

**LESSON PLAN #2 SHEET- SECONDARY****Teacher:** Ms. Hong Zhu**Subject:** Japanese New Year**Grade Level:** I, II

**Purpose:** By the presentation of Japanese New Year (oshogatsu), which is the most important holiday in Japan, let students become familiar with Japanese culture

1. When does Japanese New Year begin?
2. How do Japanese prepare for New Year?
3. How do Japanese celebrate New Year?

**Rationale:** In Japan like in China, the celebration of holidays has the important effect to understand the culture. Through learning these ceremonies, students can get some concrete knowledge about Japan and its culture.

**Materials:** Video tape about Japanese New Year, flash cards, scissors, origami paper, color pencils, glue, tape, Bingo sheet

**Activities:**

1. To watch the video tape about Japanese New Year and discuss the questions listed above in the purpose part with students.
2. To teach students how to say some common greetings, wishes and holiday's names, activities in Japanese
3. To show students how to prepare the invitation card for New Year party
4. To teach students how to do the invitation card and origami.
5. To play Bingo game about Japanese words

**Assignment:** 1. Words writing in Japanese on common greetings, wishes and Holiday's name and activities in Japanese

2. To make an origami for a friend or for the member of family

### **1. When does Japanese New Year begin?**

Japanese New Year (oshogatsu) is celebrated from January 1 to January 3. Japan has adopted the solar calendar since 1873 and the New Year celebration starts on January 1.

### **2. How do Japanese prepare for New Year?**

The New Year holiday in Japan is both a celebration and an event of great symbolic significance. On the domestic front, Japanese homes are given a special cleaning inside and outside called "susharai" (soot sweeping) to remove the stains of the past year and to welcome the New Year with a scrubbed appearance and a fresh outlook. Front entrance are decorated with a combination of pine branches and bamboo to encourage luck to enter the home, and "shimenawa" a sacred strand of straw with wavy strips of white Japanese paper, is placed above the entrance to prevent evil from entering.

Moreover, for the Japanese people, it is an age-old custom to settle outstanding obligations and unfulfilled tasks so as to usher in the New Year with a clean slate. Thus, as the end of December approaches, people all over Japan, especially businessmen, are liquidating outstanding debts and rushing to complete unfinished business by New Year's Eve. Special foods are also the order of the day, emphasizing things that are prepared in advance and keep for days (especially rice cakes, vegetable dishes and many uniquely local dishes) so that housewives can enjoy a well-deserved period of rest. By New Year's Eve, with household preparations complete, businesses and virtually all shops closed.

### **3. How do Japanese celebrate New Year?**

New Year's Eve itself is an intimate family affair of all the people. Toshikoshi soba (buckwheat noodles), symbolizing longevity, are served. Many families spend the evening watching special entertainment on television such as the music show

kohaku uta gassen. Others pay visit to nearby shrines and temples to pray by the light of special bonfires. At Buddhist temples throughout the country, watchnight bells (joya-no-kane) begin to peel at the precise stroke of midnight a prolonged and solemn 108 times. According to Buddhism, the sound of the bells has the power to clean man of his 108 sins.

On New Year's Day, the family starts the New Year with a mochi or rice cake breakfast. Family members worship at miniature Buddhist or Shinto altars in their homes, praying for happiness to accompany them through the coming year, and in practice shared with many in the Western world, to make New Year resolutions. Then the family gathers to exchange New Year's greetings. Like other Asian New Year traditions, adults give money to children on New Year's Day. It is called "otoshi-dama" or the "new year treasure," a gift that surpasses their normal allowances. It is also a time for Children to play various traditional games like kite-flying and, for the girls, battledore and shuttlecock. A popular game is Furuwarai which is the American version of pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey." The traditional card game, karuta is another popular New Year's pastime.

Another of the New Year's tradition is nenshi, paying calls on relatives and acquaintances to offer greetings and best wishes for the New Year. For those who are too far away to call on, New Year's cards, nengajo, are sent, and the postal system makes special efforts to deliver these cards on January 1.

But on January 4, the holiday period is over and everyone is back at work, relaxed, refreshed and full of resolution for the New Year.

Some useful activities and materials for the Students:

1. New Year's invitation card: write invitation on paper and then fold into origami shape.

[www.japaneselifestyle.com.au/culture/new\\_year.html](http://www.japaneselifestyle.com.au/culture/new_year.html)

Some useful materials for the teachers:

1. Japanese words:

- a) oshogatsu: New Year
- b) susharai: a special cleaning inside and outside
- c) shimenawa: a sacred strand of straw with wavy strips of white Japanese paper
- d) toshikoshi soba: buckwheat noodles
- e) kohaku uta gassen: the music show
- f) joya-no-kane: watchnight bells
- g) mochi: a kind of ice-cream
- h) otoshi-dama: new year treasure
- i) furuarai: a popular game in Japan, like American version of pin-the-tail-on-the-monkey
- j) karuta: a traditional card game in Japan
- k) nenshi: make phone call to relatives and acquaintance to offer greetings and best wishes for the New Year
- l) nengajo: New Year's card

\* [www.familyculture.com/holidays/japanese\\_new\\_year.htm](http://www.familyculture.com/holidays/japanese_new_year.htm)

\* [www.kidspartyfun.com/pages/themes/japanesenewyear.html](http://www.kidspartyfun.com/pages/themes/japanesenewyear.html)

\*[www.askasia.org/teachers/Instructional\\_Resources/  
Materials/Readings/Japan/R\\_japan\\_19.htm](http://www.askasia.org/teachers/Instructional_Resources/Materials/Readings/Japan/R_japan_19.htm)