1 Article：
Try Running Up Kimiidera's 231 Steps for a Good Year Ahead

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

For the first time in two years pilgrims run up the 200 stone steps at Kimiidera, Wakayama wishing for good luck in the new year.

For the first time in two years, pilgrims ran up the 200 stone steps leading to the main hall and prayed for a safe year at Kimiidera Temple in Wakayama City on January 10, 2022.

The site is known as Temple Number 2 of the thirty-three temples containing the Kannon (goddess of mercy) statues along the Saigoku Pilgrimage in Western Japan. About 60 men and women aged 12 to 83 took part in the first run-up the stone steps since January 2020.

Participants were clad in loincloths and headgear. Running up the steps, they created an exciting atmosphere among the delighted spectators.

This ritual has been held in early January since 2018, when the local running team thought of utilizing the steep stone steps for training its students.

The race was canceled in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While it was reconvened in 2022, the number of participants was reduced and the audience required to wear masks.

Mitsuhiro Nosaka, an 83-year-old retiree from Wakayama City was the oldest participant. He smiled, saying: "I'm happy to be able to run fast."

Ryota Ishida, a 32 year old firefighter from Kyoto Prefecture, broke a new record of 24.40 seconds up the stairs and won the race. He reflected, "thanks to my family, I have finally overcome the frustration that I had when I came second place last time."

Source：Try Running Up Kimiidera's 231 Steps for a Good Year Ahead
https://japan-forward.com/hidden-wonders-of-japan-try-running-up-kimiideras-231-steps-for-a-good-year-ahead/

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2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **for the first time in～ この～(期間で)初めて、～ぶりに**
   I went to the office and saw my co-workers in person for the first time in 3 months.

2. **take part in 参加する、出場する、加わる**
   He is going to take part in the event as a volunteer.

3. **delighted 楽しんでいる、喜んでいる、嬉しそうな**
   She was delighted to hear from her old friend.

4. **utilize 活用する、利用する、役立たせる**
   They utilize a stream to power a mill in their village.

5. **overcome 乗り越える、克服する、打開する、打ち勝つ**
   You have to overcome your fear of heights if you want to become a pilot.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. **How old was the oldest participant?**

2. **What happened to the race in 2021?**

3. **Would you ever take part in this event? Why?/Why not?**

4. **Do you know any other similar race or event that takes place around this time of the year?**

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4 日本語関連記事：
石段２００段上る速駈詣り　和歌山・紀三井寺で２年ぶり開催

西国三十三所第2番札所として知られる和歌山市の紀三井寺で10日、本堂へ続く約200段の石段を駆け上がるタイムを競い、1年の無事を祈る「福開き速駈詣り」が開かれ、12～83歳の男女約60人が参加した。開催は2020年1月以来。ふんどし姿や、かぶり物を身に着けた参加者が登場し会場を沸かせた。

地元のランニングチームが学生らの練習に使う急な石段を活用しようと考案し18年から毎年1月に開催。21年は新型コロナウイルス禍で中止となったが、今年は参加者数を減らし、観衆にマスク着用を求めて開催した。

最年長で参加した和歌山市の無職野坂光博さん（83）は「快走できてうれしい」と笑顔。新記録の24秒40で優勝し「福結び速駈王」の称号を得た京都府の消防士石田諒太さん（32）は「前回2位の悔しさを晴らせた。家族のおかげ」と話した。

出典：石段２００段上る速駈詣り　和歌山･紀三井寺で２年ぶり開催
https://japan-forward.com/japanese/%e7%9f%b3%e6%ae%b5%ef%bc%92%ef%bc%90%ef%bc%90%e6%ae%b5%e4%b8%8a%e3%82%8b%e9%80%9f%e9%a7%88%e8%a9%a3%e3%82%8a%e3%80%80%e5%92%8c%e6%ad%8c%e5%b1%b1%e3%83%bb%e7%b4%80%e4%b8%89%e4%ba%95%e5%af%ba/

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