



Japan: Festivals/Holidays

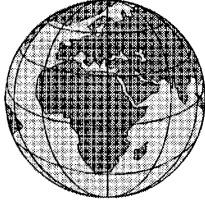
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TEACHER'S GUIDE

Asian Educational Media Service, Center for East Asian
and Pacific Studies, University of Illinois

Social Science Education Consortium

2000



JAPAN: FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS

Teacher's Guide

by Mary Hammond Bernson

The Asia Video Reports series was created and compiled at the Asian Educational Media Service in the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the Urbana-Champaign campus on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.

Asian Educational Media Service
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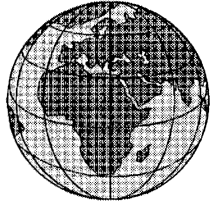
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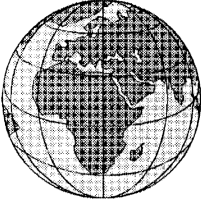
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JAPANESE PRONUNCIATION TIPS

by Mary Hammond Bernson and Evon Tanabe

Vowels: There are only five vowel sounds in Japanese. Here they are in Japanese order:

a sounds like the a in father. Example: *san*

i sounds like the i in machine or pizza. Example: *kimono*

u sounds like the u in flu or food, but is of shorter duration. Example: *mura*

e sounds like the e in pet but is shorter. Example: *sake*

o sounds like the o in comb or most. Example: *obi*

Japanese syllables are “open syllables” and almost always end in a vowel. There is very little stress on different syllables, so try to give equal stress and duration to each syllable. Some vowels, however, are long vowels in the sense of being held longer. The rhythm changes, but the pronunciation does not change as in English long vowels. When romanizing Japanese (writing it in the alphabet we use), long vowels are generally indicated by a double vowel or a line over a vowel, if noted at all. For example, *ojisan* means uncle and *ojiisan* (or *ojisan*) means grandfather.

The vowels u and i are sometimes not voiced at all when they appear at the end of a word or between such letters as f, h, k, p, s, t, ch, and sha. For example, *desu ka?* (is it?) is pronounced *deska*, and *sukiyaki* sounds like *skiyaki*.

Japanese also has some combined sounds.

ai sounds like the ai in kaiser. Example: *samurai*

ei sounds like the ei in rein. Example: *geisha*

Consonants: Most Japanese consonants sound very much like their English equivalents. The most notable differences are:

r sounds somewhat like a cross between r and l, as in the Spanish language

f sounds like a cross between f and h

g is always hard, as in go

n is more nasal than in the English language

ch sounds like the ch in cherry

ts sounds like the final ts in bits

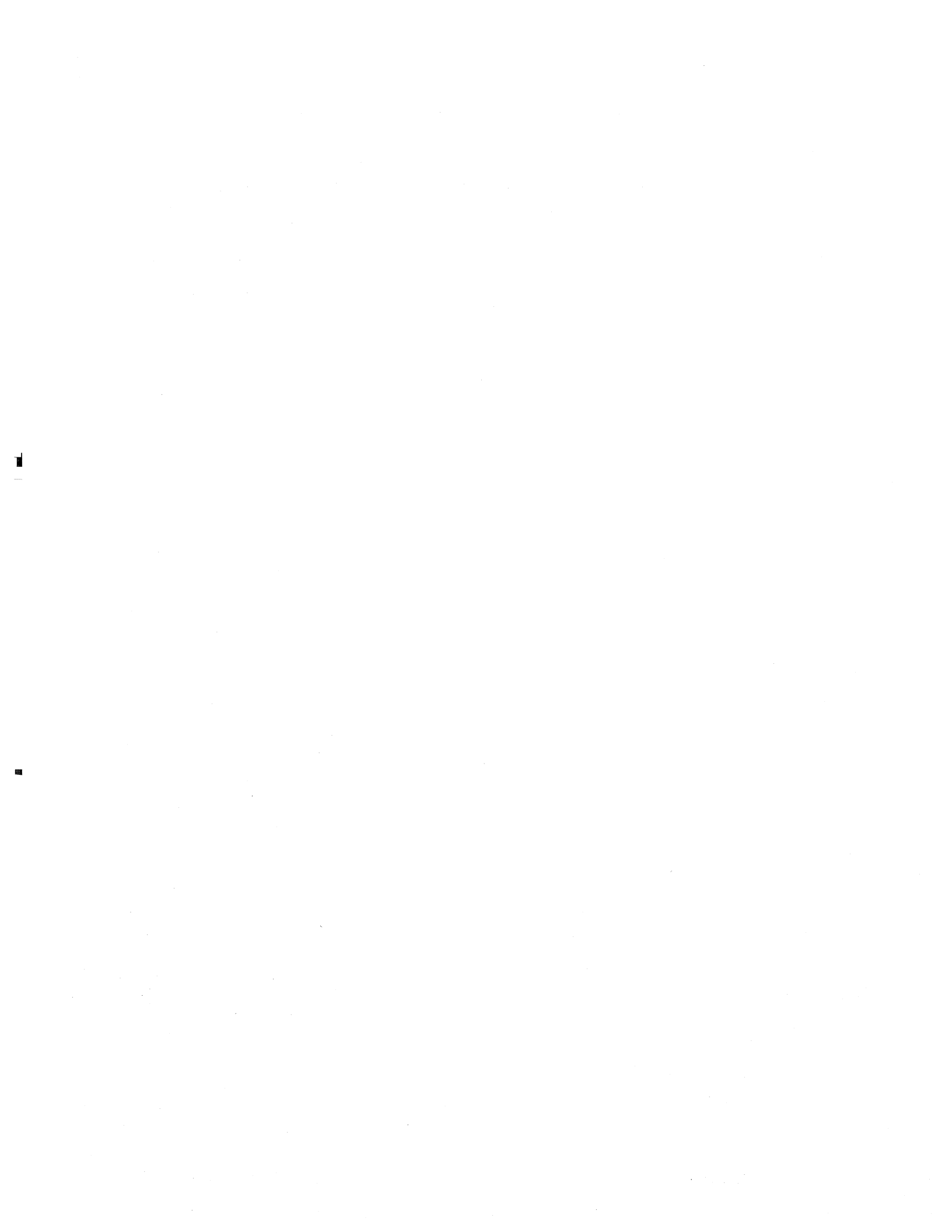
z is a hard sound, as in adds

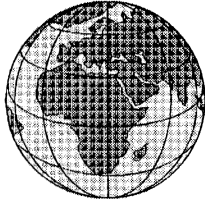
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Double consonants are both pronounced, so for example, *ss* sounds like the two sounds in the words *chess set*.

Sometimes a consonant is followed by a *y*. This does not start a new syllable. *Kyushu*, for example, is a two-syllable word sounding like *sue-shoe*. The “*kyo*” in *Tokyo* and other words is one syllable.

Practice dividing the words in these lessons. *Fukuwarai* is *fu-ku-wa-ra-i*. *Haiku* is *ha-i-ku*. *Daruma* is *da-ru-ma*. Now try pronouncing two frequently mispronounced words: *i-ke-ba-na* (flower arranging) and *bon-sa-i* (miniature plants).





SECTION 1 FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS

Introduction

Festivals reflect beliefs, customs, lifestyles, the environment, and more. They function as both windows and mirrors, offering windows into other cultures as well as mirrors that enable us to reflect upon our own culture. Festivals can be the worst of teaching tools, perpetuating stereotypes and distorting the reality of everyday life, or the best, challenging students to utilize all levels of thinking skills and many different learning styles. Festivals can fit into a wide range of curriculum units at almost any grade level. In a unit about Japan, a country where tradition, community, and a sense of history continue to be strong, studying festivals can offer students some particularly valuable insights. Then, just when students have started feeling as if they know what is going on, along comes a holiday like Valentine's Day, Japanese-style, which forces them to start all over again in their thinking about Japan.

The five segments in the Festivals and Holidays videotape introduce aspects of Japanese festivals that are not particularly well-known. Many American students have some familiarity with the more popular Japanese festivals such as Girl's Day, which are often introduced in American classrooms and maintained as traditions within the Japanese-American community. The videotape offers an opportunity to expand students' knowledge by looking at other Japanese festivals and holidays. The accompanying print materials then take students a little further in their journey toward an understanding of Japan.

Module Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe events they see in the videotape.
- Identify key activities that take place during several different festivals.
- Identify aspects of the celebrations that are traditional and others that appear more recent in their origins.
- Draw comparisons with American celebrations familiar to them.
- Analyze the psychological effects of participating in a festival.
- Create and discuss hypotheses about why some festivals, holidays, and celebrations take root in countries other than where they originated.

Module Themes:

- Tradition and change.
- Festivals and holidays as a reflection of cultural values.

- Transmission of culture from one country to another.

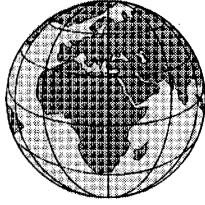
Module Components

Section 1. Festivals and Holidays. This introductory section ends with a background reading that provides some general information about the subjects of the five video segments and then expands upon those topics. Brief references to other holidays and some historic background on these festivals will help when students ask questions about what they saw in the video. The underlying assumptions are that people around the world celebrate holidays and that studying those celebrations can lead to insights into many aspects of a culture.

Section 2. Video Stories. The learning module contains five short video segments, each of which explores a festival celebrated in Japan. None of these are particularly familiar to American audiences. In this section of the guide, teachers will find an overview of the video segments and their content, a suggested approach to extending students' understanding of Japan while using this videotape, questions for class discussion, and a transcript of the video stories.

Section 3. Learning Activities. Two self-contained lessons are provided in this module. The first is a carefully structured lesson developed by Robert Stremme and originally printed in *Tora no Maki*. It can guide a three- or four-session exploration of holidays in Japan, amplifying the material the students will gain from the videotape and class discussion. It provides a framework for comparisons with seasonal celebrations in other countries, including our own. The second lesson contains a series of questions about a student reading on two holidays now celebrated in Japan: Christmas and Valentine's Day. It raises many issues about the migration of culture across national borders and the meaning of events to people raised in different cultural traditions. Extension/enrichment activities are also suggested.

Section 4. World Wide Web Resources. The final component of this module is a listing of relevant online resources.



MATSURI: FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS

Matsuri is the Japanese word that is translated as “holiday” or “festival.” The videotape shows that the concept is very elastic and can include both ancient rituals with religious roots and modern commercially sponsored promotions. This background information helps guide you through some of these unfamiliar events, which will turn out to have some very familiar aspects after all.

The Kites of Hamamatsu

In the sequence about the kites of Hamamatsu, students see a kite competition that takes place in Hamamatsu at the time of Children’s Day, May 5. As one of the many changes in Japanese society during the 1950s, this official holiday was renamed Children’s Day (*Ko-domo-no-hi*), instead of its previous name, Boy’s Day (*Tango-no-sekku*) so that it would honor both boys and girls. Despite this change, the association of the holiday with boys continues, particularly since girls celebrate Girl’s Day (*Hina matsuri*, or doll festival) on March 3.

Traditions associated with May 5 include flying large kites, shaped like windsocks and painted to look like carp. Hoops in the carps’ mouths keep them open so that the carp catch the wind and look as if they are swimming. Because they swim upstream and even leap waterfalls, carp are viewed in Japan as a symbol of courage, power, and determination—all three of which are considered desirable qualities for boys to have.

Boy’s Day kites and banners may have had their roots in the ancient farming custom of frightening insects and evil spirits away from young plants by using bright banners and figures. An obvious comparison would be to scarecrows in American fields. In the feudal period of Japanese history, the event became associated with martial values, and samurai families displayed helmets and armor while reinforcing their values by telling tales of their family’s ancestors. By the late 1700s, flying the carp became popular and the festival spread to all classes, not just to those who were samurai. Now anyone can display samurai or hero dolls and fly the carp to invoke strength and fearlessness.

Foods also symbolically reinforce the values desired for boys. Sweets made of pounded rice, some of them filled with a sweetened bean mixture, are wrapped in bamboo or oak leaves. In this case bamboo symbolizes constancy and devotion and the oak, strength and a willingness to protect others.

In Hamamatsu, a city on the Pacific Coast of Japan west of Tokyo, the carp theme continues in the festival shown in the videotape. This festival includes a parade with large floats and a competition during which teams attempt to fly giant kites and cut the strings of rival

kites. The kite-flying teams wear *happi*, traditional short jackets, with headbands. The striking designs on the jackets may be *mon* (family crests) or other designs identifying a group from a particular neighborhood, business, school, or team.

Raking in Good Luck

Unlike Children's Day, *Tori-no-ichi* is a local event, a fair held at Tokyo's Ohtori Shrine every November. This event has roots deep in Japanese history, marking the occasion when the son of an emperor visited the shrine to thank the Shinto gods for victory in battle. The fair based on this event is held on one of the two or three days of the rooster, which are considered to be auspicious days to pray for good fortune.

Although Japan now uses a solar calendar like other modern nations, time was traditionally marked by a cycle of days and years associated with a sequence of 12 animals. Some were considered lucky or unlucky, much as Friday the 13th continues to arouse superstitions here. Japan switched from the lunisolar calendar to the Gregorian solar calendar in 1873, as one of the modernization steps taken early in the Meiji era (1868-1912).

Nowadays, some of the old festivals take place on the same date every year, like Christmas in the United States, while others follow more complicated scheduling formulas, like Thanksgiving or Easter.

Buying a *kumade*, or fortune rake, is traditionally considered a way to assure prosperity for the next year. The custom was started by the merchants of Tokyo, then called Edo, and was well established by the 19th century. It is easy to see why some merchants would encourage this custom, particularly the idea that a person should purchase a larger *kumade* every year. The lucky charms attached to the rake all reflect wealth and good fortune, either directly as in the case of the coins, or indirectly via the wordplay reflected in various homonyms and puns. Whether someone really believes that the rake guarantees good fortune, the custom continues, much as "knocking on wood" continues in the United States although few believe in the Druid spirits the knocking once called forth.

Special events such as the fair at which rakes are bought and the kite contest on Children's Day reinforce people's ties to each other and to the past and offer a break from busy lives spent in offices and factories. They also provide a chance to try to assure good fortune, either through wealth or the desirable qualities of sons.

Shouldering a Tradition

In the third segment of the videotape, we meet Unosuke Miyamoto and watch the construction of *mikoshi*, portable Shinto shrines. Mr. Miyamoto works in the Asakusa area of Tokyo, an area of the capital with much history and with less and less remaining evidence of it. Earthquakes, World War II bombing, and the pressures of urban development have obliterated old buildings. Traditions, however, can live on, and Mr. Miyamoto points out that young people are now attracted to crafts such as making *mikoshi* and to the festivals where they are used.

These *mikoshi* will be used at the *Sanja Matsuri*, probably the most famous of Tokyo festivals. This festival was once marked by a parade of large floats. Around 1900, as electric power lines were introduced, city officials banned the large floats because they became tangled in the power lines. In an example of customs evolving in response to technological change, the neighborhood now uses the smaller portable shrines. Huge crowds of spectators watch as more than 100 *mikoshi* are paraded through the streets. On the main day of the festival, the three largest *mikoshi* are ceremonially carried through the neighborhood and then returned to the Asakusa Shrine. The entry to this shrine, a gate with a huge red paper lantern, is one of the most familiar images of traditional Japan.

The construction of the *mikoshi* demonstrates the adaptation of traditions, as shrines without nails are constructed with power tools and moved by a fork lift.

Warmly Welcoming Spring

Mikagari is another festival with ancient roots, being a local variation of new year festivities. It would be a curiosity to most modern Japanese, just as it is to videotape viewers from other countries, and teachers everywhere would probably warn students not to try this at home. The brief sequence here can be approached as the basis of an inquiry activity about why ancient peoples, not to mention their descendants, might view fire as so important and powerful. As a part of preparations for the new year, *Mikagari* resembles customs elsewhere that involve destroying the old, often by fire, to make way for the new year. Paired with the sequence about raking in good fortune with the *kumade*, it shows two ways of trying to give the new year an auspicious beginning.

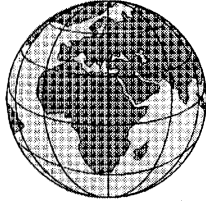
Glittering Ginza

With this segment, viewers are suddenly tossed into contemporary Japan, to the glittering district of Tokyo called the Ginza. This festival is a weeklong commercial promotion that attracts a million people to a parade having many elements students will find familiar, possibly from watching the New York Thanksgiving parade on television. The leap from old to new can be jarring to student viewers, in a way that can be very useful. They can then analyze the components of a celebration, the emotional and psychological aspects of it, the role played by commercial interests, and both Japanese and foreign origins of the event.

The Ginza has enjoyed more than a century of being perceived as the most trendy and international part of Japan, although it now has many rivals. The commercial signs light up the night. In fact, this was the first place in Japan to have street lights, first gas and then electric.

The name dates to 1612, when Ginza, the official silver mint, was opened there. The modern history of the area dates to 1873, the same year as the adoption of the solar calendar, when two-story brick houses and brick sidewalks along both sides of a wide boulevard were constructed here. Both were innovations, the first in Japan. These innovations were a part of the efforts to modernize Japan, which also included the introduction of telephones and the telegraph. Part of the motivation was also to seem modern to foreigners, so in the same year the Meiji Emperor first appeared in a Western-style military uniform rather than the elaborate robes worn by his imperial ancestors. Changes in Japan, both in substance and appearance, helped Japan avoid becoming the colony of any other nation.

Real estate prices in the Ginza are now among the highest in Japan, and the land is occupied by major department stores and other businesses. Prices are very high here, but people will pay them if they believe the Ginza offers the best and most current merchandise and experiences. This parade contributes to that atmosphere.



SECTION 2 VIDEO STORIES

Video Viewing Guide and Discussion Questions

The *Festivals and Holidays* videotape contains five story segments:

Segment 1. *The Kites of Hamamatsu* (2 minutes 4 seconds). This segment shows the yearly kite competition on Boy's Day in the city of Hamamatsu.

Segment 2. *Raking in Good Luck* (1 minute 56 seconds). This segment focuses on the sale of *kumade* or fortune rakes during the November fairs at Tokyo's Ohtori Shrine.

Segment 3. *Shouldering a Tradition* (5 minutes). *Mikoshi*, the portable Shinto shrines used at traditional festivals, are shown as they are constructed and then used at a neighborhood festival. The segment follows a master craftsman, Unosuke Miyamoto, through the process.

Segment 4. *Warmly Welcoming Spring* (1 minute 48 seconds). *Mikagari*, the Fire Festival, celebrates the last day of winter according to the old lunar calendar with the tossing of burning torches.

Segment 5. *Glittering Ginza* (2 minutes 40 seconds). The Ginza area of Tokyo, a high-rent, high-profile shopping and entertainment district, is visited during its five-day Ginza festival.

To enable the students to discover this material for themselves, show them the videotape without any introduction other than an announcement that they will see a videotape about Japanese celebrations. Because the segments are so fast-paced, students may miss key aspects of the video if they are busy taking notes or looking for specific details.

After students have seen the videotape for the first time, encourage them to express their personal response to the content, either orally or in a brief paragraph. They should feel free to express personal opinions even if they are on the level of "some of this is pretty weird." Those opinions can be revisited after the class explores the reasons some of the activities in the video have lasted many centuries or, in other cases, recently been adopted in Japan.

To get students to think beyond their initial impressions and reactions, ask them to identify common elements of festivals and holidays, both in Japan and in other countries. Some they might mention are music, dance, special clothing, food, entertainment, decorations, and souvenirs. Use the information from the teacher background reading to answer questions students have about specific details they observed in the videotape.

Ask students to identify which parts of the celebrations they saw seem to be traditional and which seem to be either adaptations of the traditional festivities or recent imports from another country.

To encourage students to think about the psychological aspects of celebrating festivals and holidays, ask them to identify the emotions and feelings they think participants in these Japanese festivals might experience. Possible answers could include anticipation and excitement; release from daily routine; community or group spirit; teamwork; patriotism; expression of affection; remembering and honoring past events, people, and customs; pausing to take stock of the present; gratitude for good fortune; and allaying fears by doing something to attain future good fortune. Next, ask students to give examples of American holidays and the emotions that might be attached to them.

Pose the following questions to the class, without asking for an immediate answer:

- Can people from different cultures celebrate the same holiday?
- Can the same holiday be celebrated differently in different countries?

If time permits, turn to Lesson 2 under “Learning Activities” to introduce students to Christmas and Valentine’s Day, Japanese-style.

In concluding the lesson, return to students’ original reactions to the videotape and ask them if their personal reactions to the videotape have changed now that they know a bit more about the background and purpose of the festivals shown in it. Consider asking them to research possible answers to the questions above as homework or an in-class assignment.

The Kites of Hamamatsu (2 minutes 4 seconds): Video Transcript

CROWD SNAKE DANCING	The spirit of a country can be seen in its festivals ... and how true this is of Japan.
LARGE KITE ON FIELD	Among the most exciting is the yearly kite competition on Boy’s Day at Hamamatsu. Kites have always symbolized man’s soaring spirit, his tenacity in conquering life’s obstacles—a lesson to be imparted early to the young. —Especially to boys. “Sons” need to be strong to compete in the world. They need to be like kites, able to soar, to achieve new heights, characteristics strongly evident in this action-filled spectacle.
MAN LETS OUT ROPES	The kites that will fly today represent first-born sons, and eager teams of fathers and friends maneuver them into the sky. Which team will fly its kite best?
KITE CLIMBS INTO SKY	The action begins -
KITE CLIMBING	The win will go to the strong and the swift ... to those who can read the wind ... pull hard ... harder still ... get the kite over to the right...
KITE STRINGS	cut the string of the competing kite and bring it down!

OLD MAN	One team loses ...
MEN DANCING	while somewhere else another team wins. That is the risk of victory
KITE PLUNGES TO GROUND	or sudden defeat.
MEN TUGGING ROPES	Each team exerts its all ...
KITE FALLING	but another kite falls like an autumn leaf.
MEN WAVE HANDS	Yet the challenge will remain—to win next year when the kites once more take to the sky.

Raking in Good Luck (1 minute 56 seconds): Video Transcript

PEOPLE APPLAUDING	Rhythmic clapping means another sale of a <i>kumade</i> or fortune rake during the <i>Tori-no-ichi</i> fairs at Tokyo's Ohtori Shrine every November.
SHRINE EXTERIOR	These fairs are held on the Shinto Day of the Rooster, which occurs two to three times during the month, an auspicious day for merchants to pray for good fortune. This custom took root when the son of an Emperor visited Ohtori shrine to thank the gods for winning a battle. Thus, seeking divine help for good fortune became popular and the more elaborate the <i>kumade</i> purchased, the greater the buyer's chance of future prosperity.
BALD MAN SMOKING	At some shops fortune rakes have no fixed price, and bargaining is in order. The greater the number of lucky charms fixed to the rake—masks of plump women, fat carp, replicas of ancient gold coins—the more expensive the <i>kumade</i> . Negotiations are spirited but eventually both sides get to agreement.
SELLER IN RED, CLAPPING	Another <i>kumade</i> is sold and everyone wishes the buyer lots of prosperity. With the year soon drawing to a close, meaning bills to be paid and other expenses to meet so as to greet the New Year properly, <i>kumade</i> sales are always brisk. After all, no salary is ever enough, and there's no harm in asking for a little divine assistance.
SELLER IN GREEN	Whether the buyer will rake in a fortune, only the future can tell, but the prosperity of those selling the <i>kumade</i> appears certain.

Shouldering a Tradition (5 minutes): Video Transcript

MIKOSHI IN SHOP	<i>Mikoshi</i> are portable Shinto shrines used at traditional Japanese festivals to symbolically tote the deities protecting the neighborhood through the streets and to ensure them an exciting trip.
KAMINARIMON, ASAKUSA	Here in Tokyo's historic Asakusa district, where such festivals are frequent, is the shop of Mr. Unosuke Miyamoto, a <i>mikoshi</i> -maker. And speaking of tradition, his family has been making <i>mikoshi</i> for 130 years.
INTERIOR WORKSHOP	The creation involves a three-step process performed by specially trained craftsmen. Each <i>mikoshi</i> is constructed of carved pieces of wood. They must interlock perfectly because no nails or glue are used. Painting comes next—layer on layer of Japanese lacquer.

CUTTING GOLD TRIM	But it's the gold trimming that turns the construction into a brilliant <i>mikoshi</i> . These steps may appear simple, but the entire process takes about a year.
MAN WORKING	Mr. Makoto Sakamoto is one of Mr. Miyamoto's 50 employees. As a child, he was fascinated by the <i>mikoshi</i> of his village. This fascination never left him and, on turning 18, he left for Tokyo to work at this shop. Forty-three years later, he heads the final detailing division.
ASAKUSA STREET SCENE	Spring is a popular season for festivals, and Tokyo's Asakusa district bustles with activity as the time draws near for the <i>Sanja Matsuri</i> , one of Japan's most famous festivals. At this shop, work progresses at a hectic pace, for old <i>mikoshi</i> must be repaired and new <i>mikoshi</i> completed.
HOISTING MIKOSHI ONTO TRUCK	But schedules are met and the <i>mikoshi</i> delivered though some made of cypress and oak weigh 400 kilos or nearly 900 pounds. Mr. Sakamoto often regrets seeing his latest masterpiece leave.
GROUP AT LUNCH	Lunch provides a welcomed break in the busy day.
SHOGI GAME	Some play <i>shogi</i> , but Mr. Sakamoto has a new apprentice to instruct.
SAKAMOTO	A growing interest in national traditions is attracting youths to Japanese crafts and, under Mr. Sakamoto's guidance, the painstaking skills of <i>mikoshi</i> -making are being passed on to the young. Mr. Sakamoto devotes as much time to instruction as he does to his craft.
UMBRELLA	The day of the <i>Sanja Matsuri</i> arrives and with it, rain. Donning his festival head gear, Mr. Sakamoto takes an early walk through the district to check that his <i>mikoshi</i> are in place. Any imperfections he sees must be fixed. His work only ends when the <i>matsuri</i> begins.
SENSOJI	According to legend, in the 7th century three local men were deified and some 500 years ago, the <i>Sanja Matsuri</i> was initiated to honor them. To do so equally, each of the festival's 100 <i>mikoshi</i> is toted about the streets three times. Eighty are from Mr. Sakamoto's shop.
SAKAMOTO IN CROWD	Mr. Sakamoto says that only after experiencing the excitement of a festival does the purpose of <i>mikoshi</i> -making become clear. Seeing happy youths hoisting his creation is ample reward.
SAKAMOTO CHECKING MIKOSHI	Enthusiastic crowds ensure a successful festival but the greater the fun, the greater the risk that his <i>mikoshi</i> may be damaged. This is a constant concern.
GROUP CLAPPING	Hand clapping precedes <i>mikoshi</i> -hoisting and a rhythmic chant keeps the <i>mikoshi</i> -bearers from thinking of their heavy load.
SHOP INTERIOR, UNFINISHED MIKOSHI ROOF	But there's another festival deadline to meet and work to be done at the shop. However, the happy sounds of the <i>matsuri</i> keep Mr. Sakamoto's spirits high and his hands agile as another <i>mikoshi</i> takes shape.

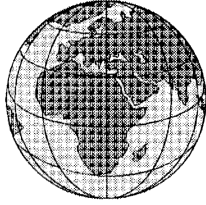
Warmly Welcoming Spring (1 minute 48 seconds): Video Transcript

PRIEST	According to the lunar calendar, February 3 is the last day of winter and New Year's eve, and to celebrate the occasion at Kamo Shrine north of Tokyo, a fire festival is held.
SETS FIRE	It's called <i>Mikagari</i> . Fire helps to chase the evil spirits away.
DECORATIONS	Charms that protected families during the last year are burned and prayers are offered for a prosperous new year.
LOGS	As the fire grows, logs are added—to be purified by the flames.
RAKING	Then, at the right time, the logs are extracted to become <i>mikagari</i> or sacred torches. Here is when the fun begins.
WINDING ARMS	Torches are grasped and then swung. These torches are to be hurled and the hurlers need to warm up.
DRUM	At the sound of the drum, the participants on each side toss their torches to each other. It's a thrilling sight and nobody objects to some heat being spread about.
TORCH THROWING, SIDE VIEW	Though it looks like a sport, there are no winners or losers. The fun of this festival is in the exciting toss.
TORCH THROWING, REAR VIEW	Some torches miss their mark, but being touched by sparks is said to bring good luck and happiness.
DRUM	The <i>Mikagari</i> festival always provides a warm welcome to spring.

Glittering Ginza (2 minutes 40 seconds): Video Transcript

GINZA DORI ROAD - DAYTIME	Ginza is to Tokyo what the Champs d'Elysees is to Paris and what 5th Avenue is to New York—a high-rent, high-profile shopping and entertainment district.
SHOP INTERIOR THROUGH WINDOW	Each year local merchants put on a weeklong festival to attract visitors to the area.
STREET LIGHTS, FLAG BATONS	The highlight of the Ginza Festival is a sound and light parade. Baton twirlers lead a procession of over 2,000 merrymakers.
SHISHEIDO STORE	The Ginza festival is uptown Tokyo at its best—everything the one million visitors who attended this year could ask for.





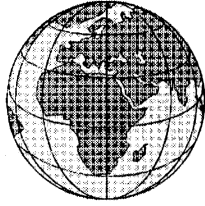
SECTION 3 LEARNING ACTIVITIES

This section continues two lessons that can be used to reinforce and extend the concepts underlying this unit and reflected in the videotape: tradition and change, festivals and holidays as a reflection of cultural values, and transmission of culture from one country to another.

Lesson 1. Celebrations—Matsuri: 365 Days A Year. Written by Robert Stremme, a Pennsylvania elementary school teacher who received a Keizai Koho Center Fellowship for travel/study in Japan, this lesson provides a framework for comparisons with seasonal celebrations in other countries. It can guide a three- or four-session exploration of holidays.

Lesson 2. Where Are We Anyway? This short lesson is based on a student reading about Christmas and Valentine's Day in Japan. It asks whether people from different cultures can celebrate the same holiday and whether the same holiday can be celebrated differently in different countries.

Several extension and enrichment activities conclude this section of the guide.



Lesson 1. Celebrations— *Matsuri*: 365 Days a Year

by Robert Stremme

Introduction

This lesson addresses the NCSS standards of culture (give examples and describe the importance of cultural unity and diversity within and across groups) and individual, groups, and institutions (give examples of and explain group and institutional influences such as religious beliefs, laws, and peer pressure, on people, events, and elements of culture).

Holidays, festivals, and celebrations are an integral part of every culture and a way in which people express their beliefs, group unity, and emotional well being. In Japan these special days are called *matsuri*. *Matsuri* can be national holidays or the specific celebrations of a shrine, temple, village, or city. Most *matsuri* can be classified as: national holiday, seasonal holiday, or commercially based celebration. In Japan any season or occasion can give rise to a *matsuri*. During this lesson students will compare and contrast four seasonal holidays of the United States with four seasonal *matsuri* found in both countries. For the sake of conformity, all holidays, festivals, and celebrations in both countries will be referred to as *matsuri*. In Japanese the word *matsuri* can be singular or plural.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify *matsuri* found in Japanese and United States cultures.
- Describe traditions and elements identified with each *matsuri*.
- Compare and contrast Japanese and United States *matsuri*.
- Discover that Japan and the United States have *matsuri* in common.
- Recognize that each country has unique *matsuri*.
- Discover that *matsuri* serve to unite people with similar cultures.
- Diagram concept maps of *matsuri* for Japan and the United States.
- Compile a calendar of shared and unique Japanese and United States *matsuri*.

Teaching Time: 3 to 4 class periods

Reprinted from *Tora No Maki* (Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies, 1996), pp. 25-29. © National Council for the Social Studies. Reprinted by permission.

Materials: You will need copies of Handouts 1-3 and chart paper.

Procedure

1. Ask each student to share the name of his/her favorite holiday with the class, giving one reason why it is his/her favorite. Explain that all cultures/countries celebrate holidays and that in Japan these holidays are called *matsuri*. This lesson is about Japanese *matsuri*, how they are celebrated, and what they have in common with holidays in the United States.

2. Divide the class into four groups and assign each group one of the four seasons. Each group will become the “experts” on a Japanese and a United States *matsuri* celebrated during their particular season.

3. Ask each group to agree upon a *matsuri* found in the United States that is celebrated during their assigned season. (Suggestions might include winter—New Year’s Day; spring—Memorial Day; summer—Fourth of July; autumn—Thanksgiving; however, any holiday that falls within the season will work.)

4. Have each group use its prior knowledge to answer the following questions on the concept map (Handout 1). Students can first complete a personal concept map and transfer answers to a chart paper concept map, or the students can verbally answer the questions and transfer answers to the chart paper map.

- What special foods do you associate with this *matsuri*?
- What special traditions do you associate with this *matsuri*?
- What special clothing do you wear for this *matsuri*?
- What special decorations do you use for this *matsuri*?
- What special place(s) do you visit during this *matsuri*?
- What special activity do you do in school for this *matsuri*?

5. Conduct a whole class discussion in which the expert groups share their chart paper concept maps. Ask each group and then the class as a whole to comment on how the *matsuri* are used to hold the culture of the United States together.

6. Ask each group to agree upon a *matsuri* (Handout 2) found in Japan that is celebrated during their assigned season. (Suggestions might be winter—*O-Shogatsu*; spring—*Kodomo-no-hi*; summer—*O-Bon*; autumn—*Shichi-Go-San*; however, any holiday that falls within the season will work if information is readily available).

7. Have each group research its selected *matsuri* and answer the following questions on the concept map. Students can first complete a personal concept map and transfer answers to a chart paper concept map, or the students can verbally answer the questions and transfer answers to the chart paper concept map.

- What special foods do the Japanese associate with this *matsuri*?
- What special traditions do the Japanese associate with this *matsuri*?

- What special clothing do the Japanese wear for this *matsuri*?
- What special decorations do the Japanese use for this *matsuri*?
- What special place(s) do the Japanese visit during this *matsuri*?
- What special activity do the Japanese do in school during this *matsuri*?

8. Conduct a whole class discussion in which the expert groups share their chart paper concept maps. Ask each group, and then the class as a whole, to comment on how the *matsuri* are used to hold together the Japanese culture.

9. Put the chart paper concept maps up and ask the students to find ways in which *matsuri* in both countries are similar and different. These differences can be noted verbally, on the board, or in the students' notebooks.

10. Give three blank calendars (Handout 3) to each group. Ask each group to compile a class calendar for *matsuri* of both countries. The winter group will compile for the months of December, January, February; spring for the months of March, April, May; summer for the months of June, July, August; and autumn for the months of September, October, November. Students will print the names of the Japanese *matsuri* in red, and the names of the United States *matsuri* in blue.

11. As an assessment, ask students to use the completed concept maps and class calendar to answer the following question in written form: While Japan and the United States are very different cultures, they both celebrate many *matsuri* throughout the year. Why is it important that these *matsuri* are celebrated, and what kinds of *matsuri* do these countries have in common?

Extension and Enrichment

1. Children's birthdays are celebrated by both cultures. In Japan a gift of money is sometimes given, although presents and cards are increasingly popular. (Money is given to children on New Year's Day.) The money is enclosed in a decorative envelope, but the inside is usually plain. There are many different kinds of gift envelopes, with some featuring a small *origami* figure and cords tied around in a knot. In the United States the envelope is very plain and a decorative card is enclosed. If a money gift is given, it is enclosed with a card. Ask the students to produce Japanese and United States birthday cards featuring these differences. Play money can be used for the inside.

2. Religious themes and customs are a large part of many *matsuri* found in both countries. Ask the students to compile calendars of sacred and secular *matsuri* found in both countries in order to see the difference. The students can personalize this calendar by putting down the religious *matsuri* that they celebrate.

3. Both countries have national *matsuri* in addition to *matsuri* celebrated on a local basis. Ask the students to compile a calendar that just lists national *matsuri* for both countries.

4. Select one Japanese *matsuri*. Have the students create a handicraft project connected with that *matsuri*. Example: *Tanabata* - have students write a wish on a decorative piece of paper and hang these wishes on a branch or from a bamboo pole.

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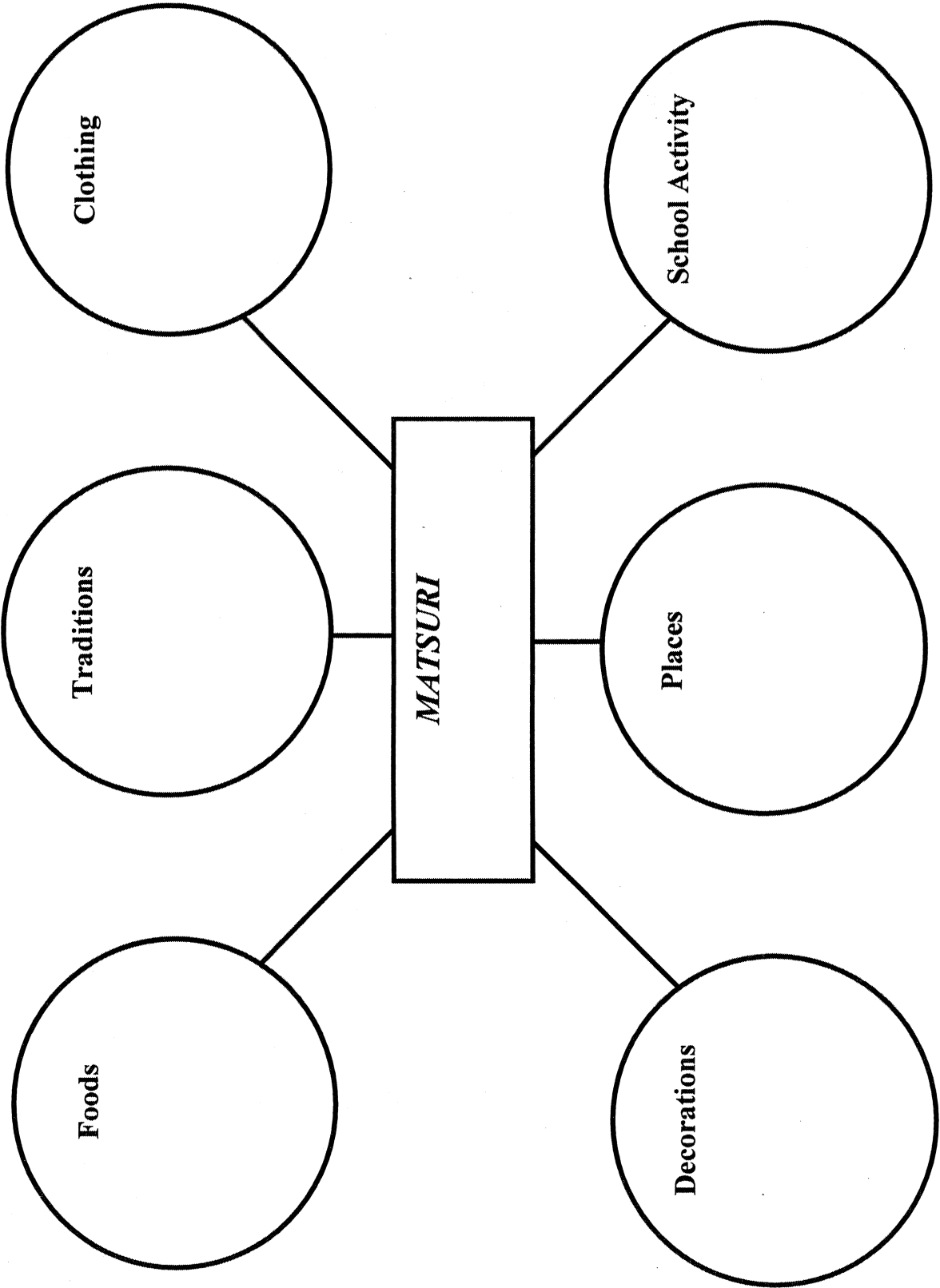
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Concept Map



Matsuri Celebrated in Japan

(N)=a Japanese National Holiday

Date	Matsuri	Japanese Name
January 1 (N)	New Year's Day	<i>O-Shogatsu</i> Often lasts three days and includes exchange of postcards, ceremonies to eliminate past bad fortune and ensure future good fortune, and gifts of money for children.
January 15 (N)	Coming-of-Age Day	<i>Seijin-no-bi</i> A day kept for the encouragement and awareness of the young who reach adulthood, 20 years of age.
February 3	Last Day of Winter	<i>Setsubun</i> This traditional ceremony has become associated with the rites of purification and exorcism of demons needed to prepare for the coming year and spring planting.
February 14*	Valentine's Day	<i>Barentain Dei</i>
March 3	Girl's Festival	<i>Hina matsuri</i> A beautiful display of dolls is a main feature of this festival.
March 14*	White Day	<i>Howaito Dei</i>
March 21 (N)	Vernal Equinox	<i>Shunbun-no-hi</i> A day to appreciate the natural environment and, in accordance with Buddhism, a time to visit family graves and have family reunions.
April 8	Flower Festival	<i>Hana matsuri</i> This is the name for several different annual festivals, one being the birth of Buddha, in which flowers are used.
April 29 (N)	Greenery Day	<i>Midori-no-hi</i> A day to respect and become familiar with nature; this is the Showa Emperor's birthday.
May 3 (N)	Constitution Day	<i>Kenpo Kinenbi</i> A holiday in memory of the day the Constitution of Japan went into effect.
May 5 (N)	Children's Day	<i>Kodomo-no-hi</i> or <i>Tango-no-sekku</i> A day to value the character of children, to wish for their happiness, and to appreciate mothers.
July 7	Star Festival	<i>Tanabata</i> The story of two lovers separated by the Milky Way is the basis for this picturesque and romantic festival.
July 20 (N)	Sea Memorial Day	<i>Umi-no-Kinenbi</i> Beginning in 1996, a holiday in appreciation of the sea, which is so important to Japan.

Date	Matsuri	Japanese Name
Mid-August	All Souls Day	<i>O-Bon</i> This Buddhist celebration is related to the ancient belief that ancestors return to their birth homes at this time and at the close of the year.
Mid-September	Moon Viewing	<i>Tsukimi</i> Today, this moon-viewing ritual, which originated with farmers' religious observances for a good harvest, features offerings and prayers so that wishes can come true.
September 15 (N)	Respect for the Aged Day	<i>Keiro-no-hi</i> A day to respect the elderly and to celebrate their lives.
September 23 (N)	Autumnal Equinox	<i>Shubun-no-hi</i> A day to respect ancestors and to remember those who have passed away.
October 10 (N)	Health - Sports Day	<i>Taiiku-no-hi</i> A day to promote physical and mental health.
November 3 (N)	Culture Day	<i>Bunka-no-hi</i> A day in honor of freedom, peace, and the continuance of culture; The Constitution of Japan was promulgated on this day in 1946.
November 23 (N)	Labor Thanksgiving Day	<i>Kinro Kansha-no-hi</i> The celebration of labor and productivity; a day to thank one another.
December 23 (N)	The Emperor's Birthday	<i>Tenno Tanjobi</i> The present Emperor Akihito's birthday.
December 25*	Christmas	<i>Kurisumasu</i>
December 31	New Year's Eve	<i>O-misoka</i> Typically, bells at temples are rung 108 times.

*These are holidays that are becoming popular with the Japanese people. On Valentine's Day the women give gifts (often chocolate) to men, and on White Day, men give gifts of sweets (sometimes white chocolate) or other presents to women. Christmas is mostly celebrated as a secular holiday with a special dinner, including a Christmas cake.

Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday



Lesson 2. Where Are We Anyway?

Introduction

This brief lesson can be used to explore some questions raised by the importation of holidays into another country or can be the beginning of a larger unit of inquiry about the transmission of culture from one country to another. The student reading introduces three holidays. The first is Christmas, which has been noted by some people in Japan at least since the arrival of Europeans in the 15th century. It was not celebrated openly during the centuries when Christianity was banned. Since very few Japanese are Christian, the celebration of Christmas in 20th-century Japan is more a social and family occasion than a religious one. Some would argue that this parallels the way it is celebrated in the contemporary United States.

The second holiday, Valentine's Day, is an imported event, heavily promoted in advertising. It has changed somewhat from the way it is celebrated in the United States. Advertising plays a major role in shaping the celebration in both countries and, in fact, Valentine's Day was fading in the United States until greeting card companies increased their promotions in the past few decades.

The third holiday, White Day, is purely Japanese but seems to many Japanese to be international or American. It was created in response to the evolution of Valentine's Day in Japan into a holiday where women give chocolates to men, but not vice versa. White Day is an example of a holiday without a history, created to sell products.

While students may initially think of importing holidays as a novel idea, they can quickly learn from discussion or research that many of our holidays also originated elsewhere. Adopting holidays from another country has a long history in both Japan and the United States. Some of Japan's traditional celebrations originated in China and entered Japan more than a millennium ago, while ours often arrived with successive waves of immigrants.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Describe holidays imported to Japan.
- Explain the role of advertising in shaping holiday celebrations.
- Compare and contrast celebration of Christmas and Valentine's Day in Japan and the United States.

Teaching Time: 1 class period

Materials: You will need copies of Handout 4 for all students.

Procedure

1. To open the lesson, read the first two paragraphs of Handout 4 aloud, through the question “Where are we anyway?” Allow students to speculate on what country is being described. Then point out that Japan is the country being described.

2. Distribute Handout 4 and have students complete the reading or read it aloud with the class.

3. At the end of the student reading are five questions to initiate further thought. The answers to questions 1 and 2 will depend on students’ individual responses, and questions 3 and 4 are answered in the reading. Answering question 5 can be a springboard to further research about Japanese culture today. Clues students may pick up about life in Japan include:

- Both family life and the social life of young couples are described as being important aspects of life.
- When the “Christmas cake” phrase was coined, it seemed to be a common assumption that all young women would want to marry, so being single after the age of 25 reflected lack of success in finding a husband. Now couples are marrying later, and increasing numbers of young women say they do not intend to marry.
- Trends seem to come and go rapidly, with many people adopting them at the same time.
- Advertising and the state of the economy both play a role in creating trends.
- In the 1990s, Japan’s economy was less strong than in the 1980s.
- Consumers are receptive to foreign goods and ideas.
- Food connected with holidays has familiar aspects. Chocolates and Christmas cake came from the United States and Europe, and Kentucky Fried Chicken has long been marketed as being very American. On the other hand, the cakes and Christmas Eve dinners generally come from bakeries, restaurants, or department store food departments. This is both because Japanese kitchens have small ovens if they have ovens at all, and because of the aura of consuming something special that could not have been made at home.

4. If time permits, encourage students to research holidays celebrated in this country to determine where they originated.

Where Are We Anyway?

It is December 24, and loudspeakers blare carols. Department store displays feature decorated trees, and last-minute gift-buying has shoppers in a frenzy. Santa seems to appear in every television ad. Magazines spew advice about how to celebrate the holiday in a traditional way with family members, rather than in the extravagant way many people celebrated in the 1980s.

Now turn the calendar to February 14, when the fanciest stores and candy shops feature displays with red hearts and boxes full of the best chocolates. Romance seems to be everywhere. Where are we anyway? Not in the United States, but in Japan. What is going on here? Read on.

The Santa Clauses in department stores bow to passing customers, who are busily buying presents. Christmas, Japanese-style, is primarily a social occasion, since less than one percent of the population is Christian. Although Christmas has been noted in Japan for many years, it was not until the 1980s that it became a major phenomenon. The economy was booming, and stores, hotels, and the media were all pushing new ways to spend money. In fact, many young Japanese couples celebrated Christmas eve as a romantic occasion, a night on the town featuring expensive meals and entertainment, a chance to dress up and celebrate. The young man was expected to give an expensive gift, often jewelry from a prestigious store.

With Japan's economic growth slower in the 1990s, family Christmases became more the fashion. Many families followed the custom of eating chicken. Why? Turkey seems to be what to eat at Christmas, but few families have an oven that could accommodate a turkey. Kentucky Fried Chicken saw an opportunity and did a great job of marketing their product, tying together the company's American origins and the roly-poly statues of Colonel Sanders out in front of the stores. It is not hard to make the statues look like Santa. At one point the company did five times its usual volume on Christmas Eve, but now other fast food outlets and the food sections of big department stores also offer competing specialties for Christmas Eve.

Christmas Eve is the main time to celebrate, since December 25 is a regular workday. The official holiday at this time of year is December 23, in honor of the Emperor's Birthday. The former emperor had a summer birthday, but now that the holiday falls in December, it allows a chance to stretch out the festivities without missing work, and advertisers exploit the opportunity.

No Christmas would be complete without Christmas cake, according to the media. Bakeries are filled with beautifully decorated cakes which, of course, would be worthless if not sold before the holiday. A slang phrase reflects this idea. "Christmas cake" refers to a woman who has reached the age of 25 without finding a husband. Maybe the phrase itself is out of date, since the average age at marriage in Japan is now over 25, for both men and women.

Valentine's Day also looks familiar on the surface. All those ads for chocolate look more or less like ads in February in the United States. Valentine's Day was introduced into Japan in 1958 in ads sponsored by the Mary Chocolate Company, a Japanese company, and it was then promoted by major department stores. One American scholar reports that more than 10

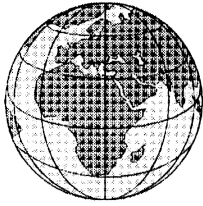
percent of the chocolate industry's entire annual sales are made in the first two weeks of February.

Just like home? Well, not exactly. A few differences stand out. On Valentine's Day, chocolates are given by women to men, never the other way around. And many of these gifts are *giri choco* a combination word that basically means "social obligation chocolates." Women give them to their bosses or co-workers. Women are expected to do that. Since that leaves out the women on Valentine's Day, a new holiday was invented, White Day. White Day takes place on March 14, and that is when men give the women gifts, often white chocolates or things like lace handkerchiefs. The words "White Day" are written either in English or in the Japanese writing system used for foreign words, so many view it as an international holiday, even though it was invented in Japan.

Now you have met Christmas and Valentine's Day, Japanese-style. Before you shake your head about how different they are, see what you can find out about American celebrations of these holidays compared to the way they were celebrated in the countries where they originated.

Questions for Further Thought:

1. Which aspects of these holidays seem familiar?
2. Which seem different?
3. How did the three holidays mentioned here get started in Japan?
4. What role does advertising play in the choices people make about how to celebrate these holidays?
5. What clues does this article give about life in Japan?



Extension and Enrichment

1. The videotape makes brief references to the days of the horse and rooster. Explore further the question of the calendar and the cycle of twelve animals. Find out more about the auspicious and inauspicious associations with the days and with the year of one's birth. Students can brainstorm images of various animals in our culture, such as wily foxes or wise owls, and draw comparisons. They can also branch out into Asian and European folklore and literature about animals.

2. Students can interview older family members or Americans born in other countries to find out more about how holidays change over time or change as they migrate from country to country.

3. As an art activity, students could create their own good luck symbol, using their own imagery and attaching items to a *kumade* (fortune rake) or other shape.

4. To explore the way Japanese holidays have or have not been adopted in the United States, students can interview Japanese-Americans or read books, fiction or non-fiction, about Japanese-American experiences. *Matsuri* is a particularly useful teacher reference book about Japanese-American celebrations, with extensive background information about how the same holidays are celebrated in Japan.

5. After studying a Japanese holiday, ask students to introduce it to younger children at a school, child care center, or other location. Craft activities could be taught to the younger children. An excellent resource for use in the lower grades is *Cooperation in Japan*, a unit from the SPICE project at Stanford that introduces cultural values as they are reflected in Boy's Day activities. Contact SPICE at the Institute for International Studies, Littlefield Center, Room 14C, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-5013.

6. Either for assessment purposes or to encourage creative thinking, have students divide into small groups to work on the following open-ended activity. Identify a reason why a new holiday would be desirable in the United States and the psychological needs this holiday could meet. Then choose a date, giving reasons for that choice, and design the holiday. Include components identified in the videotape such as music, foods, and clothing. Create an advertising campaign to promote it.

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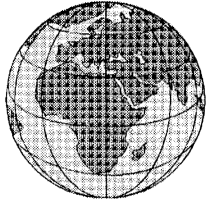
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SECTION 4 WORLD WIDE WEB RESOURCES

The World Wide Web provides an almost inexhaustible supply of background material, additional classroom activities, and research information to meet the needs of students and teachers. The following list is only a sample of what is available. As content and online addresses change frequently, the URLs (uniform resource locators) listed here in print may no longer be valid. If this is the case, use your favorite search engine to locate the sites listed.

Sites Related to Japanese Festivals and Holidays

Haga Library: Festival, People, and Culture (<http://plaza.harmonix.ne.jp/~haga/home-E.html>)

This is the place for full-color photographs of Japanese festivals throughout the year. The site also features New Year's celebrations around the world and the best 40 festivals worldwide.

Hamamatsu City (<http://www.city.hamamatsu.shizuoka.jp/hamaEng/index.htm>)

Visit the town that hosts the annual kite-flying contest seen in the video. The site includes pictures and movies of the festival.

Irasshai (<http://www.peachstar.gatech.edu/irasshai/culwww.homepg.htm>)

Check out the "Calendars" and "Holidays and Festivals" sections of this launch pad for essays and links to related sites in Japan.

Kidsweb Japan (<http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/>)

Click on the "Annual Calendar" to check out Japanese holidays, events, and school activities throughout the year.

Sites with General Information about Japan

Asian Educational Media Service (<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/>)

A national clearinghouse for information about audiovisual materials on Japan and Asia. Database is searchable by country, media type, audience, or subject.

Ask Asia (<http://www.askasia.org/>)

Features resources for the K-12 classroom including lesson plans, readings, bibliography, and images for use in teaching and learning about the countries of Asia.

Irasshai (<http://www.peachstar.gatech.edu/irasshai/>)

This site produced by Georgia Public Broadcasting invites users to voyage to Japan through the World Wide Web. The "Launch Pad" includes a list of 23 major topics with dozens of subcategories linking to relevant sites or materials selected for their appeal to middle and high school students. The site's unique frame-design returns users to Irasshai after sojourns to linked sites, keeping students on task.

Japan Information Network (<http://www.jinjapan.org/>)

Maintained by the Japan Center for Intercultural Communications (JCIC), this site offers statistics, regional information, and links to other sites in Japan.

Japan Window (<http://www.jwindow.net/>)

A collaborative project between Stanford University and NTT Japan, this site offers information about Japanese science and technology, business, economics, education, and government. Also includes information about working, studying, living, and traveling in Japan and daily news headlines. This is the entry point to Kid's Window.

Kids Web Japan (<http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/>)

Part of the Japan Information Network and managed by the Japan Center for Intercultural Communications, this colorful site for school kids has many graphics and photographs. The site provides basic information on many aspects of Japan. It includes facts about daily life, history, economy, and other topics, monthly news of interest to kids, links to other sites, games, and an interactive form to ask questions about Japan.

National Clearinghouse for U.S.-Japan Studies (<http://www.indiana.edu/~japan>)

This adjunct clearinghouse of ERIC based at Indiana University offers two searchable databases of information about print resources and lesson plans for teaching and learning about Japan, especially at the K-12 level. Also features virtual Japan kit of images and information and links to other sites about and in Japan.

NTT Japanese Information (<http://www.ntt.co.jp/japan/>)

Maintained by Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT), this site offers information about the geography, culture, customs, government, sports, and tourist attractions of Japan.