

LESSON NOTES

Japanese Culture Class #8

Hinamatsuri

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VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English
両手に花	りょうてにはな	ryōte ni hana	two blessings at once
菱餅	ひしもち	hishimochi	rhombus-shaped mochi
白酒	しろざけ	shirozake	sweet white sake
平安	へいあん	heian	Heian era (794-1185)
五人囃子	ごにんばやし	gonin bayashi	five court-musician dolls
三人官女	さんにんかんじょ	san-nin kanjo	3 court ladies
お雛様	おひなさま	o-hina-sama	set of dolls on display, empress doll
男雛	おびな	obina	emperor doll
お内裏様	おだいらさま	o-dairi-sama	Emperor doll
雛人形	ひなにんぎょう	hinaningyō	doll for Doll Festival
雛祭り	ひなまつり	hinamatsuri	Girls' (dolls') Festival (March 3rd)
桃の節句	もものせっき	momo no sekku	Peach Festival (doll festival on March 3rd)
雛あられ	ひなあられ	hina arare	snack associated with Doll Festival

GRAMMAR

Today's topic is "桃の節句 (*Momo no Sekku*)" which is also called as "雛祭り (*Hina Matsuri*)." Both of them refer to "Girl's Day" or the "Festival of Dolls" on March 3rd, which celebrates the birth of girls and their future happiness. 桃 (*momo*) means peach flowers. In the old lunar calendar, March 3 was the season of peach flowers, so it came to be called as "桃の節句 (*Momo no Sekku*)." It is generally believed that this festival originated in the *Heian* Era (794 to 1185).

People display a set of graceful dolls in ancient court costumes on a tier of 5 to 7 shelves, which is called "雛人形 (*Hina Ningyō*)". The main dolls are the Emperor and Empress, courtiers, court ladies and imperial musicians. The dolls were believed to protect girls from illness or evil spirits.

- **The Emperor and Empress:** They are called as "男雛 (*o-bina*) or お内裏様 (*o-dairi-sama*)" and the Empress is called as "女雛 (*me-bina*) or お雛様 (*o-hina-sama*).". They are displayed on the top of the shelves.

- **The Court Ladies:** Three ladies called "三人官女 (*san-nin kanjo*).". They are displayed on the second tier from the top.

- **The Court Musicians:** Five men called "五人囃子 (*go-nin bayashi*).". They are displayed on the third tier from the top.

People usually display the dolls a few weeks in advance of March 3 and take them down immediately after March 3rd. This is because of a superstition that says that if they keep displaying the dolls for a long time after March 3rd, it might delay their daughter's marriage.

On the day of the Festival, people gather in front of the dolls' display and have a good time, eating 雛あられ (*Hina arare*; sweet rice crackers) or 菱餅 (*Hishi mochi*; rhombus-shaped rice cake) or drinking 白酒 (*Shirozake*; white sake).