a Japan derived martial arts which was born in around 700. We have sumo wrestling class as an educational program in the senior high school now.

When I was an elementary school kid, I always watched sumo game on TV with my grand father. Even now sumo game is very popular in Japan. but, foreign wrestlers are stronger than Japanese wrestlers now. That is a little regret.



December 24, 2017, my wife and I went to Matsue in Shimane prefecture to see my second son. It was second time for me to visit Matsue city though, I came here again because I wanted to see Matsue castle. What a stately castle is. I was enamored with the monumental and massive architecture. This castle was built in 1611 and maintained up to now. The structure of this building consists 5 floors on the ground and 1 floor under the ground. The height of this castle is almost 30 meters from the bottom of stone wall. On the first basement level, there are a storage room for salt and etc. Also there is 24 meters depth well in the basement. The castle is made of woods and walls are daub. You can see all direction from the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. The entrance gate is made of irons. After passing through agate, there are two stairways and two stairs. It is not easy for enemies to come in.



In side of this building, various weapons, armors and objects of art are displayed. Inside posts are not as long as I thought. There are 308 posts in side of this building. Each of those posts support 2 floors. many pray plates were put on the posts. On the wall there are many small windows and holes to throw stones and shoot enemy coming from outside. These holes are not able to be seen from outside. The stairs are so steep and narrow. It is difficult to take the stairs. I wonder if the dweller in this building took this steep stairs every time.



When I visited the castle, it was the end of December in 2017. Kadomatsu was decorated at the front of the gate. As Christmas tree is decorated in west, in Japan we put the branch of pine tree and plum tree in front of the gate of each house. Also, Kagamimochi (round rice-cake) are decorated in side of each house in Japan. This is Japanese custom for new year. We believe that God will bring happiness and wellness to each house. Kadomatsu is a symbol to invite God to the house. Once a period of time, cutting tree was prohibited for environmental conservation. But now Kadomatsu has a comeback.

