



Recently, the 2nd year students had their presentations on “Something Local” in their English classes! I was really interested in all the different local events and I learned about the upcoming Autumn Festivals in Himeji and Aboshi.

On October 15th, I went to the Nada no Kenka Fighting Festival at Matsubara Hachiman Shrine in Himeji. I was very excited to see all the people gathered around the stadium, as well as all the different food stalls! When I went inside the shrine, I could see the all the beautiful yatai. I was amazed by the detail of the wood carvings, as well as the embroidery (sewing, needlework) of different images around the sides of the yatai. It was very fun to watch the omikoshi rock back and forth when they were raised, but once they started fighting, I was surprised! Although I couldn’t see clearly from the crowd, it seemed very easy to get injured, especially if you get caught under the falling shrine.

The weekend after, I went to Usuki Hachiman Shrine in Aboshi to watch the Lantern Smashing Festival. There, I saw the beautiful yatai with their lights on at night. The men also carried the yatai over their heads! Inside the shrine, there were many different food stalls. I wanted to eat everything, but my stomach is only so big. The lantern smashing was also interesting to watch! It reminded me of a custom we have in North America: during a child’s birthday party, it is common to have a piñata, which is an animal figure filled with toys and candy. The piñata is hung on the ceiling and children would take turns hitting it with a long stick, until it broke and candy spilled out. I also saw many students from Nishi-ko! I can’t wait to see more festivals, so please tell me more about them, and say hello to me if you see me there! ☺

