November 8th saw an exchange activity, a recreation of a marriage ceremony as held in Afghanistan, with Afghans receiving training in order to reconstruct after war damage, at the Hiroshima Central Community Center in Central Ward (hosted by the UNITAR Hiroshima Office, amongst others.)

Those taking part included 39 Afghan government workers and technicians attending training at the UNITAR Hiroshima Office and 19 Japanese. For the marriage ceremony, the roles of the groom and the bride were filled by Japanese participants, with other Japanese acting as the grooms family and the role of the brides family being filled by the Afghan participants who invited them into their “house.” After shaking hands and hugging each other in the Afghan fashion, the participants who had been greeted enjoyed chai, nuts and dried fruit. “Henna”, a natural dye, was applied to the palms of the participants. Henna, holds the meaning of “great luck” and once applied, does not fade for one or two weeks. A delicate flower pattern was drawn on the hand of 35 year old Chiaki Miki, a company employee from Higashi-Kannon in West Ward who played the part of the bride. Ms. Miki stated “It’s very beautiful. I am happy to have been able to see a gorgeous side of Afghanistan that I had not known about until now.”

In addition, members of the Hiroshima University Kendama Circle “DAMaker” gave a kendama demonstration in which the Afghan participants took part, with them struggling to get the ball in the cup.

“We couldn’t do kendama so well, but we were able to interact deeply with the Japanese here and I think they got to know the culture of our country.” said a satisfied looking Mr. Gul-Afghan Saleh (51) a technician who helped with the preparation.

Photo description: An Afghan woman (center) applies henna to a woman acting as a bride (right) (at the Hiroshima Central Community Center in Naka Ward)