

# JAPANESE CELEBRATIONS

*Cherry Blossoms, Lanterns and Stars!*

Written and Illustrated  
by Betty Reynolds

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In memory of Elizabeth Reynolds and Vera Maher  
who turned every family gathering into a celebration

かがみもち

*Kagami-mochi*

An offering to the Gods  
made of pounded rice



どうも ありがとう

*Dōmo Arigatō*

“Thank You”

Thank you to my many friends in Japan who so generously shared their culture and their holidays. And a special thanks to my editor, Ed Walters.

# O-Iwai Shimasho!

Let's Celebrate!

ひがさ

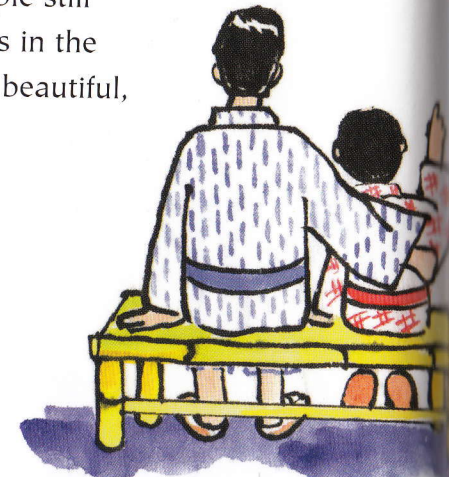
Higasa

A parasol leads  
the way in some  
Shinto ceremonies.



The people of Japan love to celebrate! There is a special day—whether it recognizes a change in the seasons, a religious observance, or just a special moment in life—in every month of the year. Ancient traditions, exotic decorations and delicious, seasonal foods come together to create wonderfully festive occasions.

Although Japan is a modern, fast-paced country, the Japanese people still honor their customs. They have celebrated their holidays and festivals in the same way for centuries. For example, many people still dress in their beautiful, traditional costume—the kimono—for special events.





はなび  
*Hana-bi*

Fireworks are popular in summer.



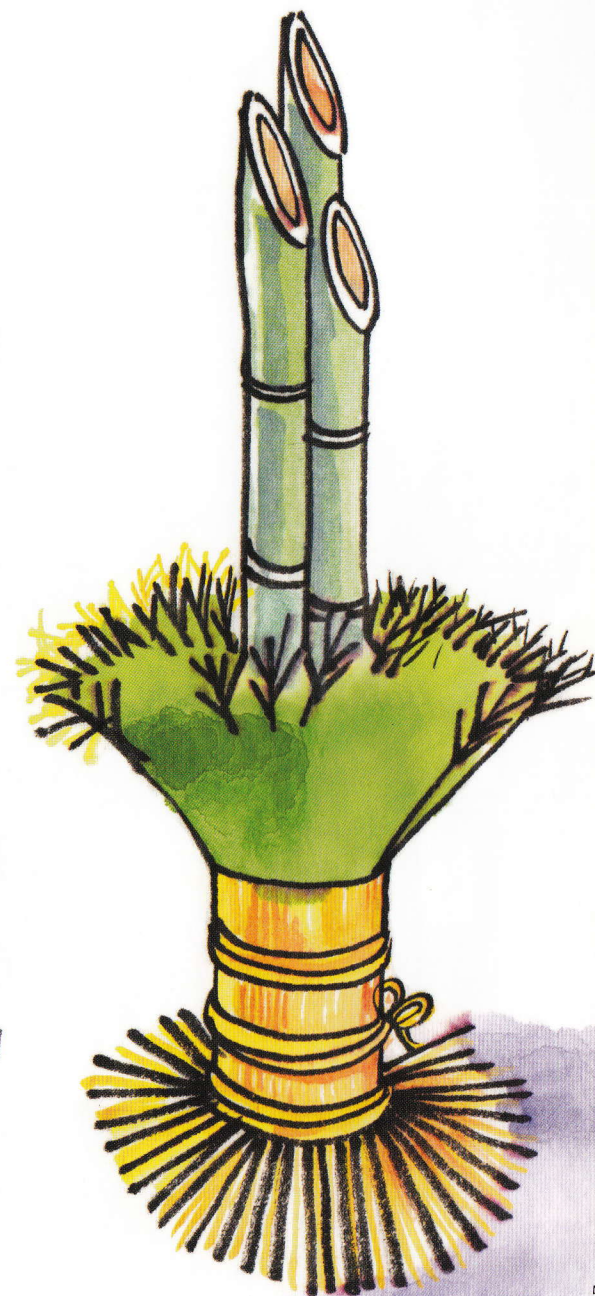
Many of the holidays are based on Japanese religious beliefs. Today, the thousands of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines serve as gathering places for families as they solemnly observe traditional religious rites, as well as joyfully eat, drink, shop and make merry. The shrine and temple grounds and the streets come alive—with strings of colorful paper lanterns overhead, and wall-to-wall with people shopping the street stalls.

The Japanese way of celebrating may seem very different to you, as it did to me when I lived in Tokyo. I hope this book takes you on an entertaining journey through a year of holiday fun in Japan.



かどまつ  
*Kadomatsu*

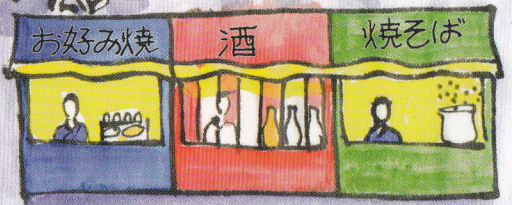
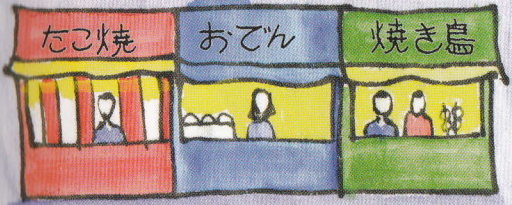
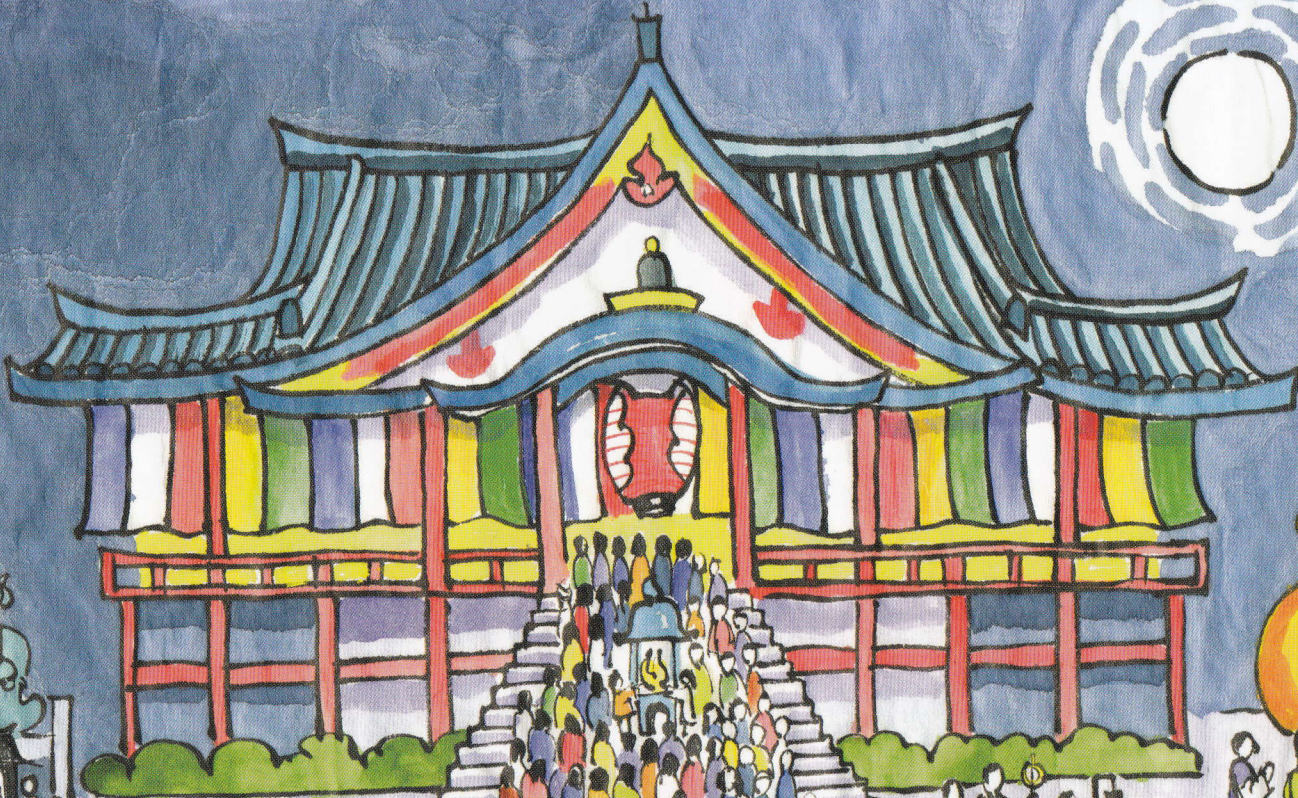
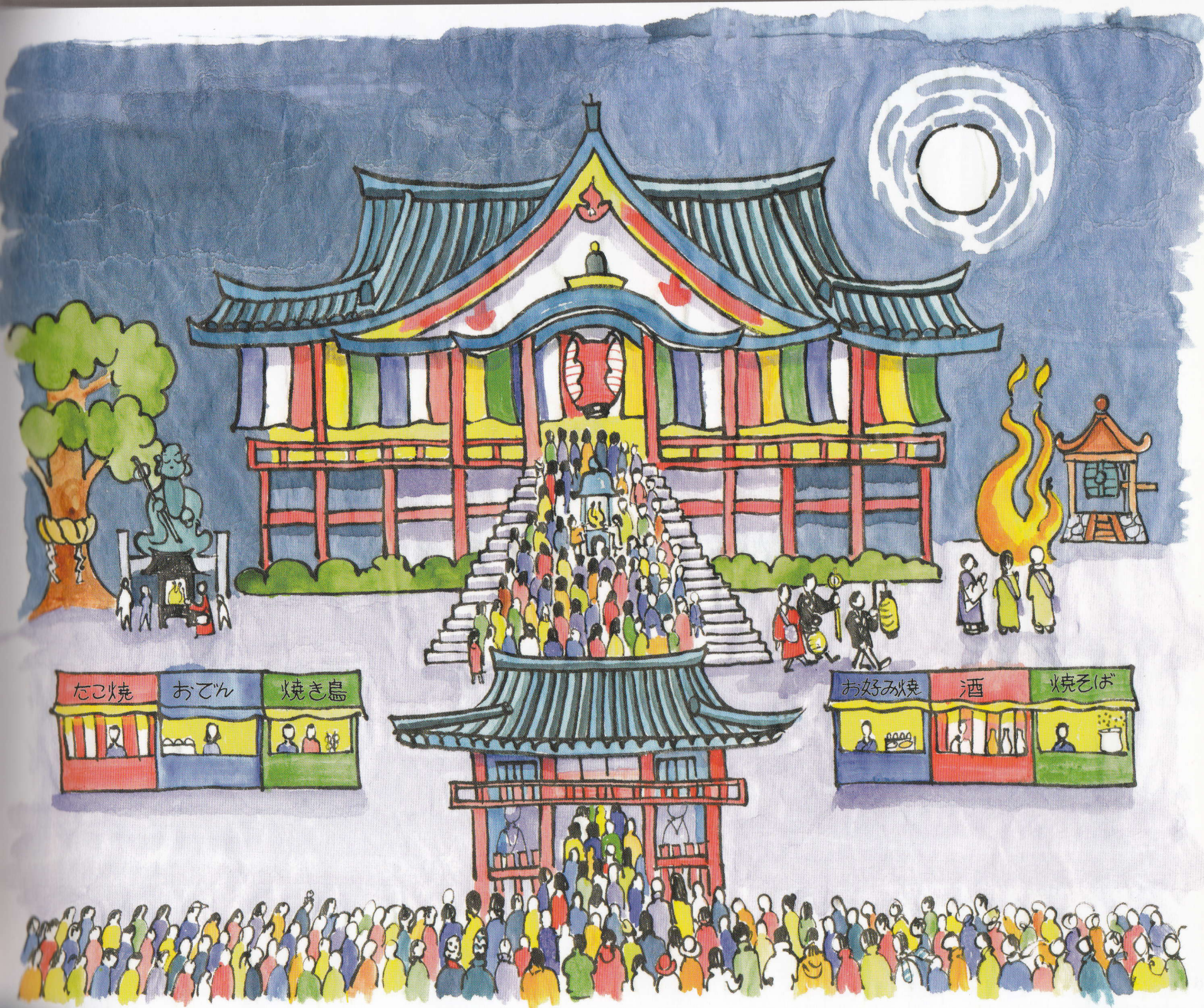
Decorations made of pine straw and bamboo are placed in front of homes for the New Year celebration.



おしろうがつ  
**O-Shōgatsu**  
Japanese New Year January 1st

Shortly before midnight on New Year's Eve, Buddhist priests appear carrying paper lanterns. Trickle at first, then streams, then rivers of people enter through the sacred gate and follow the priests into the temple. The smell of incense, the sounds of chanting and a large bell fill the air. All over Japan, families and friends are performing Hatsumōdé—the year's first worship at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines to pray for good health and happiness. The New Year celebration is a joyous time that lasts several days. Special foods are prepared, debts are paid, houses are cleaned and decorations are hung to welcome back the Gods.







じよやのかね  
**Joya-no-Kane**

People stand in line to ring out the 108 kinds of desire (who knew there were so many?) on New Year's Eve.

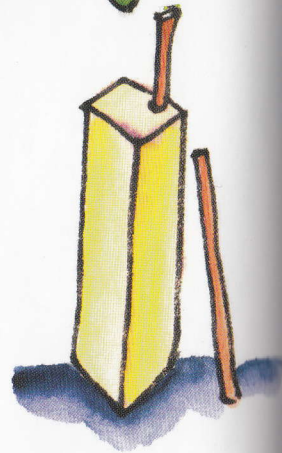


おめん  
**O-men** Children love colorful masks of cartoon and folklore characters.



おみくじ  
**O-mikuji**

Determine your fortune by shaking a stick out of a box. Tie the written version on a tree.



After praying, people shop for symbols of good luck and protection.



だるま  
**Daruma**

Make a wish on the Paint in one black eye.

When your wish comes true—paint in the other.



えま  
**Ema** Write a vow or a special wish on a painted wooden tablet.



どんどやき  
**Dondo-yaki** Last year's good luck tokens and decorations are burned in a bonfire as a way of thanking them for past performance.



としこしそば  
*Toshi Koshi-soba:*

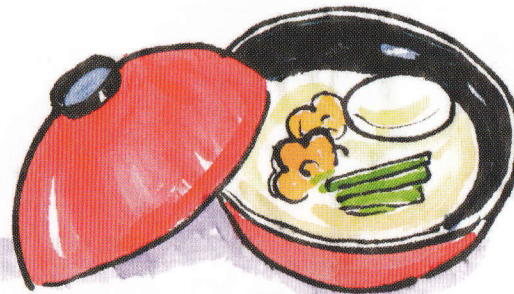
Long noodles representing long life are eaten on New Year's Eve.

おぞうに *O-zōni:* A special soup containing O-mochi (pounded sticky-rice cakes). Chew carefully so you don't choke!



おせちりょうり *Osechi Ryōri:*

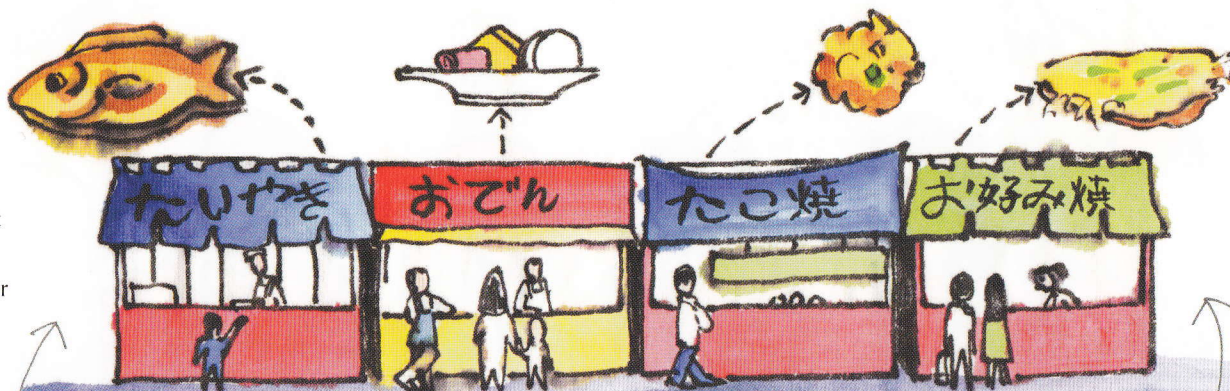
Foods representing health, happiness and a good harvest are prepared ahead and stored in a lacquer box.



**Special foods are eaten during the New Year celebration.**

やたい  
*Yatai*

Mobile street stalls sell other popular foods.



たいやき  
*Tai-yaki:* A small cake filled with sweet beans represents happiness

おでん  
*Oden:* A stew of fish cake, tofu, egg and radish

たこやき  
*Tako-yaki:* Bits of octopus cooked in a batter

おこのみやき  
*Okonomi-yaki:* A pancake of seafood and vegetables cooked on a griddle



くしだんご  
*Kushi-dango:*

Rice dumplings grilled on a bamboo stick

もちつき  
*Mochitsuki:*

Sticky-rice is pounded to make O-mochi on New Year's Eve.



はねつき  
Hane-tsuki:  
Japanese  
badminton



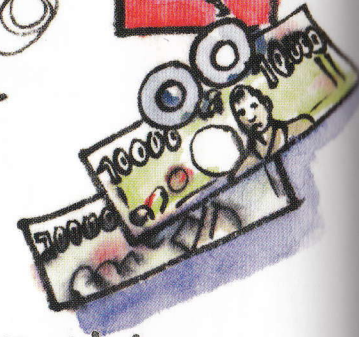
はごいた  
Hagoita  
(Some people just  
collect decorative  
paddles)



かるた  
Karuta:  
Traditional card games



たこあげ  
Tako-age  
Kite-flying



おとしだま O-Toshidama

Children receive tiny envelopes  
containing generous gifts of money  
from family members.

## Other Traditional New Year's Pastimes

しちふくじん

Shichi-fuku-jin: The Seven Lucky Gods



だいこくてん へびさ べんざいてん びしやもんてん じゅろうじんと  
Daikokuten Ebisu Benzaiten Bishamonten Jurojin & Fukurokujin Hotei ほとい

The God of wealth

The God of fishermen

The Goddess  
of arts

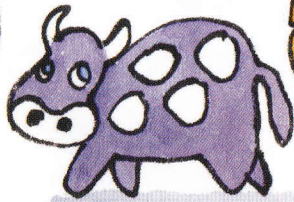
The God of warriors

Jurojin & Fukurokujin  
The Gods of long life

The God of happiness



ね  
**Ne:** The rat is charming, honest and ambitious.



うし  
**Ushi:** The ox is smart, reliable and sensible.



とら  
**Tora:** Tigers are born leaders and competitive.



う  
**U:** Rabbits are talented, sociable and well-spoken.

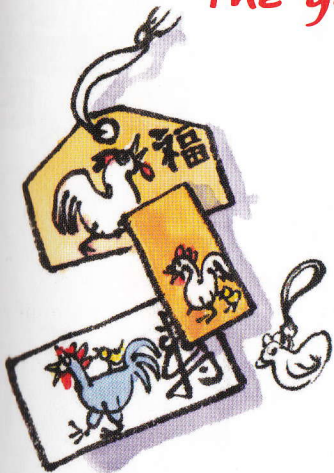


たつ  
**Tatsu:** Dragons are elegant, healthy and strong.



み  
**Mi:** The snake is beautiful, refined and subtle.

The year's zodiac animal becomes the symbol for the new year.



The zodiac "animal of the year" is often used on nenga-jō, (New Year's cards).

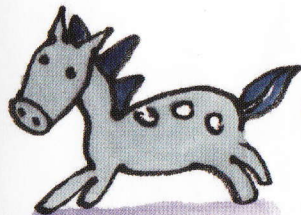
じゅうにし  
**Jūni-shi**

The zodiac calendar follows a twelve-year cycle. Each year is named after one of the twelve animals. Many Japanese believe that you will have the same personality traits as the animal sign for the year you were born.

Which year were you born in? What animal represents that year? Do you match your animal sign?

(Add or subtract 12 years to determine the year of each animal in the future or the past.)

Rat	1984	1996
Ox	1985	1997
Tiger	1986	1998
Rabbit	1987	1999
Dragon	1988	2000
Snake	1989	2001
Horse	1990	2002
Sheep	1991	2003
Monkey	1992	2004
Rooster	1993	2005
Dog	1994	2006
Boar	1995	2007



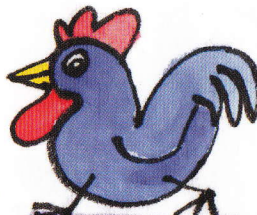
うま  
**Uma:** The horse is sporty, popular and a good team member.



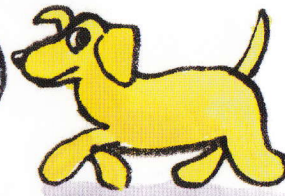
ひつじ  
**Hitsuji:** Sheep are creative, caring and trustful.



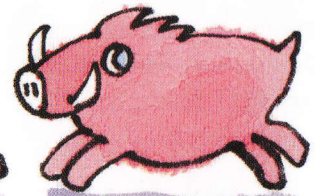
さる  
**Saru:** The monkey is smart, impish and a crowd pleaser.



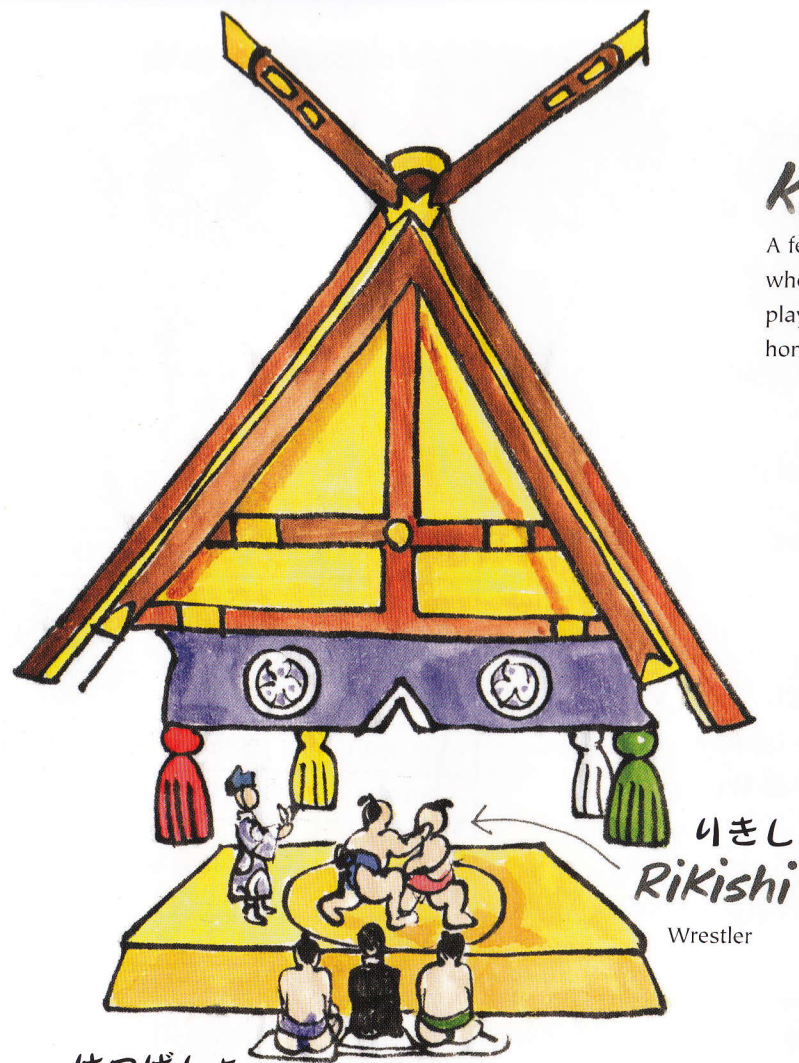
とこ  
**Tori:** Roosters are high-spirited, clever and artistic.



いぬ  
**Inu:** The dog is active, honest and very loyal.



い  
**I:** Boars are noble, fun-loving and industrious.



かまくら  
*Kamakura*

A festival in northern Japan where children play in snow huts, honoring the God of water



*Other Celebrations in January*

はつばしよ  
*Hatsubasho*

The first sumo tournament of the year starts on the second Sunday of January in Tokyo.

りきし  
*Rikishi*  
Wrestler

でぞめしき  
*Dezome-shiki*

A 400-year-old tradition where firemen perform acrobatics high atop bamboo ladders propped up by poles held by other firemen.

いれずみ  
*Irezumi*

Tattoo

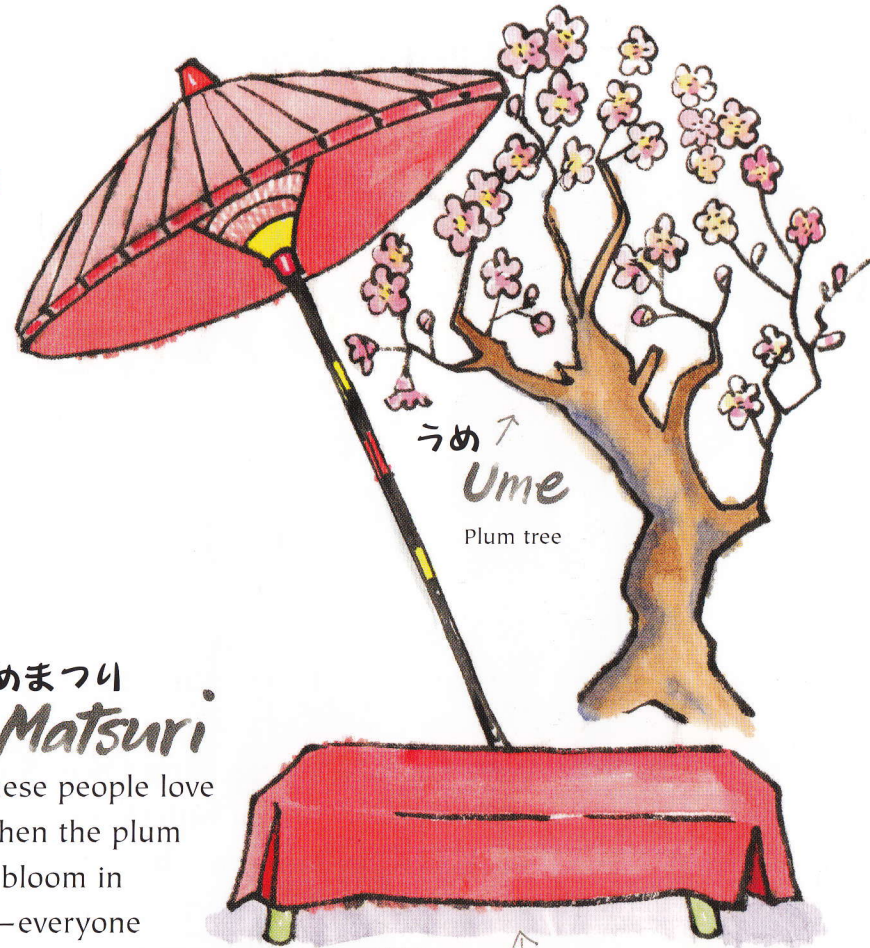


せいじんのひ

# Seijin-no-hi

Coming of Age Day—Second Monday of January

A national holiday when 20-year-olds are honored first in a civil ceremony and later at temples and shrines. They are officially adults and now have the right to vote.



うめ ↑  
**Ume**  
Plum tree

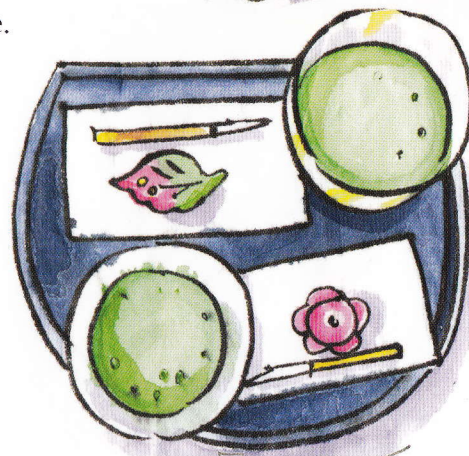
うめまつり

## Ume Matsuri

The Japanese people love nature. When the plum blossoms bloom in February—everyone takes notice.

## わがし Wa-gashi

Sweets made from beans and rice flour



Tea houses with plum trees nearby set up benches with parasols where they can serve green tea.

## まっちゃ Matcha

Powdered green tea used in tea ceremonies

## はおり Haori

Kimono jacket



## はかま Hakama

Pleated skirt-like trousers.



## Furisode ふりそで

Long-sleeved kimono



まめ  
*Mame*  
Beans

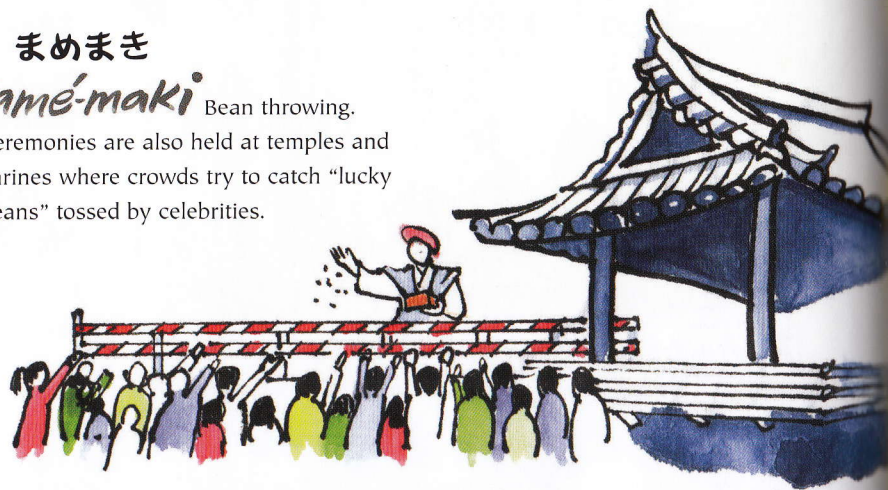
# せつぶん *Setsubun* Change of Season

## *The Bean-Throwing Ceremony-February 3rd*

According to the old lunar calendar of Japan, February 3rd marks the eve of the first day of spring. On that day, in an effort to ward off illness and misfortune, Japanese families scatter roasted soy beans inside their homes and out of every window and door. Someone, usually Dad, wears a mask representing a demon while the rest of the family pelts him with beans, shouting “Oni wa soto!” (“Out with the devil!”), “Fukuwa uchi!” (“In with good luck!”). In a wish for good luck, everyone eats one bean for every year of their age. This tradition is said to stem from the days when a demon terrorized townspeople at night. The ruling Emperor ordered seven wise men to throw beans in the demon’s cave and seal up the exit.

まめまき  
*Mame-maki* Bean throwing.

Ceremonies are also held at temples and shrines where crowds try to catch “lucky beans” tossed by celebrities.



おにほもと!

“Oni wa soto!”  
 (“Devil out!”)

おにほもと!

“Oni wa soto!”  
 (“Devil out!”)

“Fuku wa uchi!”  
 (“Good luck in!”)

ふくほうち!



# ひなまつり *Hina Matsuri*

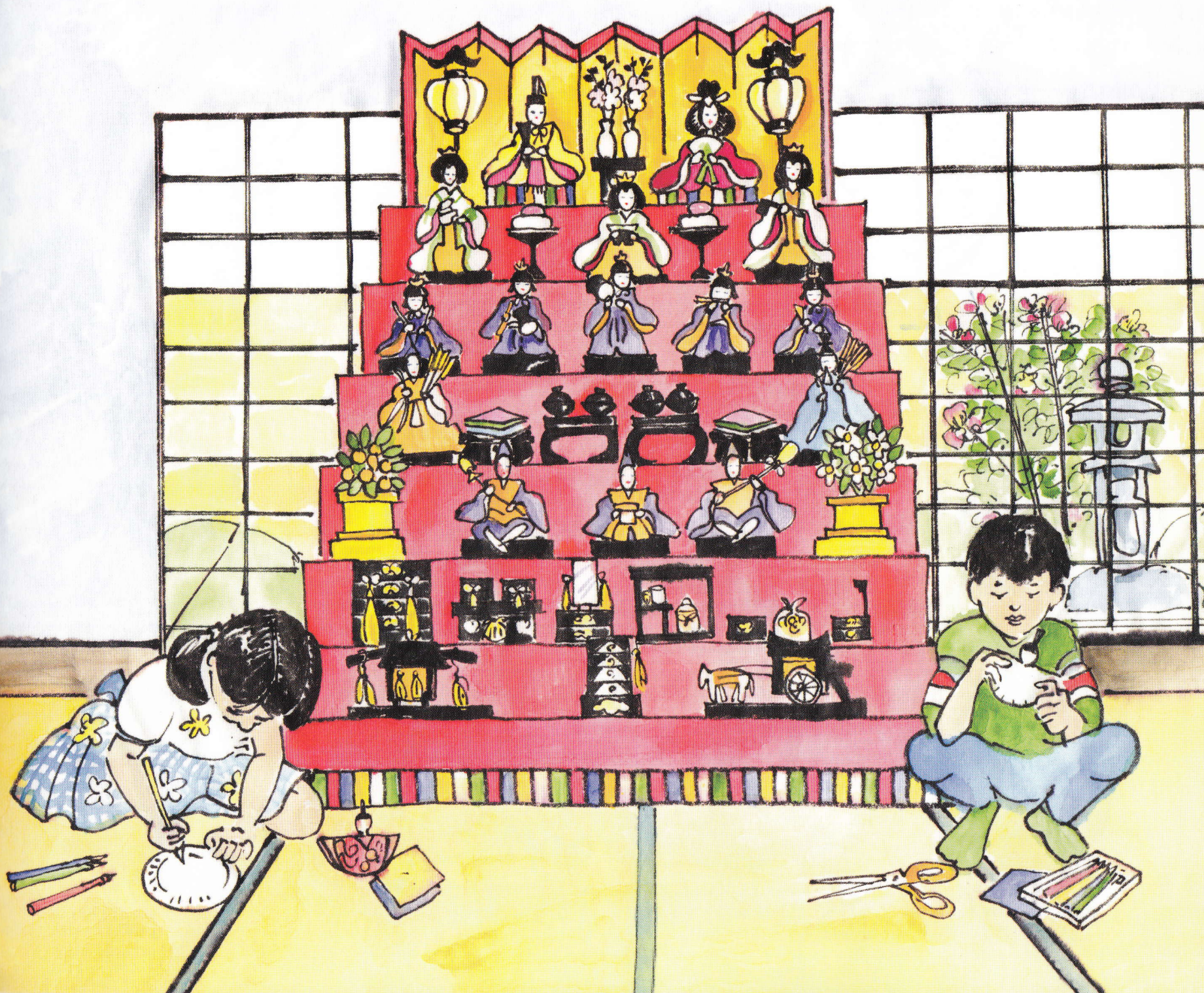
## The Doll Festival—March 3rd

On the 3rd day of March, families celebrate their pride in their daughters by displaying dolls of the Emperor and Empress in a prominent place in the home. Some doll sets also include all of the Imperial court attendants, musicians and possessions. These dolls are not played with. They are usually gifts from the grandparents or inherited from the girl's mother, and are quite delicate and expensive! They are unwrapped with ceremony, admired for a few weeks and then put back in their boxes. One popular superstition says if the dolls aren't returned to their boxes soon after the 3rd, the daughters will not get married.

### ひなにんぎょう *Hina-ningyō*

There are various types of hina dolls. Some are made of paper.





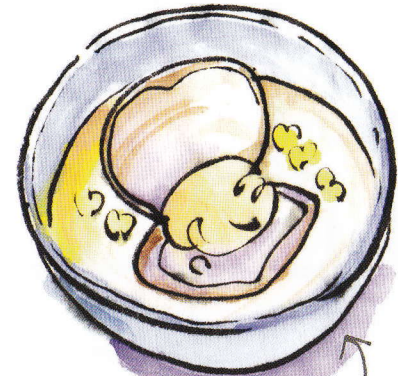
## Other Traditions Observed for Hina Matsuri



ごもくずし

**Gomonokuzushi**

and other sushi rice dishes are enjoyed during Hina Matsuri.



はまぐり  
**Hamaguri**

Clams cooked in broth are another must.

おちゃ  
**Ocha**

Green tea



It's fun to dress in a kimono for the occasion.



さくらもち  
**Sakura-mochi**  
is wrapped in an edible cherry leaf.

なまがし  
**Nama-gashi** Sweets made from sticky rice and sweet beans

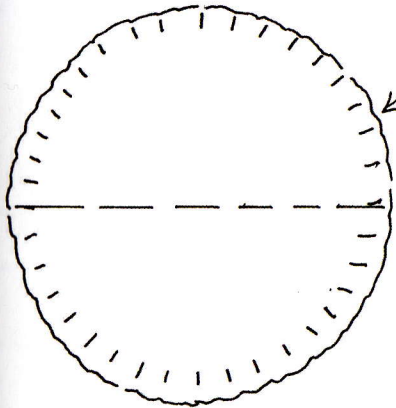
しろざけ  
**Shiro-zake**

A sweet saké made without alcohol

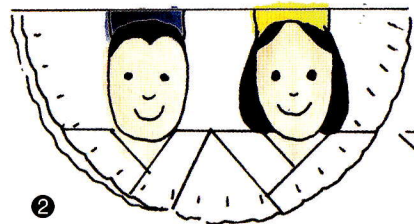
こんぺいとう  
**Kompeitō**

Tiny sugar spheres

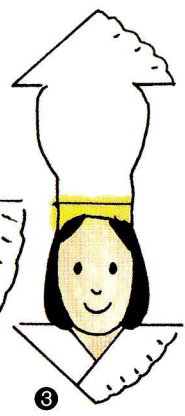
# Children like to make hina dolls out of paper. Here are two styles you can make!



**1**  
Fold 3 small paper plates in half (one for the dolls' heads, one for each body)

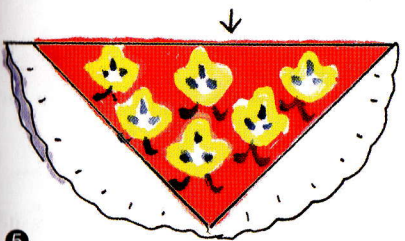


**2**  
Draw faces and kimono collars for the Emperor & Empress on the 1st plate



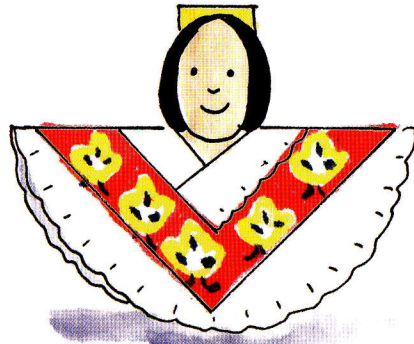
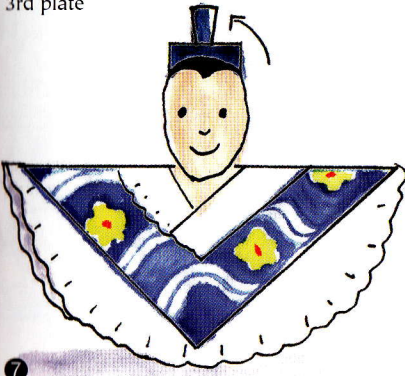
**3**  
Cut out the heads with scissors

**4**  
Cut off a corner of a colorful piece of paper for the Empress's kimono and glue on 2nd plate

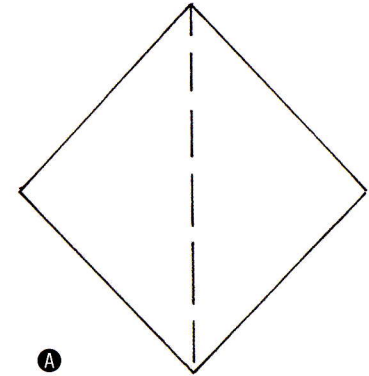


**6**  
Attach the Empress's head to both sides of the plate with glue

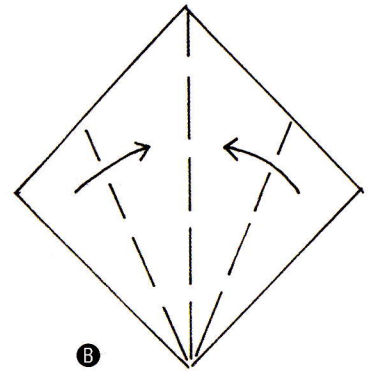
**5**  
Repeat the process for the Emperor on the 3rd plate



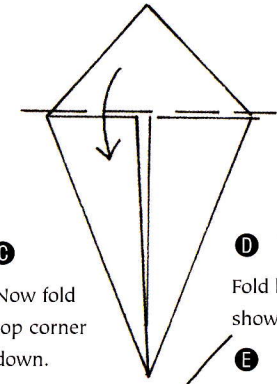
**7**  
Glue on the Emperor's head



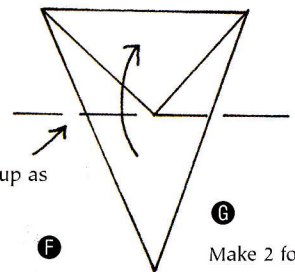
**A**  
Start with a square piece of paper folded in half



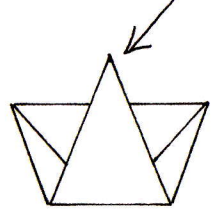
**B**  
Open back up & fold both corners into the center line.



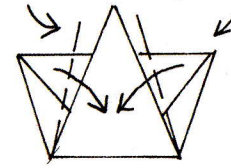
**C**  
Now fold top corner down.



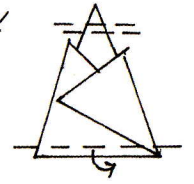
**D**  
Fold bottom half up as shown below



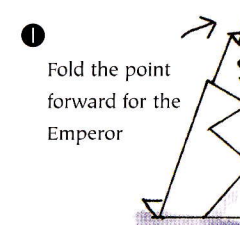
**E**  
Fold in left side first



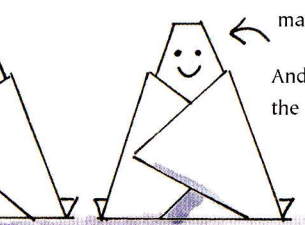
**F**  
Overlap with the right side for the Emperor's hat



**G**  
Fold back to make a base



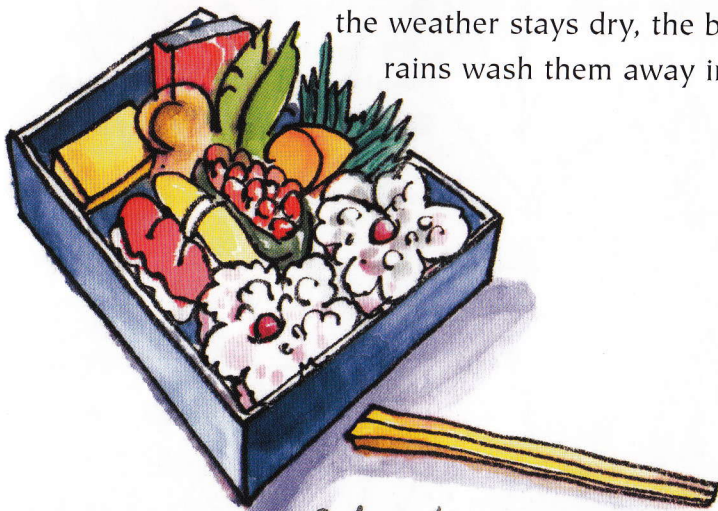
**H**  
Fold the point forward for the Emperor



**I**  
And backwards for the Empress

Everyone Loves  
さくら  
**Sakura!**  
Cherry Blossoms

All of Japan seems to catch spring fever when the cherry trees bloom. No one wants to be at school. They go out with friends picnicking, painting, photographing or just admiring the beauty of these short-lived blossoms. These parties are called Hanami. Most people are invited to several with different groups of friends or co-workers. Even tourists are invited to join in the fun. There are many famous places in Japan where there are so many cherry trees that you'll see a fairyland of pink overhead with a sea of people walking or sitting on blue tarps below. Enjoying lunchboxes and drinking rice wine called saké are important ingredients for the festivities. If you're lucky and the weather stays dry, the blossoms could last two whole weeks! But some years the rains wash them away in just a few days!



*O-bentō* おべんとう

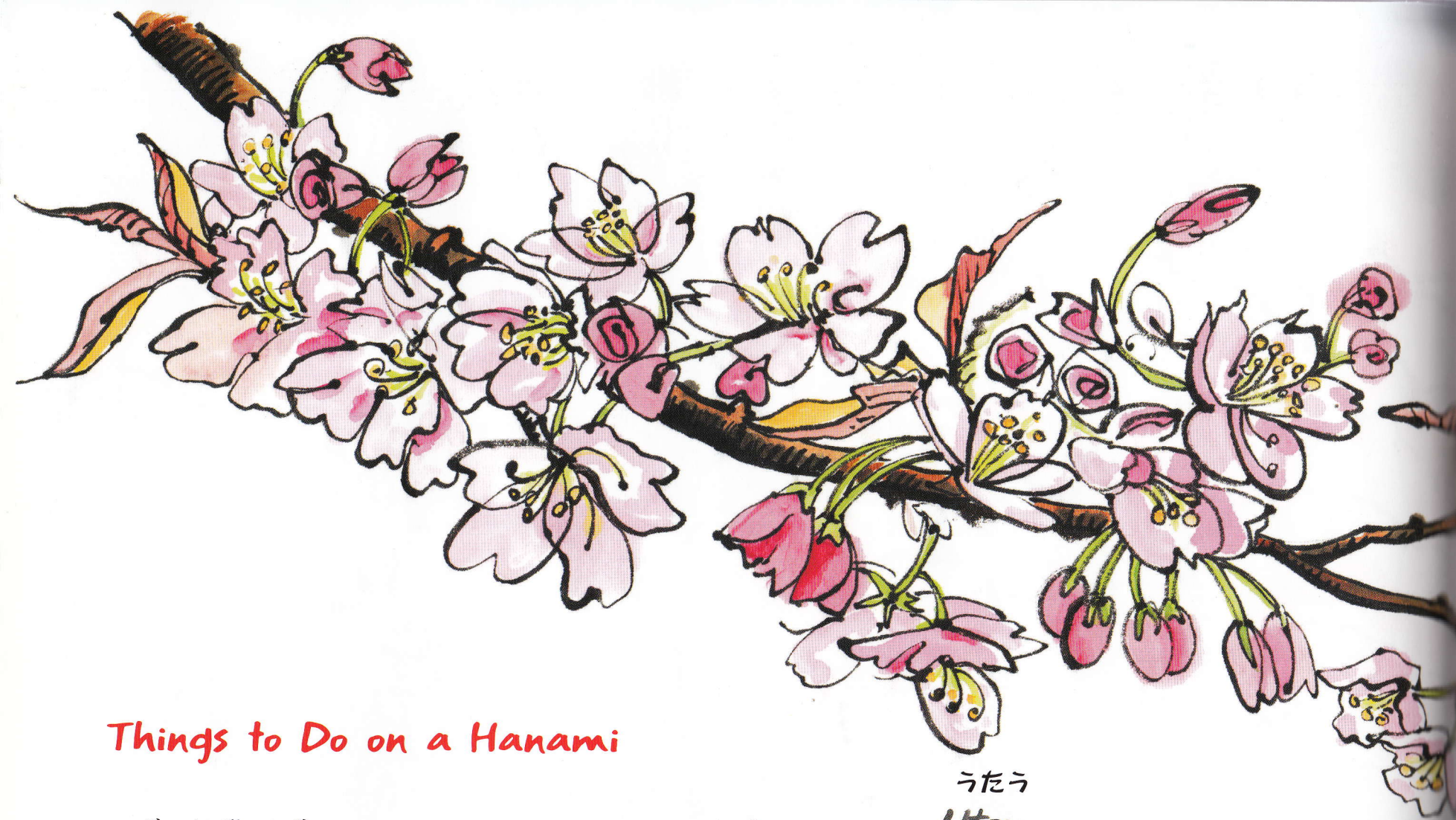
People pack or buy a lunchbox filled with rice, vegetables and cooked and raw fish.

さくらぜんせん  
*Sakura Zensen*

"Cherry Blossom Front"  
forecasts are televised daily as the blooms move north from Okinawa to Hokkaido. The season runs from late March to mid-May.







## Things to Do on a Hanami

ボートをこぐ  
*Bōto-wo-kogu*

Row a boat



のる  
*Noru*

Ride



おどる  
*Odoru*

Dance!



うたう

*Utau*

Sing



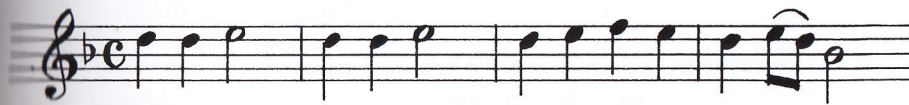
たべる  
*Taberu*

Eat

のむ  
*Nomu*

Drink





さくら さくら、の やま も さと も

Sa-ku-ra, sa ku ra, No-ya-ma-mo sa-to-mo  
On hills, in dales and villages, cherry blossoms



みわたす かぎ—り、 かすみ か

Mi-wa-ta-su Ka-gi—ri, Ka-su-mi-Ka  
cherry blossoms blooming everywhere



くも か、 あさひ に にお—う

Ku-mo-ka, A-sa-hi-ni ni-ō—  
Like pink mists or clouds in morning light,



さくら さくら、 はな ざ—かり

Sa-ku-ra Sa-ku-ra, ha-na-za—ka-ri  
Cherry blossoms, cherry blossoms, glowing in  
full bloom



Let's all go on a

# Hanami

Cherry Blossom Viewing Party

はなみ

けんぶつする  
*Kenbutsu-suru*

Watch others enjoy



いぬのさんぽ  
*Inu no sampo*

Walk a dog



ねる  
*Neru*  
Sleep



しやしんをとる  
*Shashinwo toru*

Take a photo



みる  
*Miru*

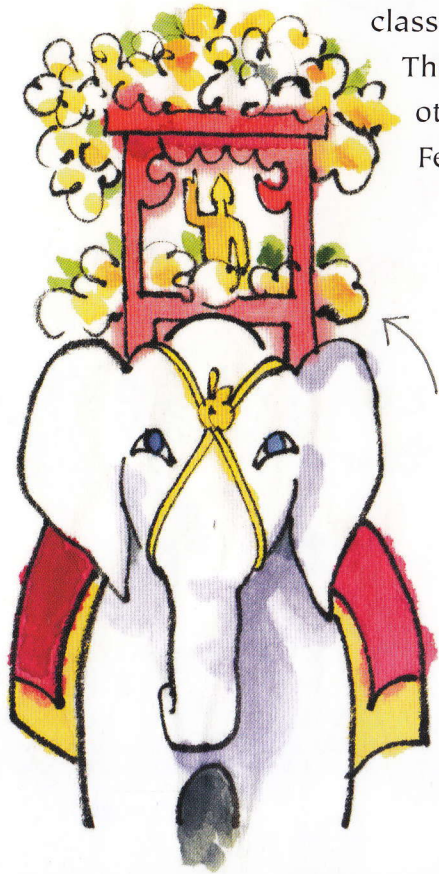
Look



# かんぶつえ *Kan-butse*

## *Buddha's Baptism Celebration*

On the 8th of April Japan celebrates the birthday of Buddha, the founder of Buddhism—one of their major religions. Throughout Japan, miniature pavilions with a statue of the young Buddha are decorated with flowers and carried to Buddhist temples in colorful processions. Children who attend Buddhist study classes take turns pouring sweet tea over Buddha's head in a form of baptism. The statue then stays in place on the temple grounds for a few days so that others may pay their respects. This ceremony, also known as the Flower Festival, often occurs during the cherry blossom season.



### はなみどう *Hanamidō*

The "Flowery Temple" is delivered by a statue of an elephant wheeled into a famous temple in Tokyo.

はなまつり



# こどものひ kodomo-no-hi

Children's Day-May 5th

For centuries Japan celebrated Boy's Day on the 5th day of the 5th month. In 1954 the festival became known as Kodomo-no-hi, a national holiday celebrating the healthy growth of all children—both boys and girls. Families with a son fly fish-shaped windsocks outside of their homes on a long pole. The windsocks, called Koi nobori, represent carp swimming upstream. Parents hope their sons will overcome obstacles as they grow up and become men. It is a treat to see all of the carp streamers flying high above the city and in the countryside. Kodomo-no-hi is part of Golden Week, a week of separate holidays when many families travel, visit amusement parks and just relax. Other holidays during that week include Greenery Day and Constitution Day.

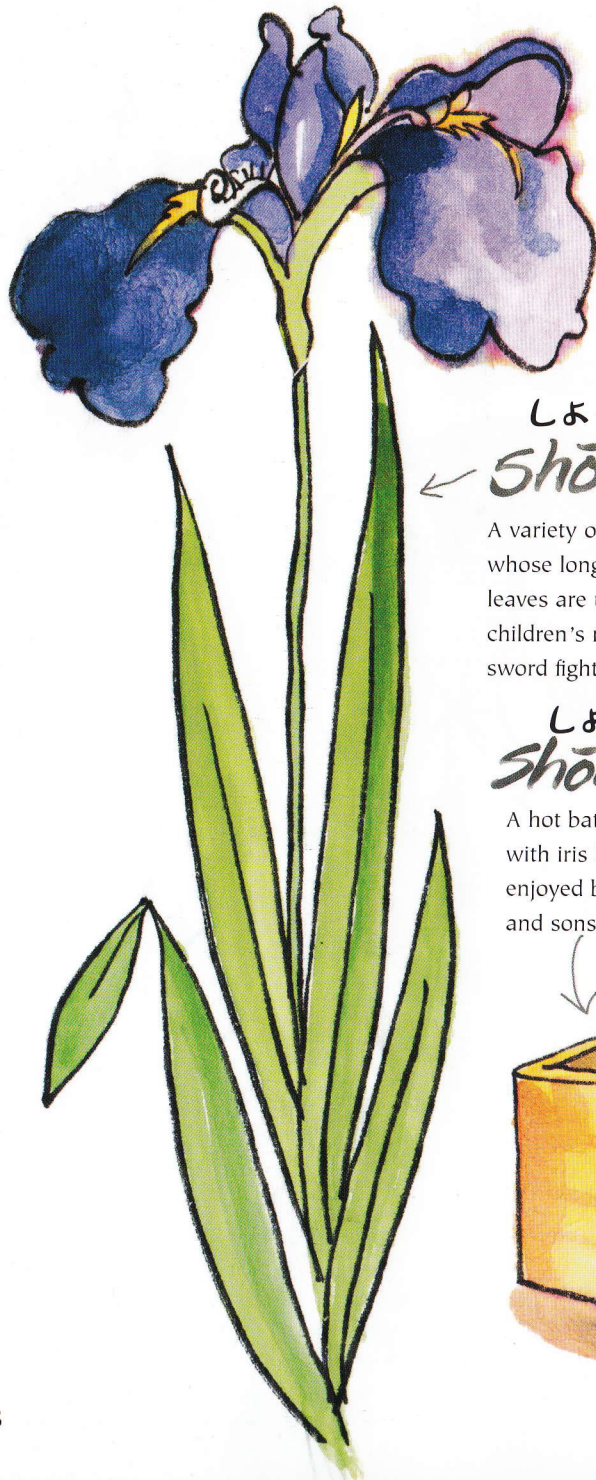
こいのぼり  
Koi nobori

Carp streamers





Other traditions for  
Children's Day include:

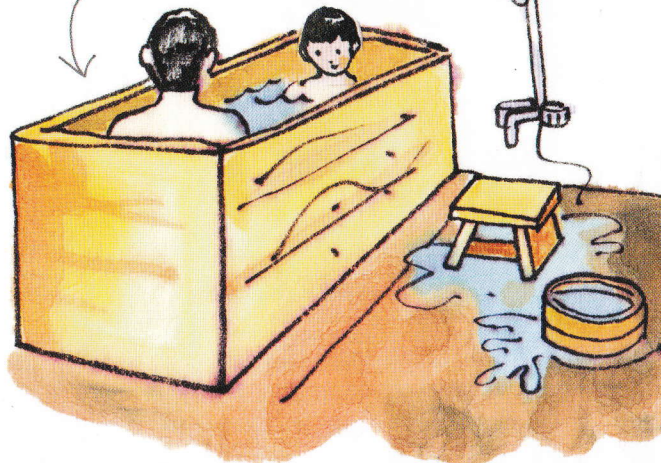


しょうぶ  
← *Shōbu*

A variety of iris whose long, pointed leaves are used in children's mock sword fights

しょうぶゆ  
*Shōbu-yu*

A hot bath scented with iris leaves enjoyed by fathers and sons

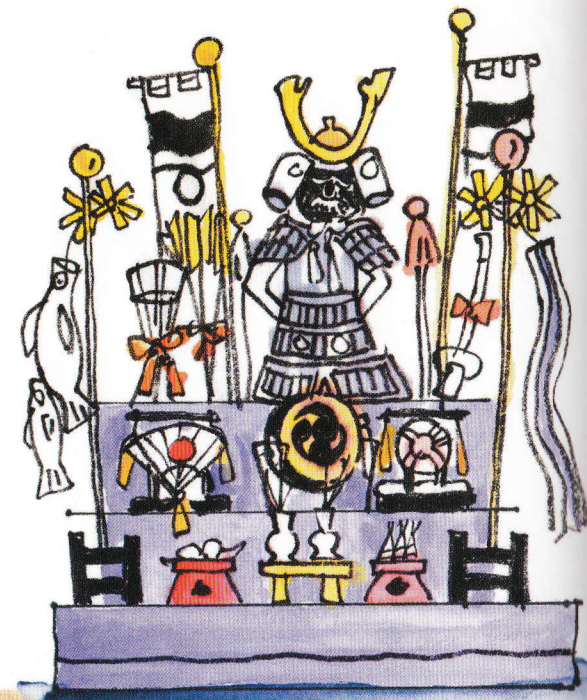


ちまき  
← *Chimaki*

Sweet rice dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves are another favorite treat.

かしわもち  
*Kashiwa-mochi*

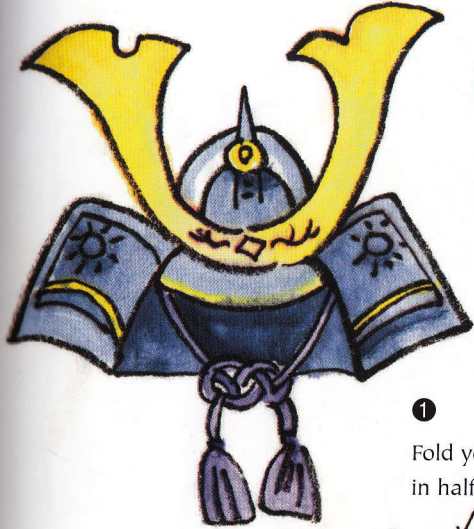
Rice-flour dumplings filled with a paste of sweet beans are wrapped in oak leaves.



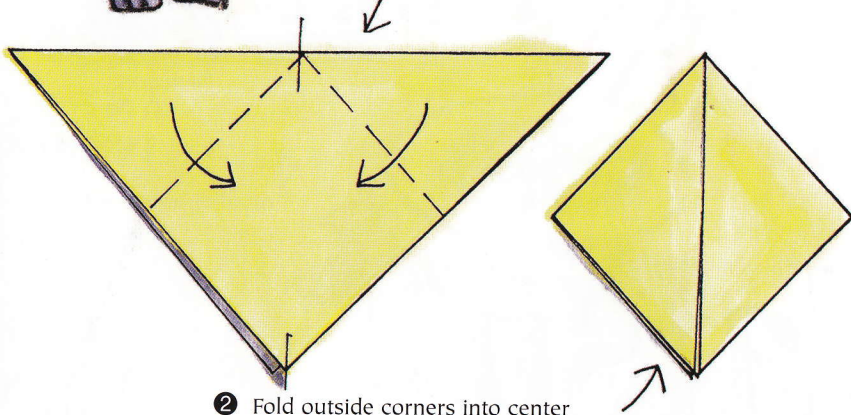
ごがつにぎょう  
*Gogatsu-ningyō*

Families with sons set up displays of samurai helmets and other martial symbols.

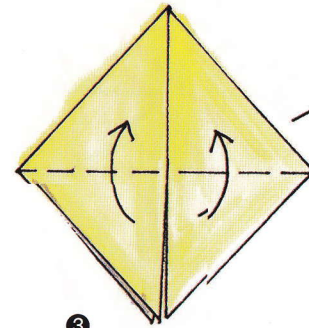
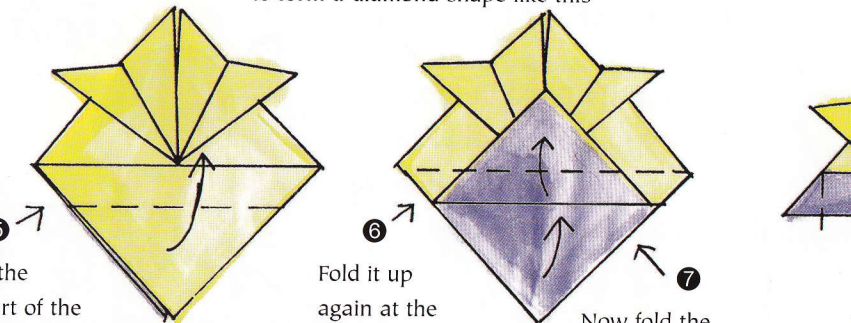
# Here's how to make a samurai helmet from a piece of 2-toned origami paper:



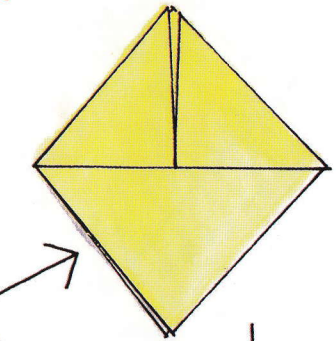
1 Fold your square piece of paper in half to form a triangle



2 Fold outside corners into center to form a diamond shape like this

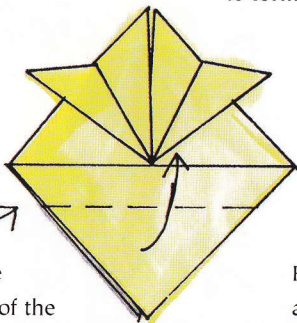


3 Fold the lower corners on the front of the diamond to the top

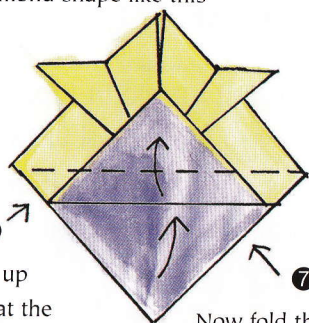


4 Then fold the foremost triangles outward

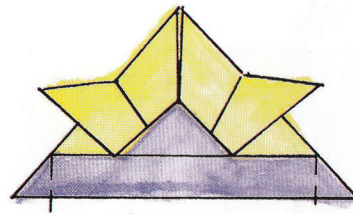
5 Now fold the bottom part of the front triangle up along the dotted line



6 Fold it up again at the dotted line



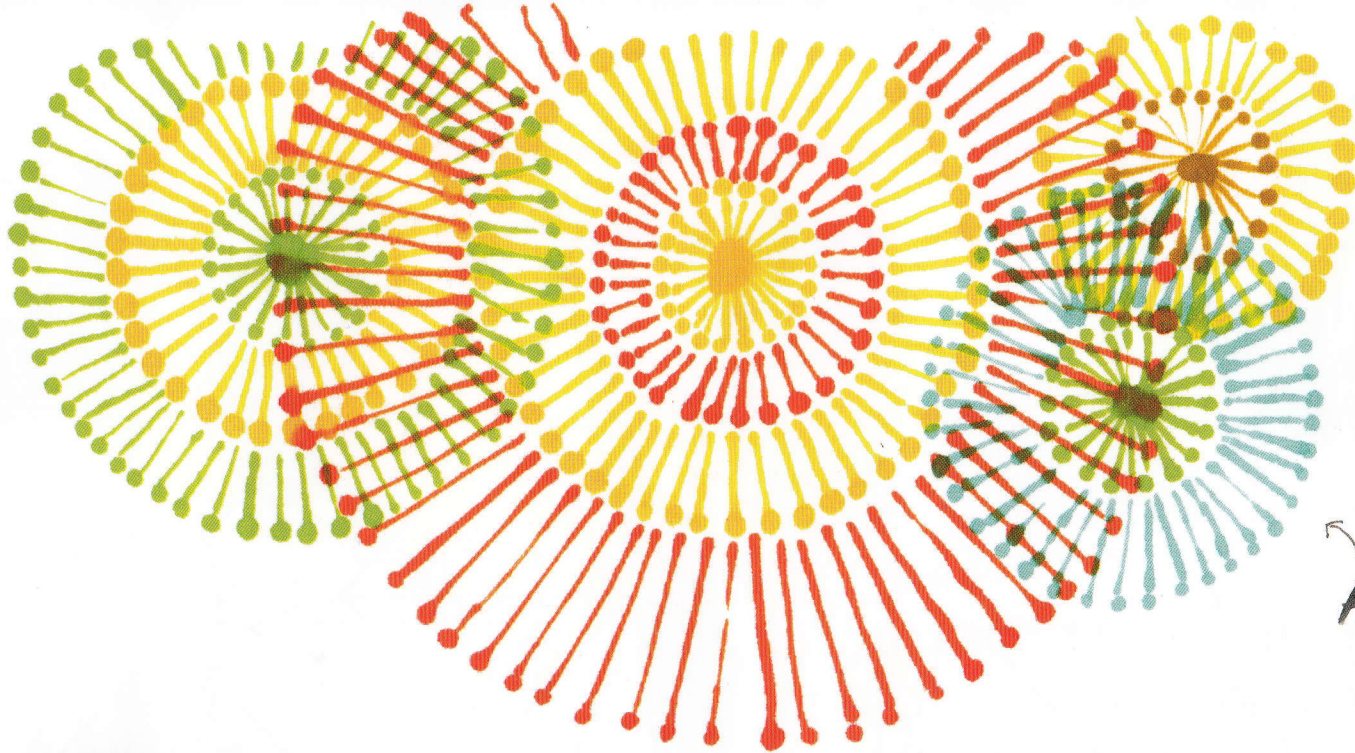
7 Now fold the triangle on the opposite side upward



8 Fold the 2 outside edges inward. Now you can open your tiny hat

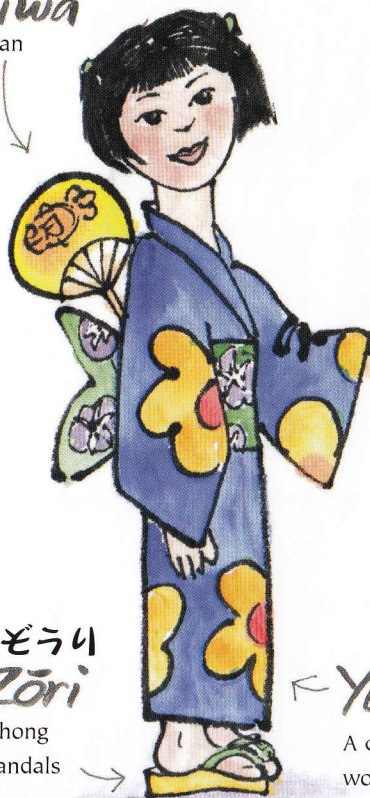
A piece of newspaper cut to 22" x 22" square and folded this way will give you a wearable helmet.





はなび  
*Hana-bi*  
Fireworks

うちわ  
*Uchiwa*  
Fan



ぞうり  
*Zōri*  
Thong sandals

ゆかた  
*Yukata*  
A cotton kimono is often worn to summer events.

なつ  
*Natsu*  
Summer

Although summers are very hot and humid in Japan, there are plenty of things to look forward to. School vacation, sensational fireworks, public swimming pools and numerous festivals and street fairs distract children from the heat.

げた  
*Geta*  
Clogs

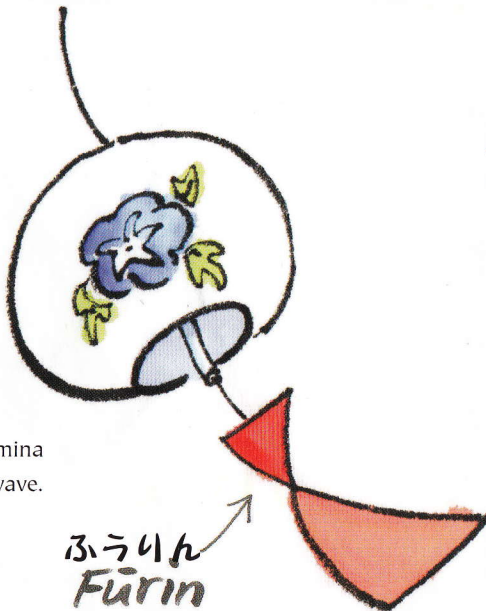
せんこう はなび  
*Senkō hana-bi*  
Sparklers





うなぎ  
*Unagi*

Eel gives you stamina during the heat wave.

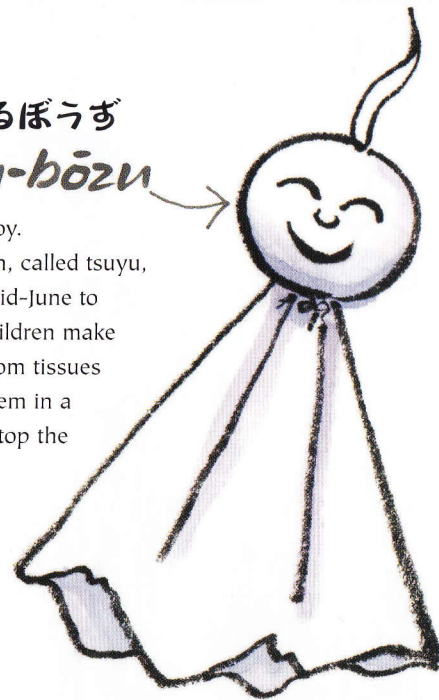


ふうりん  
*Furin*

Glass wind chimes try to catch the slightest breeze.

てるてるぼうず  
*Teru-teru-bōzu*

Rainy day boy.  
Rainy season, called tsuyu, lasts from mid-June to mid-July. Children make little dolls from tissues and hang them in a window to stop the dreary rain.



そうめん  
*Sōmen*

Cold noodles dipped in broth are very refreshing.



わたあめ  
*Wata-amē*  
Cotton candy

とうもろこし  
*Tōmorokoshi*

Corn on the cob grilled with soy sauce

かきごおり  
*Kakigōri*

Shaved ice with flavored syrup

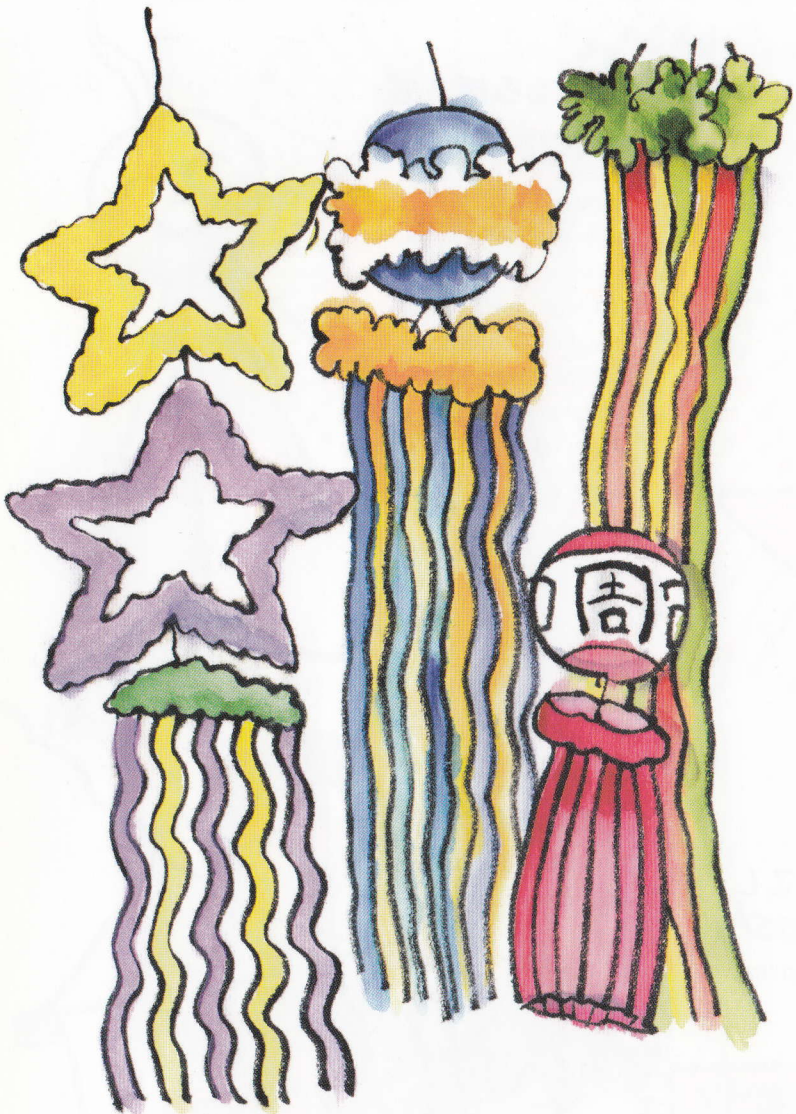


きんぎょすくい  
*Kingyo-sukui*

Catching goldfish with a thin paper ladle is very tricky.



やたい *Yatai*: Street stalls attract children of all ages during festival days.



People in Sendai City celebrate with huge ornaments of confetti balls and streamers.



Children often write about the careers they would like to have. This child would like to become a doctor.





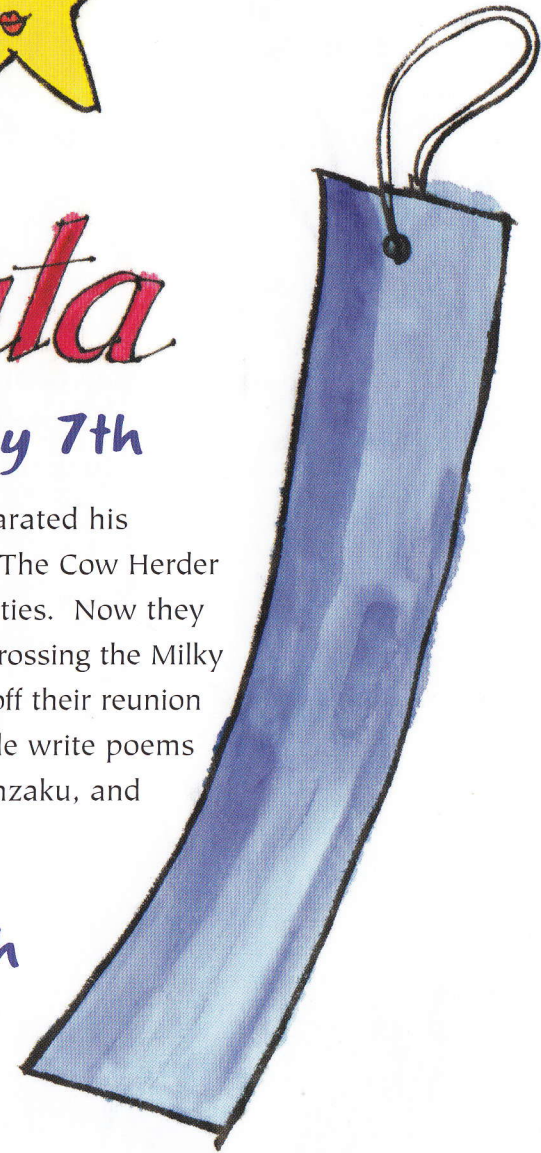
たなばた

# Tanabata

The Star Festival—July 7th

According to an old legend, a king of the heavens separated his daughter, The Princess Weaver Star, from her husband, The Cow Herder Star, because their intense love kept them from their duties. Now they can only meet once a year—on the eve of July 7th—by crossing the Milky Way. If it rains, the star-crossed lovers will have to put off their reunion for another year. To celebrate this romantic story, people write poems and special wishes on colorful strips of paper called tanzaku, and hang them from the limbs of bamboo trees.

What would your special wish be? Write your own.





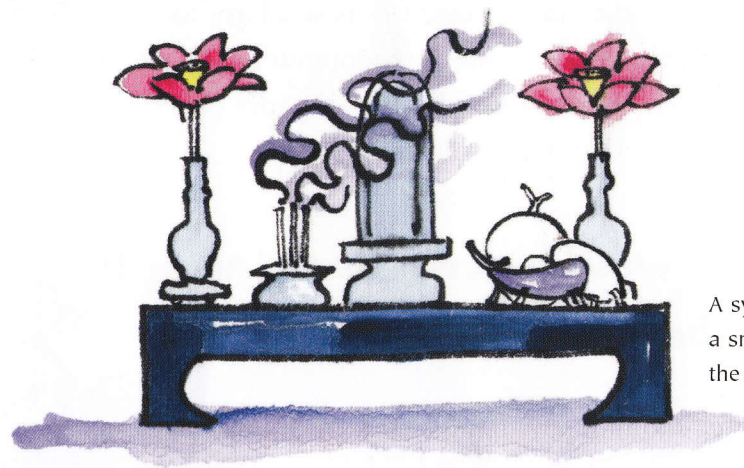
# おぼん O-Bon

The Festival of Souls—August 13th-16th

Lanterns are lit and tiny fires are set in front of homes to lead the spirits back.



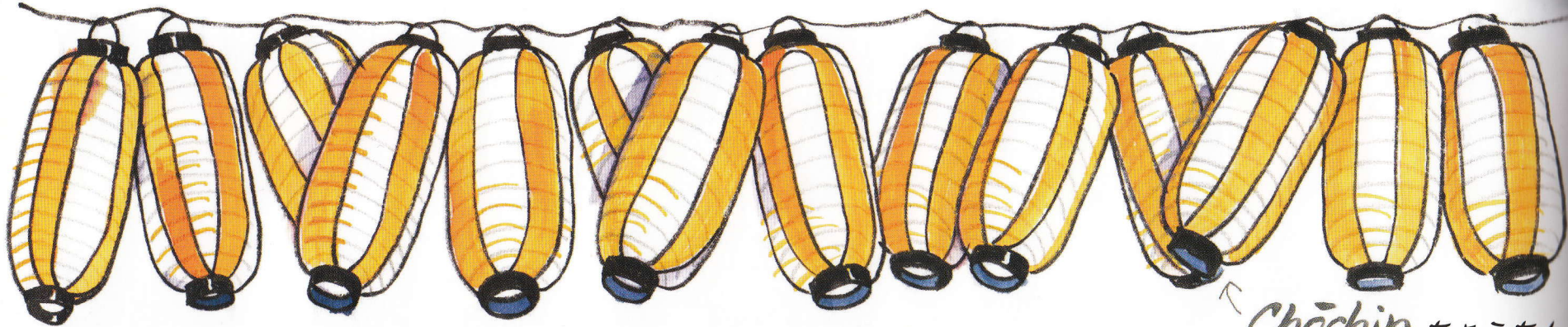
O-Bon, a centuries-old Buddhist memorial festival, is a time to pay respects to one's ancestors. Families travel back to their hometowns for a 3-day reunion with their living relatives—and the spirits of the deceased. To welcome back the spirits, people pray at gravesites and in front of small altars in the family home. Often, a Buddhist priest is invited to say prayers. Although O-Bon is a solemn occasion, people enjoy spending time with their families. Lanterns are hung, and a tower for musicians is erected in a central location. Many people gather to perform a folk-dance called Bon-odori. Everyone is invited to join in. You don't need to be a good dancer to learn the steps. Just watch what the person in front of you is doing and follow them as they dance around in a big circle.



A symbolic meal is placed on a small altar for the spirits of the dead.

fires





← Chōchin ちょうちん

Paper lanterns

# まつり Matsuri

Festivals

Throughout the centuries, summer festivals were held to ward off floods and epidemics. Fall festivals were dedicated to good harvests. Most areas in Japan host a special matsuri during these seasons. In some celebrations, parades of people carry portable Shinto shrines called mikoshi through the streets. Chanting “wa shoi, wa shoi!” the bearers start and stop, move forward and get pushed backwards, giving the shrine’s spirits a very rowdy ride. Hopefully, the Gods will feel properly thanked for the past harvests and continue to provide good ones for years to come.

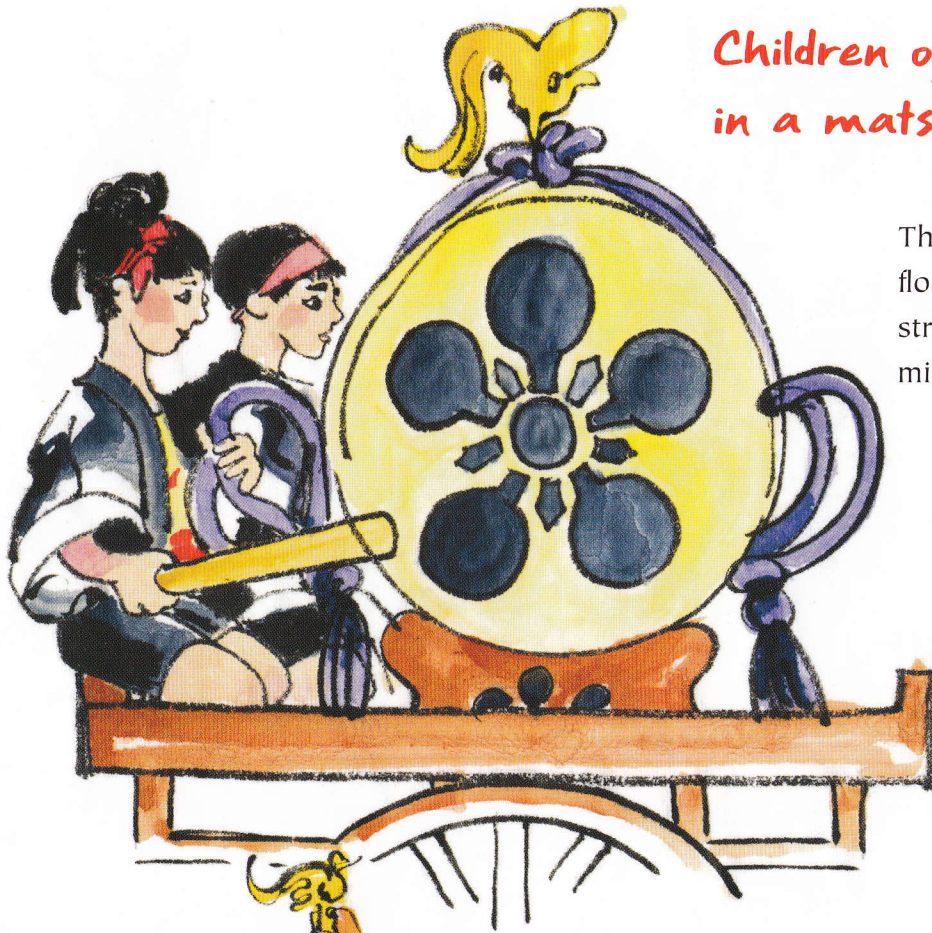


← Hanten はんてん

Short festival coat



*Children often participate  
in a matsuri.*



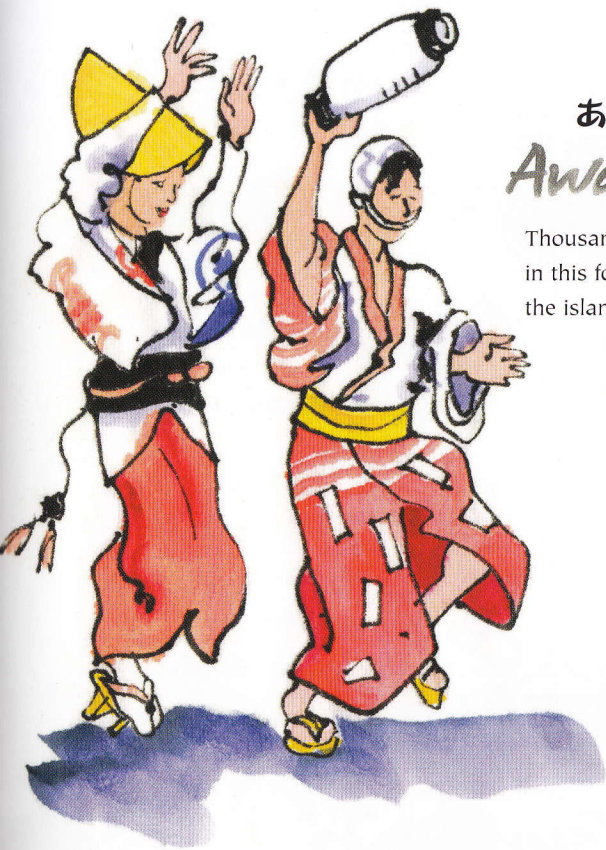
They can ride on top of a festival float that is pulled through the streets, or they can help carry a miniature shrine.



They can perform in a traditional drum troupe (which requires hard practice).



At one festival in Tokyo, children throw pails of water at each other to keep everyone cooled down.



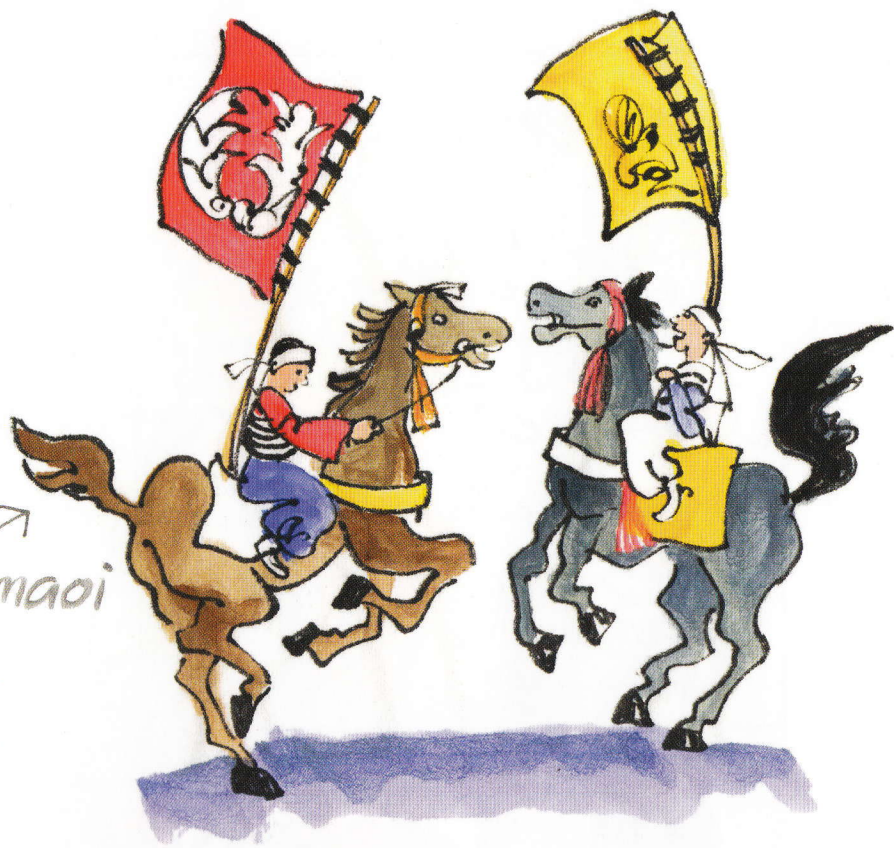
あわ おどり  
*Awa Odori*

Thousands participate  
in this folk dance on  
the island of Shikoku.



そうま のまおい  
*Sōma Nomaoi*

A fantastic pageant  
where hundreds of riders  
on horseback fight for  
a battle flag in Soma City



Many regions in Japan have their  
own special matsuri. Here are just  
three examples.



ねぶた  
*Nebuta*

A festival dedicated to the God of sleep  
has illuminated floats and many  
energetic dancers in Aomori City.



# Jan-ken じゃんけん

WINNER



Stone smashes scissors



Scissors cut paper



Paper covers stone

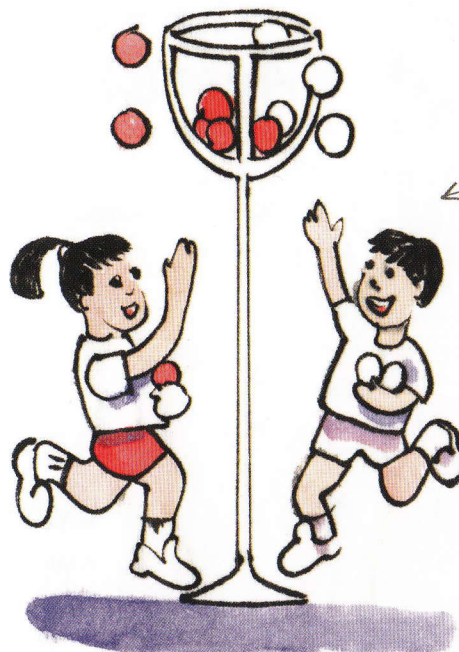
LOSER



Japanese children have their own version of the traditional game rock, paper, scissors.

Here's how to play: Two players form their hands into the shape of a stone, a paper or scissors while shouting "Jan-ken-pon!"

The player with two wins out of three goes first in the competition.



たまいれ

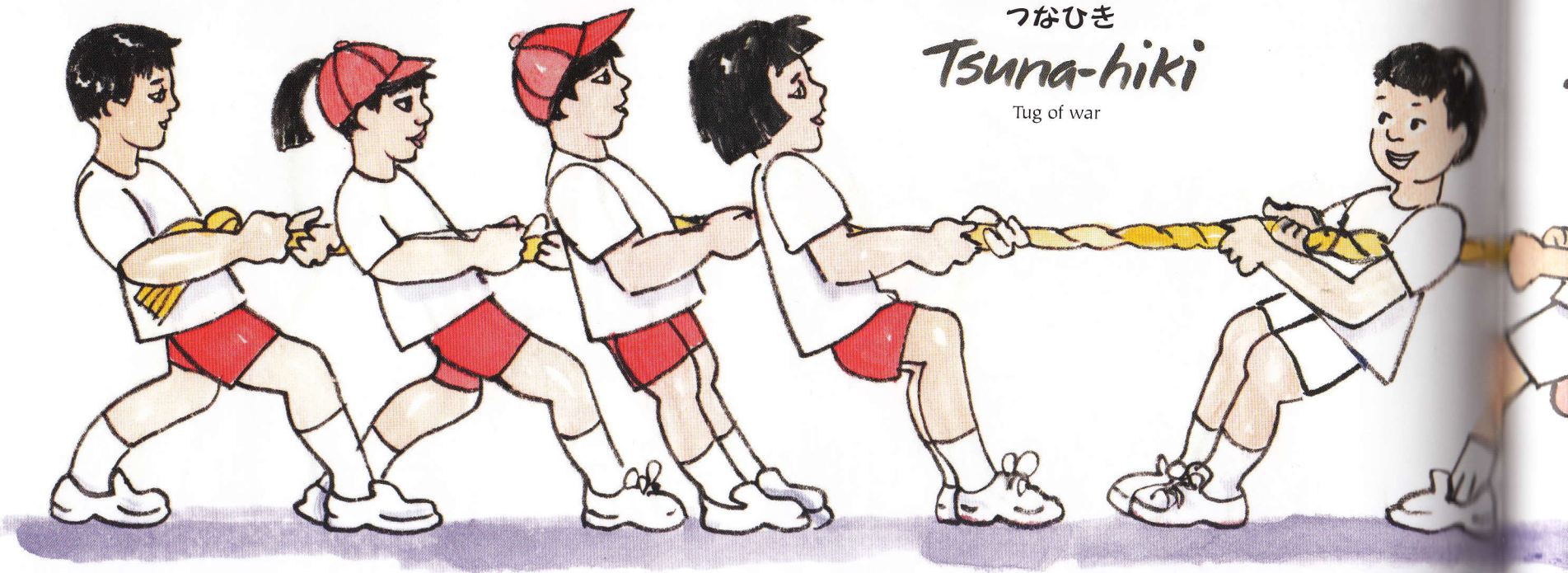
# Tama-iré

Two teams compete to see who gets the most balls in a basket.

つなひき

# Tsuna-hiki

Tug of war



まいれ  
ma-irē

ams compete  
who gets  
ost balls  
asket.

うんどうかい

# Undō-kai

Athletic Meets-

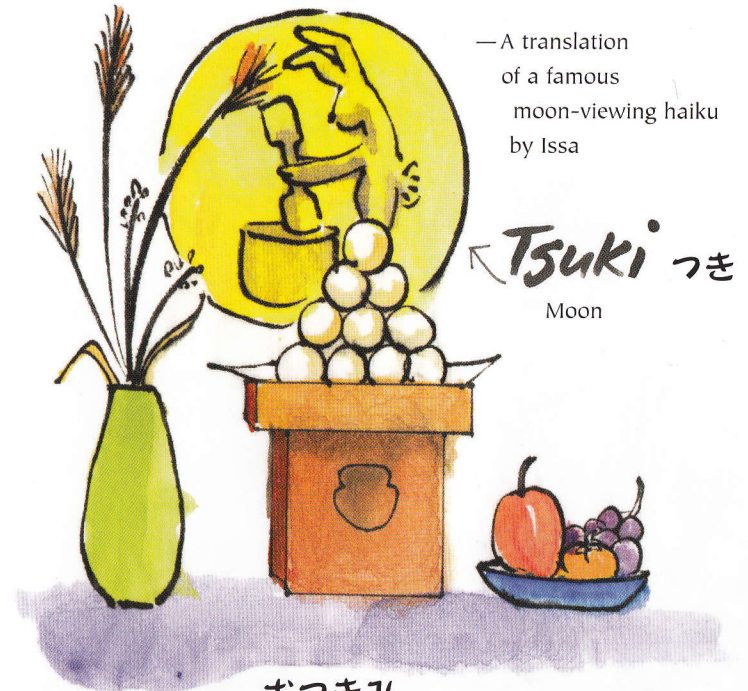
September through October

You can usually hear these competitions before you see them. You'll hear roars from the crowd, cheers from the winners and groans from the losers. Meets are often held on weekends so parents can attend. Two teams compete in foot races and traditional games.



The moon—how big and round and red and bright!  
Children, to whom does it belong tonight?

—A translation  
of a famous  
moon-viewing haiku  
by Issa



← Tsuki つき  
Moon

おつきみ

# O-Tsukimi

Moon Viewing-September

September's beautiful full moon invites admiration and inspires people to write haiku (poems). Small altars with traditional decorations are set up in prime viewing areas in homes.

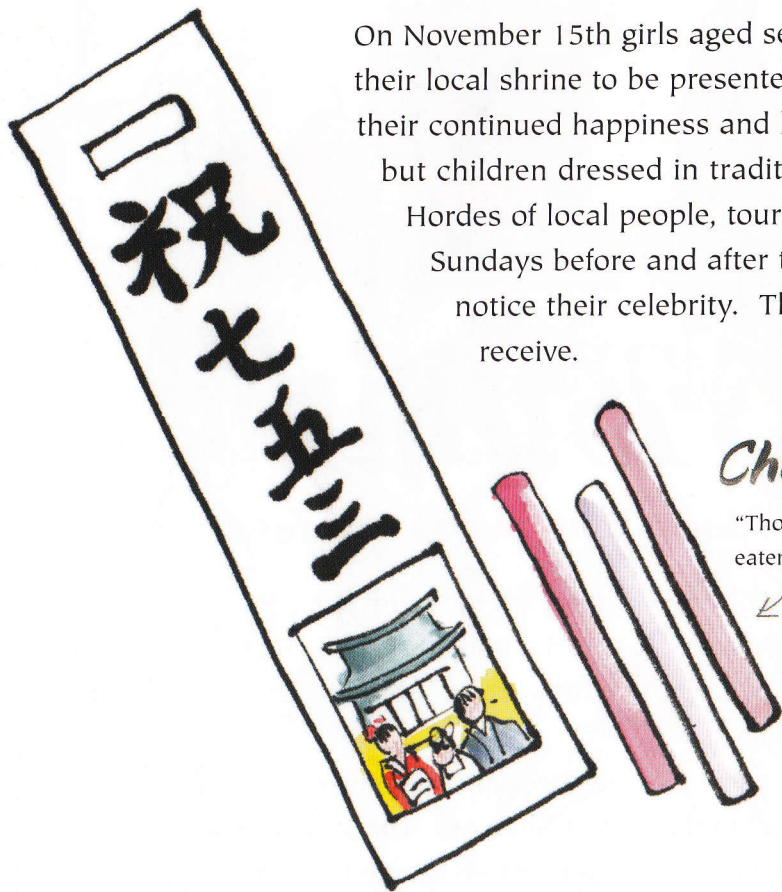
In some parts of the world people see "the man in the moon" in the craters and seas. The Japanese see a rabbit pounding rice cakes! Can you see him from your country?

# しちごさん Shichi-go-san

7-5-3 Festival November 15th

On November 15th girls aged seven and three, and boys aged five and three, are taken to their local shrine to be presented to the Gods. Their parents offer thanks and pray for their continued happiness and health. Some children wear their best modern clothes, but children dressed in traditional kimono and sandals attract most of the attention.

Hordes of local people, tourists and TV cameramen visit Meiji Shrine in Tokyo on the Sundays before and after the 15th to take photographs. Children don't seem to notice their celebrity. They are far more interested in the bags of candy they receive.



ちとせあめ  
Chitosé-amé

"Thousand-year" candy is eaten to celebrate the event.







ごへい  
*Gohei*

A paper wand symbolizing  
the purifying nature of fire



そのたのぎょうじ

# Sono-ta no-Gyōji

Other Happy  
Events

おみやまいり

## O-Miyamairi

*Baby's First Visit to a Shrine*

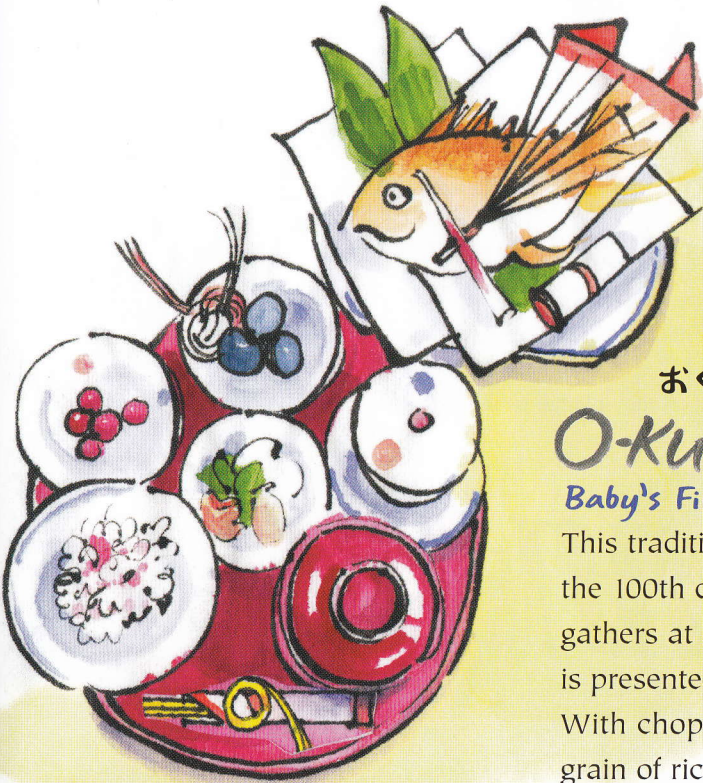
When a boy is 32 days old, and a girl is 33 days old, his or her grandmother takes the child to a local Shinto shrine to be presented to the Gods. A Shinto priest waves a wand of sacred paper over the baby's head to drive away evil spirits and to pray for blessings and protection. There is usually a celebration afterwards.

いぬはりこ

## Inu-hariko

Papier-mache dogs are  
given to the baby symbolizing  
growth and vitality.





おくいぞめ

## O-Kuizomē

*Baby's First Meal*

This tradition usually takes place on the 100th day after birth. The family gathers at a restaurant, and the baby is presented with a ceremonial meal. With chopsticks, a parent places a grain of rice into the baby's mouth. Then the rest of the family has a great time eating and drinking.



たんじょうび

## Tanjō-bi

*Birthday*

A special birthday meal includes rice cooked with red beans. It is followed by cake and presents.



さんさんくど  
*San-san-Kudo*

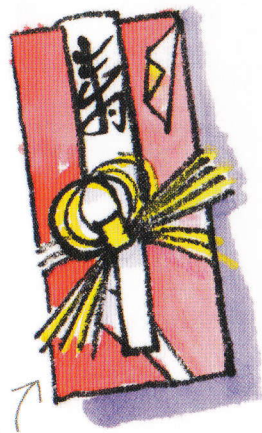
The groom and then the bride take three sips of sacred wine from each of the three cups. Then they pledge to stay together.

けっこんしき

# *Kekkon-Shiki*

Weddings

Japanese Shinto weddings combine the traditional with the modern. The bride and groom walk in a grand procession across the shrine grounds accompanied by attendants, parents, family and friends. After a Shinto priest performs a purification ceremony, the couple drinks rice wine and exchanges vows and wedding rings. Then the whole party gathers for a group photograph. At the reception afterwards, held at a chic restaurant, the bride will change out of her kimono into a white wedding gown and the groom will put on a tuxedo.



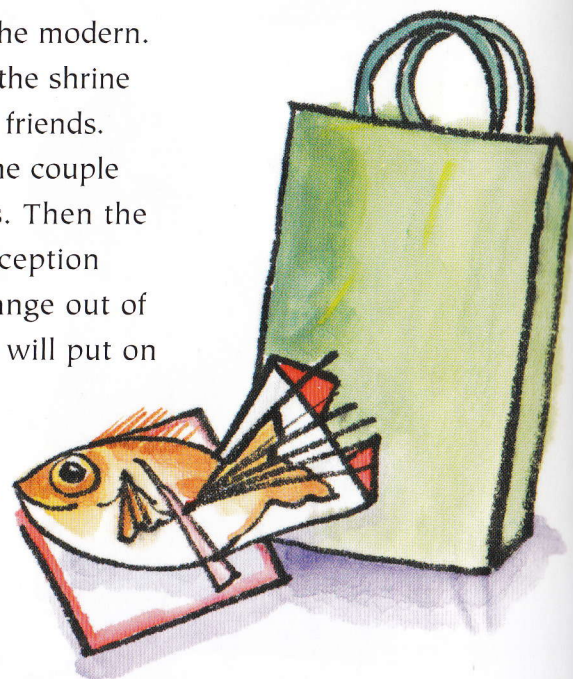
しゅうぎぶくろ

## *Shūgi-bukuro*

Guests give gifts of money in special envelopes.

たいのおかしらつき *Tai-no-okashiratsuki*

A ceremonial fish called tai (seabream) is served to signify the happiness of the union.

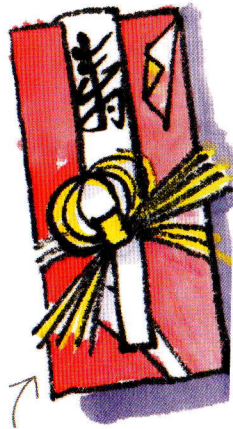




# Japanese Words Used in This Book

Japanese children first learn to write in basic symbols called hiragana. Each symbol is a separate syllable that has its own unique sound. When these symbols are combined they form Japanese words. Here are clues to help you pronounce some words in this book:

- おしょうがつ O-Shōgatsu (Oh-show-gah-tsue)
- はつもうで Hatsumōdé (Hah-tsue-mowdey)
- せつぶん Setsubun (Sey-tsue-boon)
- ひなまつり Hina Matsuri (Hee-nah-mahtsue-ree)
- さくら Sakura (Sah-koo-rah)
- はなみ Hanami (Hah-nah-mee)
- かんぶつえ Kan-butsu-e (Kahn-bootsue-eh)
- こどものひ Kodomo-no-hi (Koh-doh-moh-no-hee)
- なつ Natsu (Nah-tsue)
- たなばた Tanabata (Tah-nah-bah-tah)
- おぼん O-Bon (Oh-Bohn)
- まつり Matsuri (Mah-tsue-ree)
- うんどうかい Undō-kai (Uhn-doh-kigh)
- おつきみ O-Tsukimi (Oh-tsue-kee-mee)
- しちごさん Shichi-go-san (Shee-chee-go-sahn)
- おみやまいり O-Miyamairi (Oh-Mee-yah-mah-ree)
- おくいぞめ O-Kuizomé (Oh-Kooeee-zoh-mee)
- たんじょうび Tanjō-bi (Tan-joe-bee)
- けっこんしき Kekkon-shiki (Keh-kon-she-kee)



しゅうぎぶくろ  
**Shūgi-  
bukuro**

Guests give gifts of money in special envelopes.

		VOWELS			
		A (ah)	I (ee)	U (oo)	E (eh)
CONSONANTS	sounds like	あ a	い i	う u	え e
	K	か ka	き ki	く ku	け ke
	S	さ sa	し shi	す su	せ se
	T	た ta	ち chi	つ tsu	て te
	N	な na	に ni	ぬ nu	ね ne
	H	は ha	ひ hi	ふ fu	へ he
	M	ま ma	み mi	む mu	め me
	Y	や ya		ゆ yu	
	R	ら ra	り ri	る ru	れ re
	W	わ wa			
ん	N				

