

## Under the Candlelight

Hello, everyone! My name is Saya Oiwa. Have you ever heard about “Candle Night?” Candle Night is a time that we turn out all the lights for two hours from 8 o’clock at night on the Summer solstice and Winter solstice.

When my father introduced that idea to my family I was very surprised. I couldn’t imagine spending time without electricity. On the summer solstice in 2002, we gathered all the candles which we have at home and put them on old plates.

We had dinner under the candlelight. The atmosphere was different. My family’s faces looked different in the candlelight. The candlelight was beautiful in the darkness. Two hours passed quickly while we were drinking tea and talking after dinner. I found our conversation was a little bit different from usual.

The most impressive Candle Night was the one when we invited my grandmother. I asked, “What were you doing when you were a junior high school student?” then she started talking about her experience when she was thirteen. She stayed at her relative’s house in Gunma prefecture during the summer vacation. There was an older cousin who was very kind to her. They went to pick edible wild plants, and went to a summer festival wearing new Yukata. She told me she was small like me and called Kako-chan. I remember her tender face and finger movements in the candlelight. Now, we sometimes turn off the electric lights and eat under the candlelight.

We use electricity every single day. I had never thought about life without it. We can do homework at night and our rooms get warm quickly, just by the press of a switch.

Nowadays global warming is a big problem. But I think the most important thing we can do is trying to use less electricity. If we continue using so much electricity in Japan, the earth will keep on getting warmer.

Since I first experienced Candle Night, I started thinking about ecology, and how to stop global warming. I heard that Candle Night is done in many places; even Tokyo Tower’s famous lights are turned off. I wish many people would try Candle Night. It is ecological and you can have a wonderful time. Please try Candle Night!

夏至の日と冬至の日に行われるキャンドルナイト。父から、「キャンドルの灯りだけで夜を過ごす」と、聞いたとき、初めは驚きましたが、家族と試してみたら思ったよりも楽しくて、ゆったりとしたきもちのいい夜を過ごすことができました。

今、世界では、地球温暖化がすすんでいます。普段、私たちは何も考えずに電気を使っていますが、その裏に、地球温暖化という大きな問題があるということを、わすれてはいけません。私は、キャンドルナイトをきっかけに、地球温暖化について考えるようになりました。楽しみながら省エネ・・・ということに魅力を感じました。