

LESSON NOTES

Japanese Children's Songs #4 Musunde Hiraite

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KANJI

1. むすんで ひらいて
2. てをうって むすんで
3. またひらいて
4. てをうって
5. そのてを うえに
6. むすんで ひらいて
7. てをうって むすんで

KANA

1. むすんで ひらいて
2. てをうって むすんで
3. またひらいて
4. てをうって
5. そのてを うえに
6. むすんで ひらいて
7. てをうって むすんで

ROMANIZATION

CONT'D OVER

1. Musunde hiraite
2. Te o utte musunde
3. Mata hiraite
4. Te o utte
5. Sono te o ue ni
6. Musunde hiraite
7. Te o utte musunde

ENGLISH

1. Close your hands, Open your hands
2. Clap your hands, Close your hands.
3. Open your hands again,
4. Clap your hands,
5. Put your hands up.
6. Close your hands, Open your hands
7. Clap your hands, Close your hands.

VOCABULARY

| Kanji | Kana | Romaji | English |
|-------|------|--------|--|
| むすぶ | むすぶ | musubu | to tie, to bind; to link; to knot (a tie) |
| ひらく | ひらく | hiraku | to open, to spread out |
| うつ | うつ | utsu | to hit, to strike |
| て | て | te | hand |
| また | また | mata | again |

SAMPLE SENTENCES

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>結婚式ではネクタイをむすんで下さい。 <i>Kekkonshiki de wa nekutai o musunde kudasai.</i></p> <p>Please wear your tie at the wedding ceremony.</p> | <p>教科書 10 ページを開いてください。 <i>Kyōkasho 10-pēji o hiraite kudasai.</i></p> <p>Please open your textbook to page 10.</p> |
| <p>壁に頭をうちました。 <i>Kabe ni atama o uchimashita.</i></p> <p>I hit my head on the wall.</p> | <p>てをあらいなさい！ <i>Te o arainasai!</i></p> <p>Wash your hands!</p> |
| <p>また同じ間違いをしまいました。 <i>Mata onaji machigai o shimashita.</i></p> <p>I made the same mistake again.</p> | |

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Japanese Children's Song *Musunde Hiraite*.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a famous eighteenth-century philosopher, composed the original melody of this song. Operas in France and England used this melody and people also sang this song as a carol titled "Greenville" in the United States. In addition, people knew this song as an American folk song titled "Go Tell Aunt Rhody."

In 1874, the carol "Greenville" was introduced to Japan and then given different lyrics as a song for elementary school children. Those lyrics, however, were entirely different from

the current version of *Musunde Hiraite*. At the end of the nineteenth century, the lyrics were changed to work as a military song and was often sung as one until the end of World War II.

Then, in 1947, the song was introduced again as an elementary school children's song with new lyrics. That is the current version, *Musunde Hiraite*. Now, it is very popular as a song that kids sing with hand movements at nursery schools or in kindergarten. Most Japanese people know how to move their hands along with this song.

むすんで ひらいて てをうって むすんで

Musunde is the *te* form of the verb *musubu* (むすぶ), which generally means "to tie." *Hiraite* is the *te* form of the verb *hiraku* (ひらく), which means "to open." At this point in the song, it's not mentioned what is being tied and opened. But you find out in the next line, which says *te o utte musunde*. *Te* means "hand," *utte* means "to clap," and then *musunde* comes again. So, all together, it means "close your hands, open your hands, clap your hands, close your hands."

The *te* form of a verb can work as a request to tell someone to do something in an informal manner.

For Example:

1. まって!
Matte!
"Wait!"
2. これ、たべて。
Kore, tabete.
"Eat this."

またひらいて てをうって

Mata means "again." The other words repeat from the previous lines, so it means "Open your hands again, Clap your hands."

そのてを うえに

After *sono te o ue ni*, we omit the verb *agete* (the *te* form of *ageru* meaning "to raise").

So *sono te o ue ni* should read *sono te o ue ni agete* and means "put your hands up." *Sono* means "that" and *sono te* means "the hands," which refers to the hands that you just clapped together.

Variations

Small children sing this song with the hand movements with their friends and teachers at nursery schools or in kindergarten. They sometimes sing other variations of the last line (*sono te o ue ni*) such as *sono te o shita ni*, meaning "put your hands down," or *sono te o mae ni*, meaning "put your hands forward."