

The 2009 Japan Guide



By Ikeda High School's Freshmen Class

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Onigiri (Rice Balls)

Today, I will tell you about rice balls. They have been eaten in Japan since about 2000 years ago. The oldest rice ball was found in Ishikawa Prefecture. Rice balls are a popular food in Japan because they are made of rice, which is a staple food in Japan. Besides, it easy to make and to take out anywhere. Also, you can put various foods in it or your favorite toppings on it. There are many kinds of rice balls in Japan. For example, rice balls with butter in Hokkaido and rice balls with oysters in Hiroshima. I like rice balls. I think most people in Japan like them too. We can even buy them in convenience stores now.



Umeboshi (Pickled Plums)

Today, I will tell you about "Umeboshi."

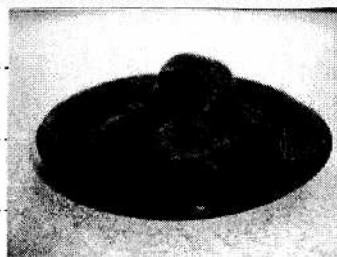
Umeboshi are pickled plums. Umeboshi are a type of tsukemono, or traditional Japanese pickled food.

Umeboshi are usually eaten with rice. As part of a box lunch, a single umeboshi is often placed in the center of the rice to recreate the flag of Japan.

the Hinomaru Bento. Umeboshi is also known to fight bacteria.

The sour and salty umeboshi is also believed to help digestion. Umeboshi are often cited in Japan as being extremely healthy. The standard Japanese folk remedy for common cold and influenza is okayu with umeboshi.

It is umeboshi that I love.



Tamagokake Gohan

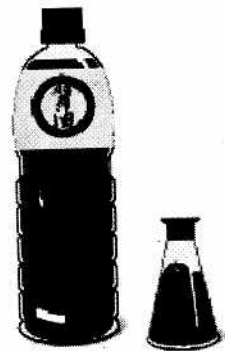
Hello, every one! Look at this. You have never seen this before, have you? This is Tamagokake gohan, which is a bowl of rice with a raw egg. It's usually eaten when we are busy in the morning. I will show you how to make it. First, serve hot rice in a rice bowl, and then pour a raw egg over it. The popular way to season it is to sprinkle ajinomoto on it and add some soy sauce. Then it is ready. And if you sprinkle nori sea weed on it, it may taste even better. I recommend Tamagokake gohan to you because it is simple to cook and it's delicious. I like it very much. Why don't you make it in the busy morning?



Shoyu (Soy Sauce)

Today, I will tell you about soy sauce. This is used when we are cooking, at break fast, at lunch, and at dinner. There are many uses, for example, boil some thing for a long time with it, or put it on sushi, tofu, fried eggs and so on.

Now, I want to talk about my experience with this. Almost all Japanese people like this, and foreigners start to like this lately. I want people all over the world to use it everytime and come to like it. I like it the best of all seasonings.



Mochi (Rice Cakes)

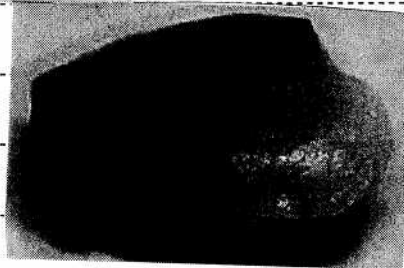
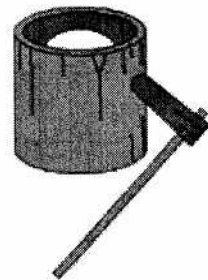
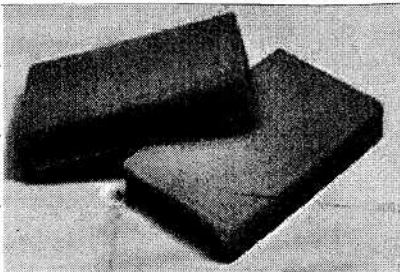
Today, I will tell you about "mochi." It is called "rice cake" in English.

It is often eaten by people in a meal. First, I will tell you about "mochi." It is very delicious and I like it very much.

Do you know how to make it? We pound boiled glutinous rice with a mallet in a mortar. It is called "mochitsuki," and "mochitsuki" is a good event too.

Second, I will tell you about "kagami-mochi." It is decorated during the New Year and we may be able to feel happy just looking at it. Also we can eat it.

Anyway, these are good.



Takoyaki (Octopus Dumplings)

Hello, everyone! Today, I will tell you about Takoyaki. It's popular in Osaka because it is very delicious.

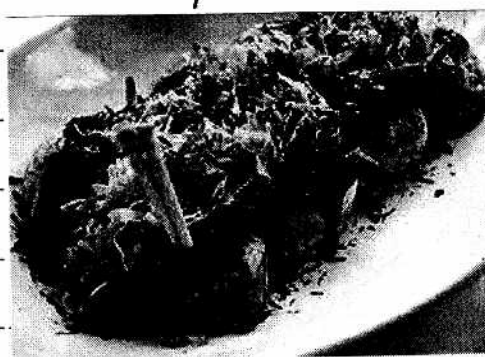
It's round and its color is brown. It's a kind of dumpling made by mixing flour with chopped octopus, ginger and minced green onions.

It's then cooked on a special griddle with a lot of small hemispherical holes.

Street stands selling takoyaki are often found at festivals. We eat it with a toothpick.

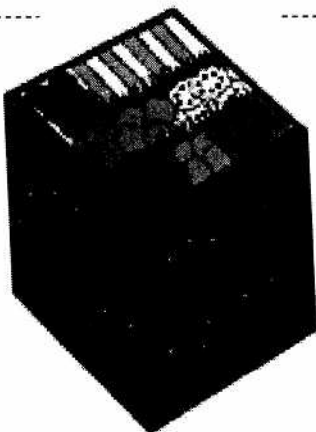
I recommend takoyaki to you because I want it to be popular and famous. Its good point is that it can be eaten without constraint, I think that it's easy to eat for foreigners.

I love Osaka and Takoyaki.



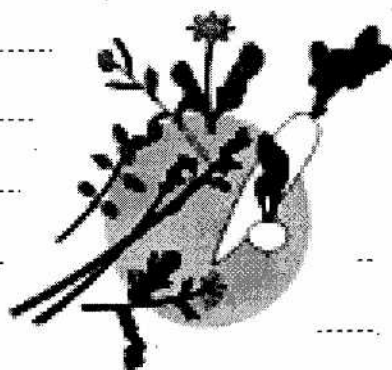
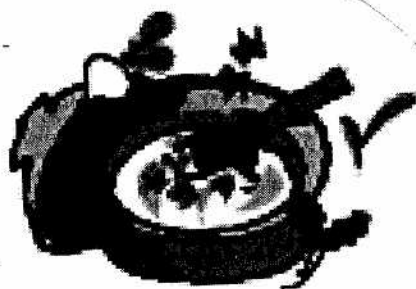
Osechi

Hi, everyone. Have you ever seen this before?
This is a picture of "Osechi." "Osechi" is Japanese food. It is eaten by Japanese people in January. "Osechi" is a box with various foods. The various foods are "Chestnuts," "Herring Roe," "Black beans" and so on. These are very nice because these are delicious and look beautiful, so we can be happy. These have meanings. For example, "kazunoko" means that women will be able to have children. Other foods also have meanings. There isn't an end to it. "Osechi" can be ordered, so Japanese mothers don't have to cook on New Year's Day. "Osechi" can help Japanese mothers. I think "Osechi" will be liked by Japanese people forever.



Nanakusagayu

Today, I will tell you about Nanakusagayu. Do you know this food? It is rice porridge. We eat it on January seventh. We eat too much during the New Year days, so we have weak digestion. Nanakusagayu is very healthy food and we fix our physical conditions by eating it. We wish to be in good health at all the year around. Nanakusa means seven grasses: Seri, Nazuna, Gogyo, Hakobera, Hotokenozsa, Suzuna and Suzusira, so it is healthy food. Nanakusagayu was introduced to Japan from China at Edo. This custom continues even today. We have to protect culture from now on. I think it is delicious. Please eat Nanakusagayu at once.



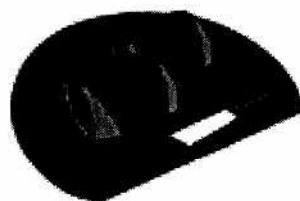
Wagashi (Japanese Sweets)

Today, I will tell you about Japanese sweets. First, I will explain about them. Please look at this picture.

Japanese sweets have been made in Kyoto since about the 17th century. They were high-priced. Japanese sweets were made with a lot of sugar, so these are very sweet and delicious. Also, Japanese sweets represent the forms of many things. For example, nature, flowers and seasons.

After all, now, cakes are more popular than Japanese sweets in Japan, but I want everyone to eat Japanese sweets.

They are very delicious !!



Sha-pen (Mechanical Pencil)

I would like to talk about Mechanical pencils.

Mr. Hayakawa, who was a Metallic workman, made them in the Taisho Era.

The pencil, "Drawing out pencil," was made in those days.

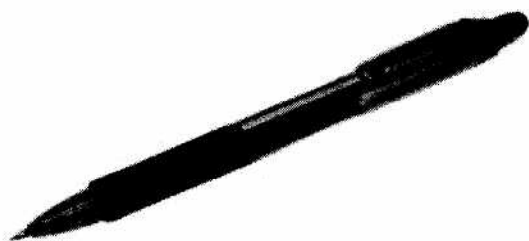
He remodeled it and made the first "Mechanical pencil."

A big company called "Sharp" established it starting with this.

Mechanical pencils are very convenient because the lead goes out only from pushing the eraser, which is attached to the top end. Also, there are many kinds, and the price is expensive, but the expensive ones cost 1000 yen and more.

There is lead that has the color, too.

I want to use mechanical pencil easily and more lightly.



Pocket Tissues

I would like to talk about pocket Tissues.

The first pocket tissues appeared in 1969.

Pocket tissues are sold in stores and

recently often distributed on the street,

near the entrances of stores. There are

many kinds of pocket tissues. They are

distributed on the street, near the

entrances of stores with advertisements

on the pocket tissues. They can melt

in the water, too. Pocket tissues are

small enough that we can carry them

in a bag and in pockets.

So we can use them whenever

we need it !!

Jidohanbaiki (Vending Machines)

Hi, everyone. Have you ever seen these before?

These are vending machines.

Vending machines are popular in Japan because they are very useful. vending machines are used to buy something like drinks, cigarettos, and other things. There are vending machines all over the place in Japan.

I want to tell you why vending machines are useful. For example, people can use them anytime. When we are bothered, can avoid contact with someone.

But, there are disadvantages too. They waste electricity and have weak security. Therefore, it is difficult to spread vending machines all over the world. But I think vending machines are very useful after all.

Netsusama-sheet

Today, I will tell you about "Netsusama-sheet" which is a cooling sticker. Now, I will talk about what "Netsusama-sheet" is and how to use it. When we have a fever, we can use it. Sticking it on our forehead, then it can cool down our fever. So it is popular in Japan. As a proof, It is called "Hiepita." and what is better it has other uses. In summer, Japan is very hot, so we need to be cooled down, so we can use it then. Now I occasionally happen to see some Japanese female students sticking them on their foreheads. I think they are very cheap. So I want all foreigners to use them.

Hashi (Chopsticks)

Today, I will tell you about chopsticks. I'll explain how to use chopsticks.

When most Japanese people have meals, they use chopsticks. Chopsticks have many functions. For example, we can pick up black soybeans, cut hamburger steak, pick up sashimi, and mix natto with chopsticks.

Compared with a knife and fork, chopsticks have more functions. These days, new type of chopsticks have appeared. For instance some chopsticks are used only for eating pasta. However, one type of chopsticks, disposable wooden chopsticks, is made of wood, so we have to cut down many trees to make them.

It's bad for environment. There are people who pay attention to the earth, and they have their own chopsticks. Liberty, democracy and own chopsticks for the world. Yes, we can.



Tenugui (Japanese Towel)

Today, I will tell you about Tenugui. It is a flat cloth. Tenugui is popular in Japan because it is very useful. It is used when we wipe our hands, face, body and so on. From the past, Tenugui has been used by everyone in their everyday life. Now, it is even popular among young people.

I recomend Tenugui to you because it can become many shapes. For example, tear it and you can use it as a bandage. Also, tie it and you can use it as a bag.

There are many patterns of Tenugui lately, so, you can enjoy using them.

Why don't you to use a Tenugui?



Furoshiki (Wrapping Cloth)

Today , I would like to talk about Furoshiki. Furoshiki are used by anyone at any time. For example, we have a way of wrapping long bottles, cylindrical articles such as tea can and watermelons.

That much! Furoshiki are very handy since they so easily fit to the size and shape of the article being wrapped , and when not in use, can be folded up and easily carried in the hand or pocket. Furoshiki are very convenient.

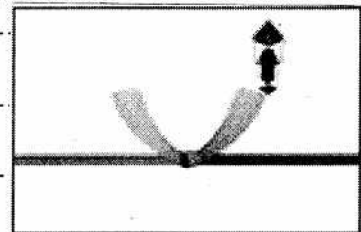
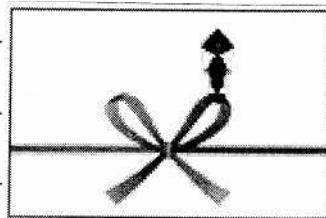
Can you use a bag from a supermarket? No. But they can be used many times. Can you have five cans of coffee? No. But they can. It's up to your imagination how to use them. Furoshiki are smart , pleasant, ecological light , and less bulky.

Furoshiki are global environmental -friendly are perfect goods!



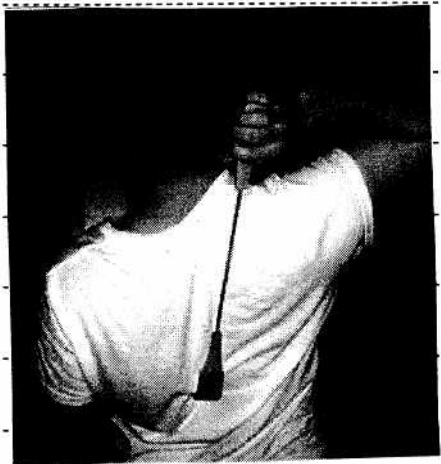
Noshigami (Gift Wrapping Paper)

I will tell you about "Noshigami". Noshigami is a paper which covers a gift. We can learn the names of people who gave us a gift, and the purpose. Noshigami has a rule. When we send a gift for a celebration, we use this paper which has a bow because it's good for the celebration to happen any number of times, but when we send a wedding gift, we use this paper which ties up once because a wedding is not supposed to happen any number of times. Also, when we send a gift as an offering, we use this paper which ties up once and has a gray color. Noshigami is Japanese culture and we often use it when we grow up, so we should know about the rules of Noshigami.



Magonote

Hello, everyone. Have you ever seen this before? This is "magonote", it's called a "back scratcher" in English. It is said that magonote were made for ages. Magonote are generally made of bamboo. However, there are high quality magonote that made of ivory. Everyone knows we use magonote when our backs itch. Also, we can use it when we want to draw something closer. Moreover, we do not use a battery to move magonote. I recommend magonote to you because they are very ecological. Please have a magonote always ready at your family's hands. Thank you for listening.



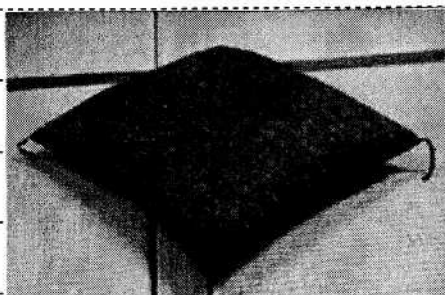
Zabuton (Japanese Cushions)

I will tell you about Zabuton. Zabuton were used by powerful and high priest from the Kamakura period. Zabuton was used to sit on in religious events those days.

Ordinary people could not use Zabuton those days.

Now, Zabuton are used for sitting on, and used as a pillow, a futon for taking a nap, a cushion to protect people, etc... As well as using Zabuton on the floor, using it on a chair is popular now.

Zabuton are simple but they have many uses. Japanese cushions, "Zabuton", are so great. Why don't you use one and realize it!



Tetsubin

I will tell you about Tetsubin. Tetsubin is a kind of pot made from iron. They have many beautiful markers. We use them to make better tea when we make tea. We can enjoy the profound flavors of tea by using them. Tetsubin have other good points.

I hear that, the iron of Tetsubin is good for the health, they keep water hot, and we can use them as interior decorations. For example, we can put a beautiful flower in one. Only this can ease my mind. Tetsubin are very convenient in various fields.

Why don't you use one and drink tea occasionally?



Tatami Rooms

Today, I will tell you about "tatami rooms." Do you know "tatami rooms"? A "tatami room" is used when we want to relax and drink Japanese tea. There are some Japanese things in it. For example, "kotatsu", "shoji" and "fusuma". "Kotatsu" is a table with a heater. Many Japanese houses have one. "Shoji" is a Japanese sliding door. They are made of white paper and wood. The light coming through them is very soft. They also keep a room warm. "Fusuma" is made of paper and wood, too. They have some beautiful pictures on them. I like "tatami rooms" because I feel very calm when I'm in one. Shall we experience a "tatami room"?



Shinkansen

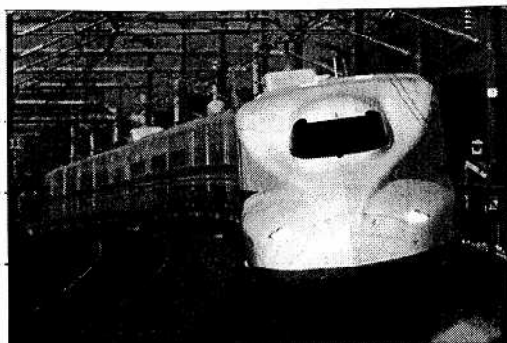
Today, I will tell you about "Shinkansen". It is a train made in 1964 in Japan. It can run more than 250 kilometers an hour. Today, it runs throughout Japan.

It is used when we travel, work and so on. That is to say, it is used when we want to go far quickly. When you want to go far, you use the proper "Shinkansen".

In Europe, the "Shinkansen" is called "TGV". It can run faster than the Japanese Shinkansen.

Today, Japanese Shinkansen are administered by an association called "JR". It is the largest railroad company in Japan.

I hope that Japanese Shinkansen just keep getting better.



Kimono

Today I will tell you about kimono. It is traditional clothing of Japan.

The reason why I choose is it because my grandmother has a shop dealing in fabrics for kimono. People who wear kimono are all women.

The time when we wear them are New Year's Day, Coming-of-Age Day, and the gala day for boys of three and five and girls of three and seven.

Kimono's good points are people wearing kimono look very beautiful and neat. However, they have bad points. To wear kimono takes a long time and it is difficult to move.

I think they are a very important part of culture in Japan and so we should protect it.

Daruma

Today, I will tell you about Daruma. Daruma are red and shaped like eggs. First, I will tell you about Daruma's history and to use them. They were introduced to Japan from China about four hundred years ago by ambassador Tatsuma. They are used as good-luck charms, and parents give them to children. You draw the pupil of an eye on a Daruma to grant your dream, and if your dream was granted, you draw the pupil of the other eye on it. We often use them on New Year's Day to wish for a good year.

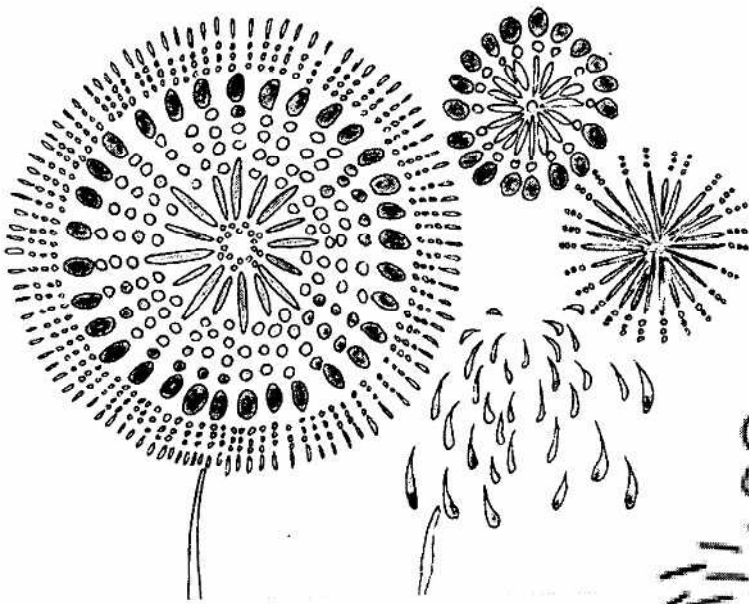


Hanabi (Fireworks)

Today I will tell you about fireworks.

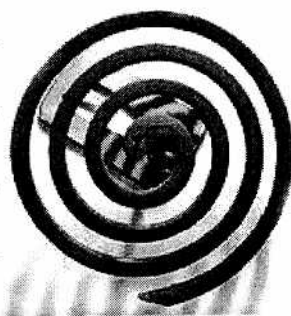
They are called Hanabi in Japan. They are made from gunpowder. They have many colors and shapes. We enjoy their light, color and sound.

There are many kinds. For example, skyrockets, set fireworks and toy sparklers. Skyrockets are very noisy, so they can be heard even from a distance, and they give off bright light that can be seen even from a distance. Set fireworks show us many kinds of shapes. Toy sparklers are soft and quiet. When we enjoy toy sparklers, we have one in our hands. They are very beautiful.



Katori-senko (Mosquito Incense Coil)

Today, I will tell you about Katorisenko. They can smoke out or kill masquitos. When a mosquito is humming around your ear, they are very useful. They are made of leaves and chrysanthemums. The usage is to light the tip. It is very ecological because we don't use electricity or much fire for Katorisenko, so the carbon dioxide emissions are less. Also, this smoke has a nice smell. I suggest that we should use Katorisenko next summer. I think you will get a nice sleep.

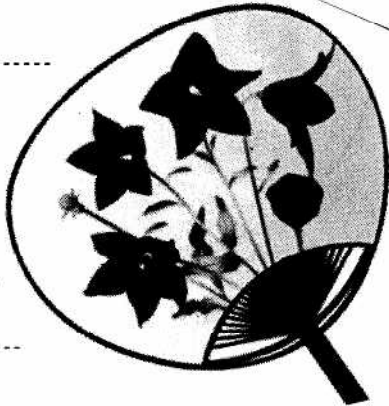


Uchiwa (Plastic Fan)

Hello everyone! Today I will tell you about traditional things in Japan. These are "Uchiwa"!! To know the history of when "Uchiwa" were made, we need to go back to the Yayoi period. In old times, "Uchiwa" were used for ceremonies, religious things and fortune-telling. Now, they are used in everyday life, especially in summer.

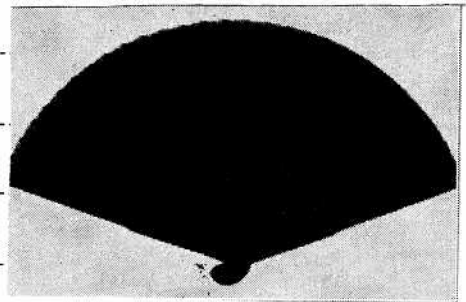
There are a lot of designs of them. "Uchiwa" are not only to make us cool, but are also used for advertisements. We can get them very easily, carry them very easily, and above all, they are very cool.

OK!! Let's get "Uchiwa" this summer.



Sensu (Folding Fan)

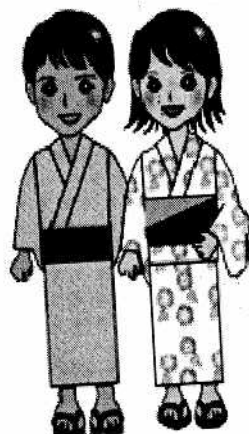
Hello, everyone! Look at this. This is a "sensu", or folding fan. The sensu came into existence far later than the paper fan. It was invented in Japan around the eighth century. It has been used not only to fan, but also for etiquette, exchanging gifts and communication. Sensu were considered better because they can become compact and were exported to the west via china. Sensu came into fashion as upper-class people's communication instruments. There are many other functions. For example, they are used in Rakugo, Tosenkyo games and of course when we are warm in summer. Now sensu are not used as often as paper fans, however, it will become that people will use sensu more than paper fans because it can be all things.



Yukata

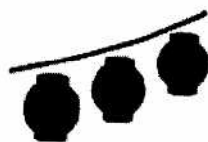
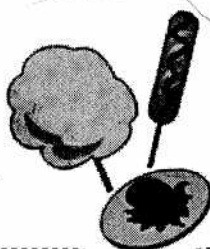
Hello, everyone! Today I will tell you about yukata.
Look at this, This is a yukata. Yukata is
clothes handed down in Japan from the old days.

I wear a yukata during school festivals because
a lot of visitors come to events such as school
festivals and I must do it. In addition, yukata
are worn at festivals in summer mainly. I wear
a yukata when it is hot, so I become very cool.
Yukata have various species, and all are very
pretty and beautiful. I can think that when I wear
a yukata, I feel Japanese. If all of you have
an opportunity, please wear a yukata by all means.



Ennichi

Today, I will tell you about "ennichi". It is special day in summer. It is opened in a shrine or a shopping district. Many kinds of booths sell many delicious foods or toys. For example, "grilled chicken", "Tokyo croquette", "milk rice cracker", "egg rice cracker", "apple candy", and "plastic models". Also there are booths of interesting events. For example, "gold fish scoop", "superball scoop", and "target the points". In ennichi, many people come and have a very exciting time! I like it very much. Also my favorite food is Tokyo croquette. If you go to one, please eat Tokyo croquette. Surely you will like Tokyo croquette too. Ennichi is a very famous event in Japan and a very interesting day!



Kotatsu

Look at the picture. This is a Kotatsu. Today, I would like to talk about this. Kotatsu are Japanese heating devices. It is a low wooden table which is covered with a thick quilt. The body warms up when sitting covered to the waist with the thick quilt. Families in Japan relax around Kotatsu in winter. Do you have one? I have an electric Kotatsu in my room. I really like it. Not only me, but also my family likes it. I often sleep in it because Kotatsu are a very comfortable temperature. Thanks to Kotatsu, we can economize electric power. I think that without Kotatsu, I can't live in winter. Kotatsu are marvelous !!



Nyuyokuzai (Bath Oil)

I would like to talk about "Bath Oil". The bath oil is called "Nyuyokuzai" in Japan. This is put in hot water as stepping into a bath. People use it to warm the body and enjoy the smell. There are various smells in bath oil. For example, there are famous smells such as lavenders, and rose and an unusual smell such as chocolate too. Second, there are various kinds of bath oil. For example there is a jacuzzi. This is a popular bath among small children. Third, the body can get very warm if Japanese people puts the bath oil into their baths. There are various advantages in using the bath oil. So, let's use bath oil.



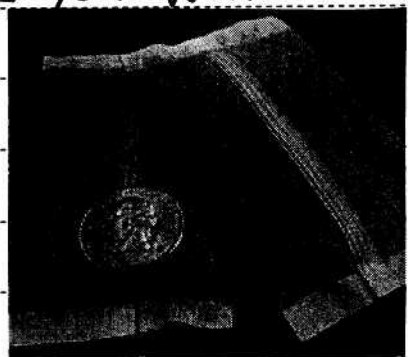
Kairo (Hand Warmers)

I will tell you about hand warmers.

Look at this. This is a hand warmer. We usually use them in winter. To use it, you only take it out of the plastic bag! Soon, it will get warm. From children to seniors can use it easily and safely. It is hand-sized, so you can carry it in your pocket.

These days, there are many types and sized of hand warmers, like for shoes, for apply to the body, with fragrance and so on. They are made of iron and touch the air. They stay warm for about twelve hours. Today, there are cool types for summer!

Will you use hand warmers when you feel cold? I'm sure you will be warm with one.



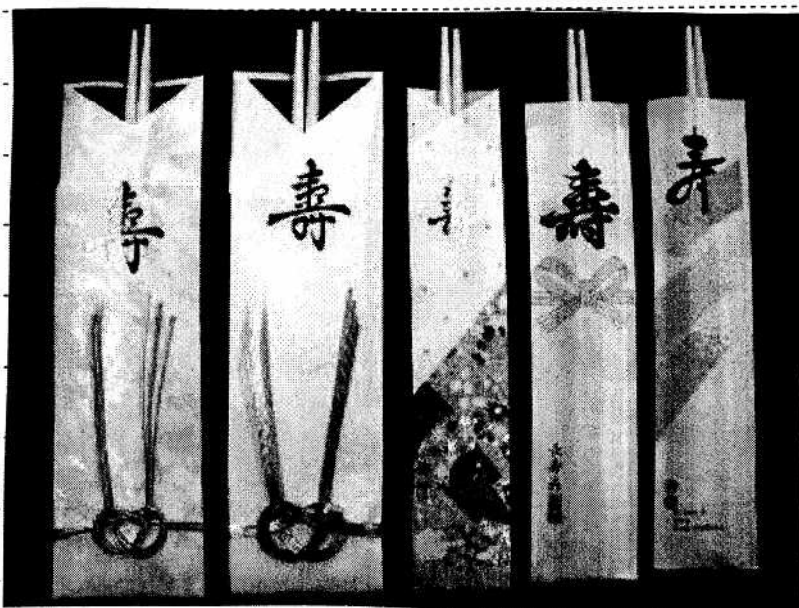
Nengajo (New Year's Cards)

Hello, everyone! Please look at this. This is a New Year's card. These are very famous in Japan. We send cards like this on the New Year's Day to good friends. It is etiquette in Japan. We should not send them if near relatives have died. I like to receive the cards because they make me happy. Everyone usually draws the animal of the year and writes New Year's greeting. I think it is nice Japanese culture. I send them to many friends every year. Why don't you send New Year's cards to your friends?



Iwaibashi (New Year Chopsticks)

Hello, everyone ! Today, I will tell you about Iwaibashi. They are used to eat food during new year festivals. They are used by everyone in Japan at home. Iwaibashi brings us good fortune. We use them on very happy days, so they are very good. Next, there are many kinds of Iwaibashi. For example, well decorated or simple. Its decorations are red, white and gold. I think they are a tradition in Japan, so I want to keep this tradition.



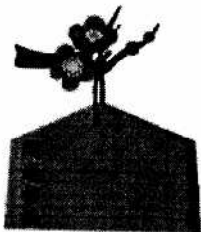
Ema (Shinto Plaques)

Hello, everyone. Look at this. This is "Ema".
Have you ever written this?

Ema is used for the New Year holidays. A lot of
people who pay homage at a shrine write some wishes on
this. After you have written something, you dedicate it
to Ema at the shrine.

Now, I want to talk about my experience with Ema.
I enjoy looking at pictures of Eto on Ema. I have looked
at many Emas and examined the writings. When I took
a test, I wrote an Ema. Then I felt alright. After
I passed the exam, I paid homage at a shrine again.

Did you write an Ema this year? I wrote "I
hope I stay healthy all year around." If you didn't
write one, please write one next year.



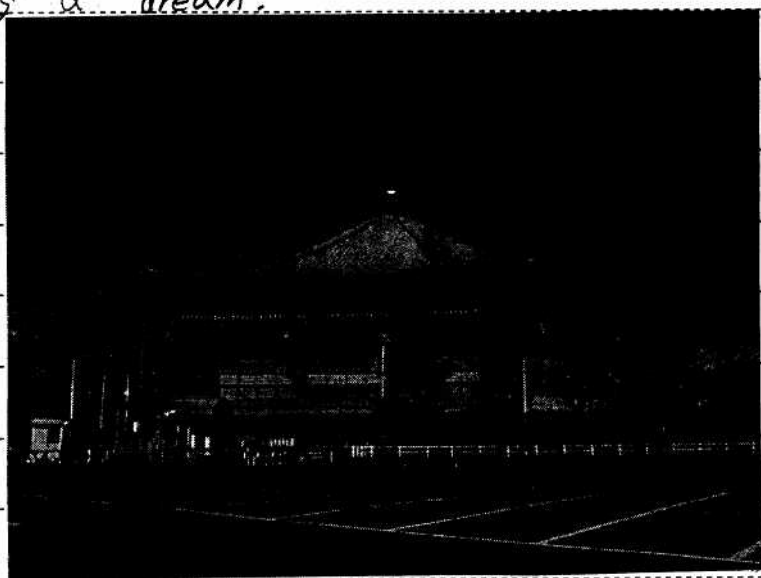
Mt. Fuji

Hello everyone! Today, I will tell you about Mt. Fuji. Look at this. This is Japanese money. There is a picture of Mt. Fuji. I think Mt. Fuji is one of the most beautiful views in Japan. Mt. Fuji is the highest in Japan. It is 3776 meters in height. Mt. Fuji originally meant "mountain of only one", but it means "mountain of good soil" now. A lot of famous painters in Japan liked it and drew it. For example, Taikan Yokoyama, Hiroshige Utagawa and Hokusai Katsushika. I like Mt. Fuji very much too, so I want to go up it.



Nippon Budokan

Today, I will tell you about Nippon-Budokan. First, I will tell you about the history and use. It was built as one of the meeting place of the Tokyo Olympics in Chiyoda city. It is used for rallies of martial arts, such as judo, kendo and karate. It is also used for entrance ceremonies of universities and companies. Well, I'd like to tell you about Nippon-Budokan as a concert hall. Performing at Budokan is a kind of young musician's dream. It is said that succeeding at a Budokan Concert is evidence of joining the first class. I want to do that someday, but it is too big a dream.



Karesansui (Rock Gardens)

Today, I would like to talk about Karesansui.

Do you know Karesansui? Look at this. It is a kind of garden. This history is very long because the first Karesansui was made in the Asuka Era by "Soga no Umako". The Asuka Era was since the end of the 6th century to the first 7th century.

He made it at the Asuka River Promontory. There are some good points.

First, I think that this is the most simple garden in the world. When

we make it, we need only two things, stones and sand. However

it can express beautiful nature. Second, it has mysterious

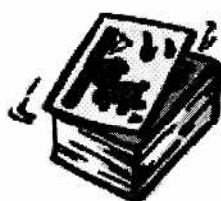
power. It makes us very calm, and it is spreading all over

the world little by little, so I suggest that you should visit

the temple of Karesansui.



Karuta



Today, I will tell you about Karuta.

Karuta is a Japanese traditional card game we play during New Year's.

I will talk about how to play it.

Karuta has two kind of cards.

One has some sentences, and the other has some pictures.

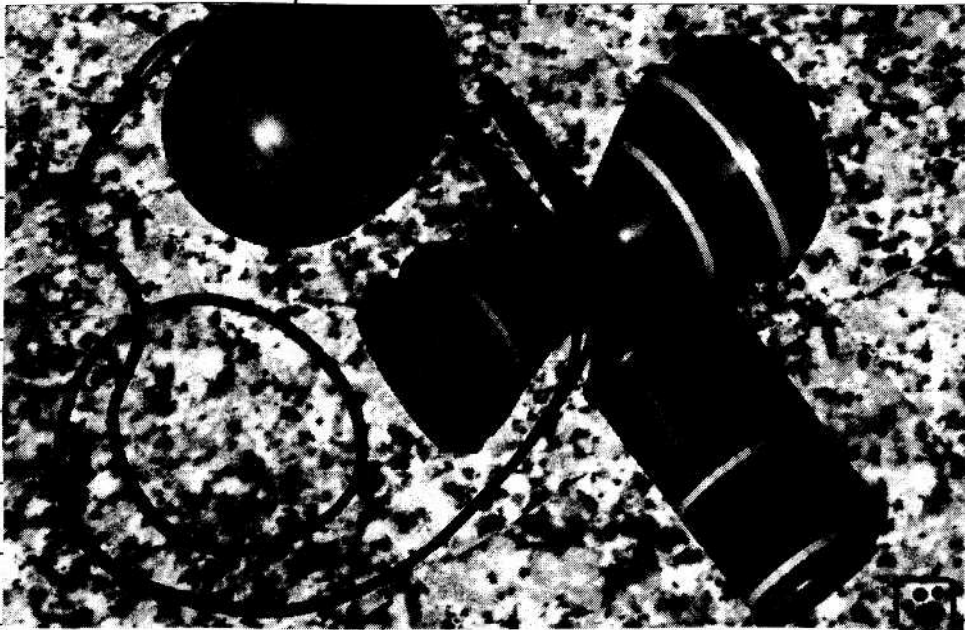
One person read sentences, and other people get a card.

Karuta has three good things. First, it is a very easy game, so from children to old people can play it. Second, Karuta has no restriction on the number of players. Third, Children can study letters by playing Karuta.

I think Karuta is a card game which we are proud of.

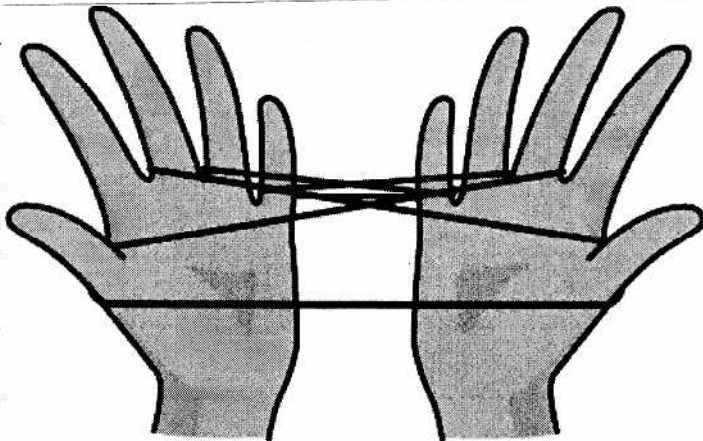
Kendama

Today I will tell you about "Kendama". Look at this. It is a traditional Japanese toy. It was given to me by a primary school teacher. It was introduced from China in the Edo period, and it became the present shape in the Taisho period. It has three cups, a ball, and a stick. You play by putting the ball on the cup, sticking the ball on the stick, and so on. Children who have concentration play it well, and it needs skill. So to be good at playing it, it is necessary for you to play it many times.



Ayatori

Hello , everyone ! Today , I will tell you about Ayatori.
Look at this ring . This ring is made of wool ,
My mother taught me how to play when I was
a child . We play Ayatori in a pair and make
a few shapes like this . Look at this shape .
This shape is a broom . Ayatori is used when
we have free time . Ayatori is famous in Japan
because old men have played it since long long
time ago . Ayatori makes our mind active .
Ayatori can be part of rehabilitation . Ayatori
can be played at any time . Ayatori have been
in fashion since a long time ago , but now
it isn't in fashion . Why don't you play Ayatori ?

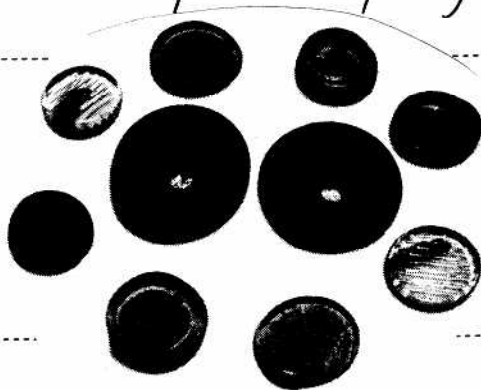


Ohajiki (Glass Beads)

I'd like to talk about magadama, a kind of glass beads. Magadama were first made in the Jomon period, about 10,000 B.C.

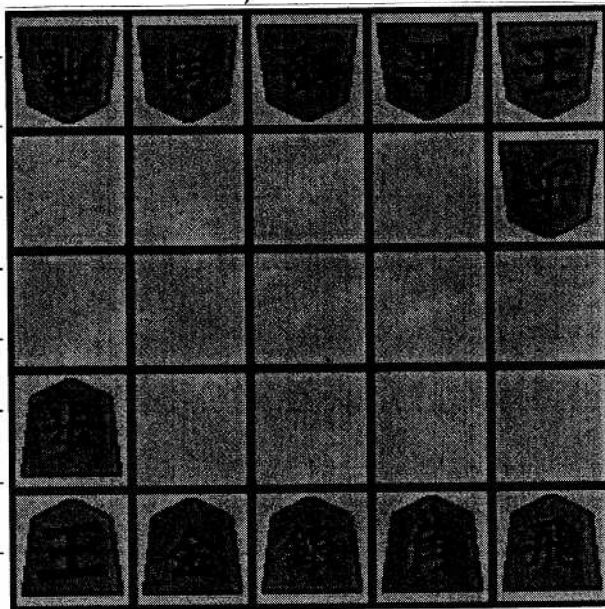
People hung them around a their necks. Also, in rites, they used them as possessions buried with dead people.

Let me tell you something about magadama. First, magadama spread from Japan to Korea. They were discovered in a Korea king's tomb. Second, magadama are beautiful. They are made of jade, jasper, pure gold, crystal and so on. This is why magadama are very beautiful. Third, people say, "If we have them, we can avoid bad things, and we can get happiness." Why don't you get some magadama?



Shogi

Today, I will tell you about Shogi. First, I will talk about what Shogi is and how to use it. It is little difficult game. It is played by two people. Both of them have twelve pieces. They move a piece toward each other. If the opponent's king can't move, the game is yours. Shogi is called Japanese chess. Well, I recommend playing Shogi because you can play the game anytime and anywhere. Now, if you use the Internet, you can play Shogi with people all over the world. Also, you will get along with many people. Please play Shogi at least once. Thank you.

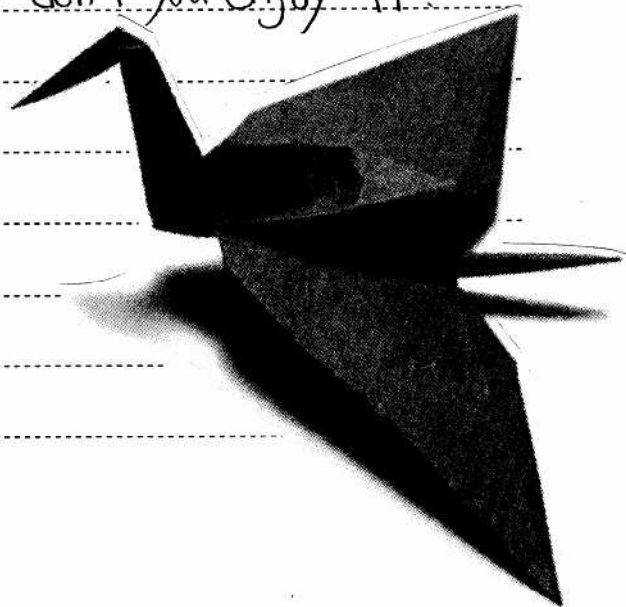
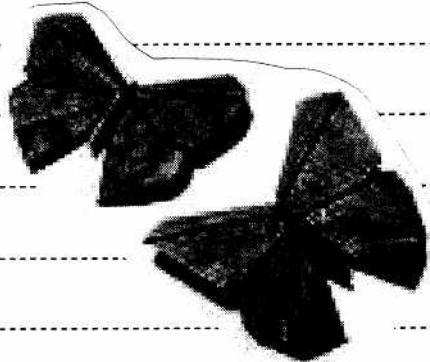


Origami

I will tell you about Origami. This shape is a square. We can make a lot of things. For example, a frog, airplane, piano, crane and so on. I used to play with Origami when I was a child.

In Japan, they are also used for special reasons. If we have a friend in the hospital, we make a thousand cranes with Origami. Then, we gather them together and we send them to him. It is said that it is good for health, so we hope the injured or sick person becomes better!

From children to old people can have a lot of fun with Origami. It is very easy! If you get some Origami, why don't you enjoy it?

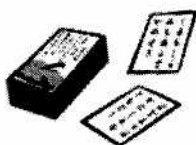


Hyakunin issbu

Today, I will tell you about "Hyakunin issbu."

Hyakunin issbu were written by poets. In the old days, they were enjoyed as an anthology of Japanese poems, but now, Hyakunin issbu are used when we enjoy traditional Japanese cards on New years day.

I will explain how to use them. Someone reads the card and others take the card. Hyakunin issbu's rules are very simple and a lot of people can enjoy it, so I think Hyakunin issbu is good for enjoying time with a lot of people. Competing to see who can get the most cards is very very fun. Why don't you play Hyakunin issbu with all of us? I have hardly ever won.



Purikura (Picture Stickers)

Today I will tell you about purikura.

It is used when we want to take a picture with our friends. The picture is a sticker.

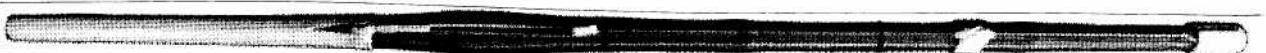
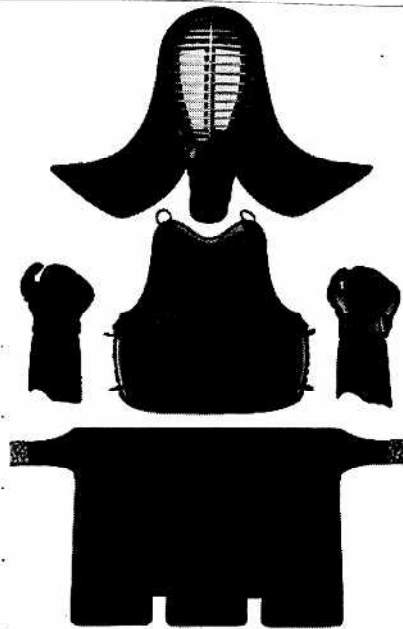
It is not one sheet. It has a few stickers, because we part them and share. We can use purikura easily. It is seen in amusement arcades in Japan. There is the strong point that we can keep them and my friends' memories easily.

We can paint on the picture, but the time was limited. Lastly, Let's leave memories, and you will remember many things in the future,



Kendo

Today, I will tell you about kendo. Kendo is a game in which we use a bamboo sword. We put on a hakama, and we wear protective equipment. We beat the head, wrists, body and throat with a bamboo sword. One match is three minutes. Next, I will tell you about the good points of kendo. If you practice kendo very hard, you will get good concentration, and have good posture. The mind and body are trained. Your stiff neck will recover. Kendo is cool like samurai. Let's practice kendo.



Naginata

Today, I will tell you about "naginata". This is a naginata's habu. "Habu" doesn't mean a snake. Habu's "ha" means an edge and habu's "bu" means a part. Naginata was used by armed monks in the Heian Era as a weapon. It is famous as a paraphernalia that was used by Benkei.

Today some people enjoy naginata as a competition. It is difficult for an amateur to use naginata. I think that naginata's rules are similar to kendo.

A naginata is about two meters long so if you walk in the city with it, you will attract people's notice.



Shodo (Calligraphy)

I'll tell you about shodo, which is Japanese calligraphy. It is to learn how to write letters well. It has a long-standing tradition and many calligraphers have lived in Japan. There are calligraphy classes in school now, and many students are trying it. We call to first write a character at the beginning of the year "kakizome". We use a brush for the first time in the New Year.

The number of people who use a computer to write is increasing, and I feel sad. The character written with a writing brush has a special beauty. Writing kanji with a writing brush is very interesting. Why don't you try it?



Chasen (Bamboo Tea Whisks)

I would like to talk about bamboo tea whisks.

Look at this. This is a bamboo tea whisk.

They are used when we make powdered green tea.

The people who make powdered green tea use this at tea ceremony parties. They are used to whip powdered green tea. Let me say something about the material of bamboo tea whisks. Bamboo tea whisks are called Cha-sen in Japanese. The word "sen" means a burn of a pot.

The size of bamboo tea whisks is about ten centimeters tall. They are made of bamboo. After all, air is included in the tea made by a tea whisk, so the taste is very good.



Hatsumode (Year's First Visit to a Shrine)

Today, I will tell you about "Hatsumode".

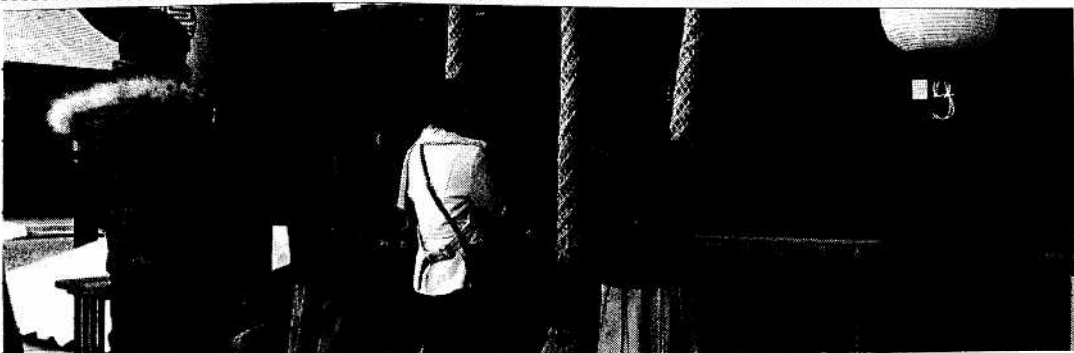
On New Year's Day, Japanese people pay homage at a shrine. Some manners are part of it.

First, you purify your hands with water in a shrine. This water is called "Chōzu".

Next, throw a coin into an offering box and ring a bell. Then bow two times and clap two times. It is called "kashiwade". You pray for something, and at last, you bow again.

Some people get fortune slips, which Japanese call "Omikuji". They tell your annual fortune.

Hatsumode is known by many Japanese people and it is a very good national event, so I want it to become popular all over the world.



Miko

Today , I will tell you about Miko. They are unmarried women.
Miko are in a shrine or a temple.

We can see them when we go and worship on New Year's Day.

They must have a pure heart. They play an important for visitors
because they give us happiness and a smiling face.

Their job is to sell lucky charms , traditional New Year's decorations,
written fortunes, incense sticks , arrows used in exorcising
ceremonies , and to say grace with a faith healer there for prayers.
How about going and worshipping at a shrine or a temple to
receive some happiness ?



Hinamatsuri (Doll Festival)

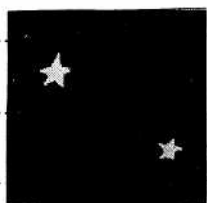
Today I will tell you about "Hina Matsuri" which is said to have started in the seventeenth century, known as the Edo Era. The nobility celebrated it at first. Hina Matsuri is to pray for girls annually. March 3rd is Hina Matsuri days. Hina Matsuri involves decorating a doll representing the emperor, a doll representing the empress, and a peach blossom. People eat Hinaarare Hishimochi, which is traditional food for this event. Hina Matsuri is a very interesting event because we eat some food, see beautiful hina dolls, and it is a girls' event. Why don't you decorate a Hina doll and pray on March 3rd this year? Thank you for listening.



Tanabata (Star Festival)

Today, I will tell you about the Star Festival celebrated on July 7th. This day has a story.

I will tell you about it. We know that Vega is Orihime, and Altair is Hikoboshi. God permitted their marriage. They were very happy. As a result, they didn't do their own work. God was angry about this. Then, God pulled the Milky Way between them. Once a year, they were permitted to meet, but it was raining on that day. The Milky Way was rising. As a result, they couldn't meet. This rain on July 7th is called "Sairuiu." It is said that it is the shedded tears of Orihime and Hikoboshi. Why don't you see the Milky Way glow as you remember this story?



Takarazuka Girls' Operetta

Hi everyone! Have you ever seen this before?

Today I'll tell you about Takarazuka Girls' Operetta Troupe.

First, I'd like to introduce the charms of the Takarazuka Opera.

They're made up of five groups: FLOWER, MOON, SNOW, STAR and COSMOS. The theater's members are all women.

It is the only Takarazuka Girls' Operetta Troupe in the world that does Operas only with women.

Second, I'll explain about the history of Takarazuka Operetta.

This group was created in Hyogo prefecture Takarazuka city in 1913. The founder was Kobayashi Ichizo.

He was the founder of the Hankyu train and famous Toho movie theater.

Third, I'll tell you about the most famous work of Takarazuka.

It is the "Rose of Versailles". This was staged in various countries in the world, and it was praised highly as Japanese original culture, so I think Takarazuka is loved by all today.

Why don't you go to the theater in Takarazuka?

You'll surely notice the charm of Takarazuka if you see it!

Joruri of Nose

There is Nose-town next to Toyono-town where I live. In Nose-town, there is a traditional theater called "Joruri of Nose." "Joruri of Nose" was born in the middle of the Edo period. Since then, it has been performed for 200 years in Nose. It is performed without a puppet, only with a Tayu song and Shamisen music. It is performed by ordinary people. Tayu invite some people in Nose-town and teaches them to succeed. And the next Tayu invite new people and teach them. The number of people who perform Joruri has been increasing. Now, over 200 people can sing a Joruri. "Joruri of Nose" is a traditional performance that is created by the ordinary people. There is "Joruri theater" in Nose-town.

We can look at the tools and the materials of Joruri there. Let's go to "Joruri theater".

However, I have not been there.