

# IFERC Newsletter

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International Fusion Energy Research Centre, Rokkasho, Aomori 039-3212, Japan

Local

## Christmas Party in Rokkasho



A Christmas Party of Rokkasho Fusion Institute was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December in Swany in Rokkasho. About 70 people joined the party. Every year our Christmas Party features some exciting event. This time it was Mochitsuki. Mochi is a rice cake. Its ingredient is sticky rice. After being steamed, a big chunk (~5 kg) of sticky rice is put in a big wooden bowl, “usu”, and is hit many times with a big wooden hammer “kine”. Usually a pair, one with a “kine” and the other mixing and turning over the rice, works together rhythmically with shouts. Coordination of the pair is essential to avoid injury. Rhythmical shouting helps coordination and adds to the fun. In Japan, mochi is available all around the year, but is especially popular during the new-year celebration. In our party, people took turns to try the “kine” and shared the fun. It was the first time experience for many of us. Many thanks to the people from the Koh-unji Temple, a zen temple in Misawa, who kindly provided “usu”, “kine” and “zenzai” (sweet soup with small pieces of mochi in it), which was very tasty, too.

Many people offered their special dishes and sweets, including Ushigusa-san, who cooked really tasty and spicy “Mapo tofu” (bean curd sautéed with ground meat and chili pepper in a thick source) on the spot. KFC and pizzas brought all the way from Hachinohe were a rarity for people living in Rokkasho.

The bingo-game was exciting. Opening each prize bag sprang a surprise and wow. Many good bottles of wine were generously offered by Okumura-san for the prize.

Many thanks to the people who took their time to

organize, prepare for, and participate in the party. We all owe special thanks to Organizing Committee members (Ushigusa-san, Kikuchi-san, Ikeda-san, Komata-san, Kitano-san, Setani-san and young Shimada-san) for organizing this exciting and heart-warming family event.

*(Michiya Shimada)*



