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# TEACHING TUESDAY

## JIGOKU MATSURI

OCTOBER 11, 2016

While this festival may be completely in the spirit of October, the Noboribetsu Jigoku Matsuri actually occurs every year in late August. The festival takes place in Japan's "hell valley," and marks the time of year when the gates of Jigokudani are supposed to open.

Noboribetsu Jigokudani, where the festival takes place, is an exploded crater and the origin of the Noboribetsu onsen. The land is marked by a strong rust color and is covered in hot steam vents and sulphurous streams often exceeding a 200 degrees Fahrenheit. The Noboribetsu Jigoku Matsuri celebrates the history of Jigokudani and the legend surrounding the town. Featuring a large float representing Enma Daio, the hellish king, the festival lasts several days.

In addition to the main float, there are small red and blue demon mikoshi and dancers clad in red doing a "Demon Dance". Unlike the common chant of "Oni wa soto!" (demons get out!) that is used around Setsubun, residents chant "Oni wa uchi!" (Demons come in!) as thanks for the hellish association which allows the town to prosper.