

## PRAYING FOR JAPANESE VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRY PROSPERITY

Country Director LaVerne E. Brabant of ASA-IM Japan traveled to Kyoto to participate in the “Hinotosai” Oil God Festival April 4 at the Rikyu Hachimangu Shrine in Yamazaki held annually since the 9<sup>th</sup> Century. It is said a priest there developed a wooden mill that crushed perilla seeds into oil. The “Egoma” or perilla oil was used to light the lamps of Japan’s Imperial Court as well as neighboring Shrines and Temples. However, over time the crushing perilla spread to other areas, and the Court designated the Priest as Perilla Crushing Master and the Shrine as the origin of oil crushing in Japan. Each April, Japan’s top oil industry leaders gather for the ceremony to offer prayers of prosperity and success for the vegetable oil industry. This year some 90 top executives from 17 oil crushers, and manufacturers along with 29 edible oil wholesalers, government and local officials, and ASA-IM Japan participated. Kazuo Ogome, President of the Japan Oilseed Processors Association (JOPA) and the Nisshin Oil Co served as the official ceremony representative for participants. CD Brabant on behalf of ASA-IM offered a symbolic bowl of oil with a flame along nearly 30 others who took part in the ceremony.

Brabant was also invited to celebrate the eve of the “Hinotosai” at an annual oil trade meeting where top oil industry and wholesalers executives exchanged greetings, trade market information, and the future. ASA-IM Japan was the only non-Japanese organization invited or represented to this important Japanese Oilseed Industry event celebrated for the 1149<sup>th</sup> year.

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Ceremony of lighted vegetable oil offerings...



Vegetable Oil Dedicated to the Oil God



Priest hands wooden mill to Shrine Maiden



Shrine Maiden Crushes Perilla into Oil



Oil Industry on the Shrine steps