

## Girls' Day Extra Credit

Translate to Japanese (*hiragana*).

1. Girls' Day is March 3<sup>rd</sup>.
2. Girls' Day is a holiday in Japan.
3. On Girls' Day, (you) take out dolls.
4. There are white and pink flowers.
5. The flowers are pretty.
6. Everyone eats delicious Girls' Day cookies (sweets).
7. The cookies (sweets) are pink and green.
8. Girls' day is very fun.

Dolls にんぎょう

fun たのしい

take out いただきます。

Very とても

## Japanese Girls' Day



Japanese girls are happy on March 3 because it's a special holiday known as *Hina Matsuri*, Girls' Doll Festival. It is a day for parents to express their love for and pride in their daughters.

Once a year, girls unpack boxes of fifteen or more dolls wearing ancient costumes to represent the Japanese imperial court. These valuable festival dolls are available in stores, but often they are heirlooms handed down through the generations from mother to daughter.

The girls place the dolls on different shelves. On the top shelf stand the *Dairi-Sama* (emperor and empress dolls), dressed in ancient court costumes of silk. The emperor stands on the top shelf because of his great power. On the lower shelves are court ministers, ladies in waiting, musicians, and imperial guards. The dolls are surrounded by miniature replicas of imperial household furniture and dishes. All the dolls wear *sokutai*, a court-style dress. Girls whose families can't afford a set of dolls usually display just a single doll.

Since the girls put soft pink and white peach blossoms all around their dolls, the Doll Festival is often called the Peach Blossom Festival. The flowers symbolize the gentleness, sweetness, and peacefulness of girls. Recently, some dolls representing movie and baseball stars have joined the traditional dolls on the shelves.

No one knows exactly how the Doll Festival began. Some people believe that long ago dolls were part of a ceremony to worship the emperor. Others believe the dolls once represented human beings and acted as charms to protect people from sickness, disaster, and evil spirits. Families used to gather together in springtime to make crude straw or paper dolls. They rubbed the dolls against their bodies to transfer evil to the straw or paper figures. Then they threw the dolls into a stream or river, which carried the evil away.

During *Hina Matsuri*, girls wear bright colorful kimonos and invite friends over to a party. All the girls are very polite and observe the proper etiquette as they enjoy sweet rice cake (called *hishi mochi*) in layers of green, pink, and white. Instead of tea, the children sip *amazake* — a sweet, thick rice wine. After the party, the girls share their dolls.

**Some Japanese-American families, especially those families whose grandparents came from Japan to the United States, also celebrate Girls' Day. Banks and ethnic stores in Japanese communities often display sets of dolls during the holiday. At the children's parties in America, the girls enjoy milk or punch with their cookies and cake instead of the traditional rice wine.**

