

## Exhibit: Japan Through The Eyes of a Child



Japan's public transport system is one of the best in the world. Students walk into a tourist information area and onto a train platform to “board” the Shinkansen or Bullet Train after learning about:

- greeting customs
- location, the islands and their geography
- currency and the exchange rate
- the time difference between Japan and the US

From the train station students travel to school where students in Japan:



- take off their “outdoor” shoes to put on “indoor” shoes
- carry identical backpacks
- serve each other lunch and eat in their classrooms
- clean their classrooms every day!

Sit at desks to discover what Japanese students are learning. For example:

- the three systems of writing: hiragana, katakana, kanji
- the very thin textbooks and unique characteristics
- PE classes which include swimming and unicycles!



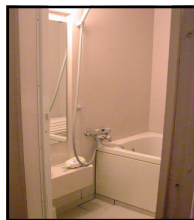
A neighborhood shopping street is the next stop on the journey where the old mixes with the new!

- a modern stationery store stocked with fun items for children
- a traditional folk toy collection from throughout Japan
- a kimono shop featuring traditional clothing that children may wear on special occasions
- a *bento* store selling a variety of the popular box lunch
- a public phone that talks to you and a post box!



Students now enter a Japanese house and see for themselves how their counterparts across the Pacific live at home. After passing through the front door of the house, children discover:

- where Japanese take off their shoes and put on slippers
- a traditional style room with tatami and a closet for the day-time storage of *futon*, the convenient fold-away “bed”
- a modern kitchen with drawers and cupboards filled with interesting food products, as well as a stove showcasing the standard fish grill instead of an oven!
- a modern bathroom module for bathing Japanese-style
- a high-tech toilet loaded with all kinds of buttons and knobs!



## Who is It? What is It? How Do We Celebrate It?

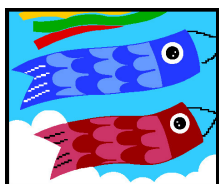
### George Sukeji Morikami (1886-1976)

George Morikami, a 19 year old Japanese, came to south Florida in 1906 to be a part of Yamato Colony. His plan was to work 3 years and return to Japan with enough money to buy orchards. About a year after his arrival, his sponsor died and George decided he needed to go to school to learn better English; he was assigned to a fifth grade class and attended elementary school for one year at the age of 22! From then on, he pursued a successful career as a farmer and fruit/vegetable wholesaler. He became an American citizen in 1967; in 1974, he donated much of his land to Palm Beach County for the benefit of the people of his adopted country out of gratitude for the opportunities he had been given. Visit [www.morikami.org](http://www.morikami.org) for more information.



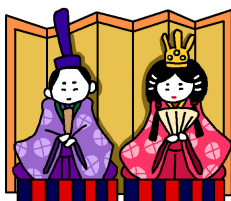
**New Years, *oshogatsu***, is the most important holiday in Japan. Businesses close January 1-3 while families get together to celebrate the new year.

It is the custom to visit a temple or shrine to honor the occasion. From relatives, children receive small envelopes with money in them called *otoshidama*. Adults send out postcard greetings to friends, family, and colleagues. The post office collects, bundles, and delivers the postcards on New Year's morning.

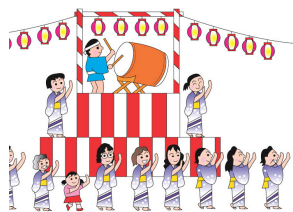


**Children's Day, May 5**, is a national holiday in Japan. Children have the day off from school and generally spend it with family and friends celebrating good health and happiness.

In the past, May 5 was **Boys' Day** and is still celebrated as such in many families. Carp kites are flown outside a house or a display of a folk hero or samurai doll may be set up inside the house in honor of the family's son(s).



**Girls' Day, *hina matsuri***, is March 3. A set of dolls representing the emperor and empress and their court are set up in the family home to mark the occasion. Girls often get together with friends to play and eat special foods.



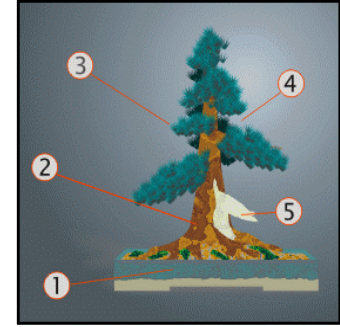
**Obon** is an annual event in July or August, depending upon the region, for commemorating one's ancestors. It is believed that each year ancestral spirits return to this world to visit their relatives.

Traditionally, lanterns are hung in front of houses to guide the spirits, dances (*bon odori*) are performed, graves are visited, and food offerings are made at home altars and at temples. At the end of Obon, floating lanterns are put into rivers or lakes to guide the spirits back into their world.



**What are bonsai?** (pronounced bone sigh; literally “plant in a tray”) Bonsai are trees and plants grown in containers. Even though they can be no taller than three feet, they look like fully grown trees. The elements of a bonsai are:

1. The container and the plant
2. The trunk (gives the tree its stature)
3. The branches (the branches decrease in size and spacing as they get nearer the top of the tree)
4. Negative (open) areas between branches (gives the impression of age and power)
5. Visual Effects, like dead wood (to give an impression of age)



[www.bonsaiprimer.com/main.html](http://www.bonsaiprimer.com/main.html)

**What are some good websites for basic bonsai information?**

- Kids Web Japan ([web-japan.org/kidsweb/virtual/bonsai/.html](http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/virtual/bonsai/.html)) has great information and also a virtual bonsai activity
- [www.andyrutledge.com/book/contents/langofartistry.htm](http://www.andyrutledge.com/book/contents/langofartistry.htm) highlights the Artistic Foundations of Bonsai Design and compares basic line and form with tree line and form in simple diagrams; also includes appropriate vocabulary for each section

**When are bonsai finished?** Unlike other works of art, bonsai are never finished as long as they are still alive and growing. They must be constantly groomed to maintain their “natural” beauty.

**Vocabulary:** perpendicular, vertical/horizontal, slanted, curved, angled, prune

**How do fish breathe?**  
**What is a person called who studies fish?**



**Estimate length & weight.**  
**Note the metric equivalents.**

### **Koi Facts**

- Average life span is 25-30 years
- Grows up to 3 feet long (just under one meter)
- Weighs up to 26 lbs. (11.8 kg)
- Size, shape, color, pattern and availability add to the value of a koi

### **General Fish Facts**

- All fish are **vertebrates** (have a backbone)
- Most fish **breathe by drinking water and forcing it out their gills**
- Fish hatch from eggs; are **cold-blooded**
- A person who studies fish is called an **ichthyologist** (ik-thē-'ä-lə-jist)