



Morioka Sansa Odori

The World's Largest Taiko Drum Festival

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Issue

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Sadly, now it's September so summer is over. What types of things did you do for the season and the **vacation**? Today, I (Sheila) will show you two fun, cultural summer festivals... all to the beat of the drums!



Has anyone ever been to **Morioka City**? It is the **capital** of **Iwate Prefecture** in northeast Japan. I lived in Morioka City for two years from 2017- 2019. While I was there, I learned about the city's famous festival. It is **Morioka Sansa Odori** (盛岡さんさ踊り)! It is the largest **taiko** drum parade in the world, according to **Guinness World Records** (ギネス世界記録).

It is every year on August 1st- August 4th from 6pm- 9pm. It is on the main city street in front of the Iwate Prefectural Government Building near Morioka Station. The last time I saw it was in 2022. That was the first festival since 2019 because of Covid-19. Many people wear beautiful **yukata** to the festival. I did that in 2017 for my first one.

It is such a special **tradition** for the area that Morioka children practice for the festival during the school year! The **performers** must be strong and **steady** to carry the taiko drums, or play the wooden **flute** while walking, or do **graceful** dance moves for a long time. The traditional **costumes** the performers wear are **bright** and beautiful! Many drummers wear a big red flower on their head





Morioka Specialties



Morioka is famous for three types of **noodles** (盛岡三大麺). My first favorite is Morioka Reimen. It originally came from **Korea**. In the winter you can eat it with an **apple** and in the summer, you can have it with **watermelon**! My second favorite is Wanko Soba. It is Japanese. It is **buckwheat** soba noodles in **tiny** bowls. You try to eat as many as you can! I think my record is 100+! The last noodle dish is Morioka Jajamen. It is originally from **China**. It has a heavy sauce with udon noodles. I do not like it very much. Try them!



If you want to see an interesting place in the area, please check out Tsunagi **Onsen** (つなぎ温泉)! There are many hot spring hotels right beside the beautiful **Lake** Gosho (御所湖). You can also go to Koiwai **Farm** (小岩井農場). You can see cute cows, eat delicious ice cream, and try milk ramen! Both these places are 30 minutes from Morioka Station by bus.



Morioka Sansa Odori in the Bunkyo Ward!



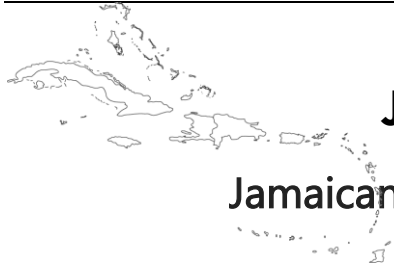
Did you know that the Bunkyo Ward and Morioka City have been **friendship** cities since 2019? Isn't that wonderful? It is perfect that I came from Morioka to work at Keika Girls' School here in Bunkyo in 2019! Why the **connection**? Do you know Takuboku Ishikawa (石川 啄木)? He was a famous **poet**. He was born in Morioka in 1886 and died in the Bunkyo Ward in 1912.

You can see Sansa Odori here in Bunkyo in the spring! Here are Sansa Odori dancers from Morioka at the Bunkyo Cherry Blossom Festival (文京さくらまつり) on March 31st, 2023 for the 5th Anniversary of Friendship Cities.



Takuboku Ishikawa





Jamaica Festival

Jamaican Reggae & Cuisine in Tokyo



Did you know that it's always summer in the Caribbean **islands**? Or maybe I should say it is always **tropical** weather there! Do you know the **Caribbean**? Maybe you have seen the classic movie *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl (2003)*? Have you been on that ride at Tokyo Disneyland? There are 16 island countries in Caribbean: **Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago.** There are some other places there like Aruba, Anguilla, and Puerto Rico under the **control** of other countries like the Netherlands, the U.K., and the U.S.A. Today we are introducing **Jamaica** (ジャマイカ)!



There is a popular Jamaica festival in some big cities in Japan like Nagoya, Osaka, and Tokyo. You can experience Jamaican food, music, **art**, and **culture**. This year the one in Yoyogi Park, Tokyo was on June 22nd -23rd, 2024.

Food

You can try Jamaica's famous dish, jerk chicken with some **spicy** jerk chicken **sauce** and rice. The sauce is made from 'Scotch bonnet **peppers**' which are like **habanero** chili peppers. You can have the popular drink, 'Blue Mountain Coffee'. Next, let's eat this classic and simple food, a 'Jamaican patty'! It looks like a **meat pie** NOT a hamburger **patty**. They can have different types of meat inside. There is also 'callaloo **stew**.' Callaloo is a green **plant** in many Caribbean dishes.





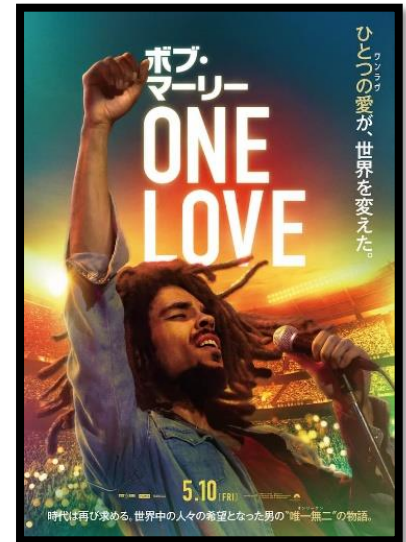
Music



DJ Nasthug
Half Jamaican,
half Japanese

Jamaica is famous for its rich musical culture. Six **genres** of music have come from the country! They are: mento, ska, rocksteady, reggae, dub, and dancehall.

1. **Mento** is a type of old Jamaican folk music with acoustic instruments. It is like calypso from Trinidad and Tobago.
2. **Ska** mixes mento / calypso with American jazz and rhythm & blues.
3. **Rocksteady** came from the 1960's after ska with its own dances.
4. Next is **reggae** from the capital **Kingston** in the 1960's. It is more than music, it a way of life about **unity**, love, **peace**, and **justice**.
5. **Dub** came from reggae but is an electronic music genre focused on remixing and beats. Dubstep later came from it.
6. Last, **dancehall** is from the 1970's and it mixes reggae, hip hop, and **electronic** beats. There is also a style of dance to go with the music.



If you want to learn more about Jamaican history and reggae music, please watch the movie *One Love (2024)*. It is a **biopic** of the most famous Jamaican of all time, Bob Marley (1945-1981). It came out on **Valentine's Day** this year. Erin and I finally watched this movie together in Roppongi in May. Sometimes I had to use the Japanese **subtitles** to understand the **dialog** because the Jamaican **accent** is **unique**! If you watch Disney's *The Little Mermaid (1989)* in English, the crab Sebastian is Jamaican and has their wonderful accent! And sometimes people speak in **Jamaican Patois** which is a **creole** with an English base and West African, Taíno, Irish, Scots, Scottish Gaelic, Spanish, Hindi, Portuguese, Chinese, and German elements.

Famous Jamaicans



Bob Marley
Reggae
singer,
guitarist &
songwriter



Spice
Dancehall
DJ & singer

'Queen of
Dancehall'



Usain Bolt
Olympic
gold medal
sprinter

'The Fastest
Man Alive'



Sean Paul
Dancehall
and
Reggae
rapper &
singer



Grace Jones
Supermodel,
singer,
songwriter &
actress



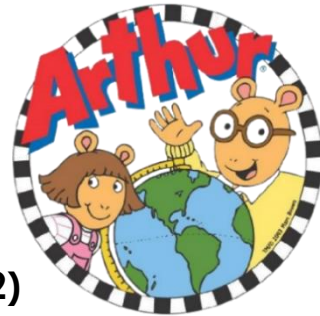
Shaggy
Reggae
rapper
& singer



Ziggy Marley

Bonus Song:

“Believe in Yourself” by Ziggy Marley



From the Hit Children's TV Show “Arthur” (1996-2022)

Have you ever seen the famous **American** kids' TV show called “Arthur”? It started as a children's book by Marc Brown and then was on the channel PBS Kids for 25 years as a wonderful TV show. PBS is a **public** channel so all children can watch. This means many Americans love and remember Arthur! Maybe you have seen the funny memes online? The famous reggae artist Ziggy Marley sang the theme song “Believe in Yourself” with his band and family in Jamaica! He is the **icon** Bob Marley's son. The song is a classic with a beautiful meaning so please enjoy! Sheila **translated** it into Japanese herself.

Every day when you're walking down the street
Everybody that you meet
Has an original point of view

一日一日に通り返きの時に
会っているみんなが
オリジナル見方を持っている

And I say “hey” (“hey!”)
What a wonderful kind of day
If you can learn to work and play
And get along with each other

僕は「HEY」と言って（「HEY!」）
何かステキな日だぜ
働く事と遊ぶ事を習えるなら
人たちに仲良くできる

You got to listen to your heart
Listen to the beat
Listen to the rhythm
The rhythm of the street
Open up your eyes
Open up your ears
Get together and make things better
By working together

心に聞かなくちゃ
ビートに聞いて
リズムに聞いて
通りのリズム
目を開けて
耳を開けて
集まって、上手く行かせて
一緒に頑張る事で

It's a simple message and it comes from the heart
Oh, believe in yourself (believe in yourself)
For that's the place to start (to start)

心からのシンプルメッセージだ
あ、自分を信じて（自分を信じて）
そこは始まりの場所だから（始まり）

And I say “hey” (“hey!”)
What a wonderful kind of day
If we can learn to work and play
And get along with each other
Hey, what a wonderful kind of day “hey!”
Hey, what a wonderful kind of day “hey!”

僕は「HEY」と言って（「HEY!」）
何かステキな日だぜ
僕たちは働く事と遊ぶ事を習えるなら
人たちに仲良くできる
HEY、何かステキな日だぜ「HEY!」
HEY、何かステキな日だぜ「HEY!」

