Hina Matsuri
THE DOLL FESTIVAL
By Yoshiko Murahata, JCC Director, MFWI
(This article is a revised version of the March 5th speech.)

We had about 150 wonderful guests attend Hina Matsuri from Children’s House Montessori, Hamblen Elementary, Roosevelt Elementary, Westgate Christian School, and the Palisades Christian Academy’s band. We also had distinguished guests Consul Yoshiki Uenishi from the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle, Spokane Councilman Mike Fagan, and Rol Harriges, President of Spokane-Nishinomiya Sister City Society. And our special guests and long time volunteers, Hide Tsutakawa, Peggy Heyamoto, Misako Egner, Marilyn Stedman, and Katsumi Hoki.

Hina-Matsuri is celebrated on March 3rd in Japan. Hina means “little bird” and matsuri means “festival.” So it is a festival for children, actually for girls. We celebrate this day by displaying beautiful dolls, and wish girls their growth, good health, and happiness. Peach blossoms are also displayed beside Hina dolls. Peach blossoms are believed to have a magical power that drive away evil spirits. How about boys? Don’t worry. We also have Boys’ Day in Japan on May 5th. March 3rd (3/3) is the girls’ day and May 5th (5/5) is the boys’ day. It’s easy to remember, isn’t it?

The boys’ day is also called Children’s Day, and it is a national holiday. On Children’s Day, many children are happy to receive some toys or gifts. Toy shops and department stores are crowded with children, parents, and grandparents. Going to a zoo or an amusement park is a special treat for children. We celebrate the Boys’ Day as well on the day, so Samurai dolls with armor and helmet are displayed on a stage. The dolls displayed are not for playing with, but looking at the dolls in colorful and gorgeous kimono surrounded by beautiful ornaments makes us happy.

Two hundred and thirty-two students from Mukogawa Women’s University, our main campus in Nishinomiya, Japan, are staying and studying here now and all of them attended the ceremony. I’m sure each of them has special memories of Hina Matsuri with their family. I myself still have Hina dolls which my mother made for me when I was born, as I wrote in the previous issue of the JCC newsletter. So the dolls are as old as I am. And I will keep them as long as I live. Sadly, I lost some ornaments and accessories we used to have as I moved many times. Some of them were broken when we put them back into boxes and took out from the boxes every year. But I still have the dolls. Isn’t it nice and amazing that you keep the dolls as long as you live?

We had some adult guests on the day. And they may be thinking it was a celebration for children. But I’d like to say that it was a day for them, too, because everybody was once a child. Just imagine what you were look like when you were a small baby, then one year old, and then two years old, and how your lovely smile attracted people around you and made them happy. Nothing is more heartwarming than children’s innocent and pleased smiles.

It may be difficult to imagine, but everybody was a child. The Children’s day is not only for children but for everybody to recall your childhood days! We celebrate this day, therefore, wishing for our happiness, peaceful life, good health, and most of all, our friendship and mutual understandings between America and Japan.
We had a very important special guest, Miss Tokushima to our Hina Matsuri Festival, accompanied by Ms. Valerie Wahl and Ms. Rose Krause and from Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture.

Miss Tokushima is a goodwill ambassador to America and she came to America in 1927. Now she is in the Northwest Museum of Arts and Cultures in Spokane. Miss Tokushima came to America with other 44 ambassador dolls. They arrived with their passports and belongings in their suitcases, as if they were real ambassadors. As they were representatives of Japan, they were named after each prefecture in Japan. So you can find Miss Hyogo in Missouri, Miss Fukuoka in Oregon, Miss Osaka in Ohio, and so on.

Since then they have been working to convey goodwill from Japan and encourage international friendship. Actually, however, Miss Tokushima was rather very quiet for a long time. During the time I think she was waiting for someone to visit her. She waited, waited and waited, and finally, one day in January, 1993, a lady from Japan came to see her, and the lady invited Miss Tokushima to a Hina Matsu festival as a special guest. How delighted she was! The lady was Michiko Takaoka, the first director of Japanese Cultural Center, Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute. Since then she has been invited to Mukogawa as a special guest for the Doll Festival every year.

And Mukogawa started Friendship Doll Program to extend goodwill from Japan. Every year we present a friendship doll to schools and children as a token of our friendship, wishing for peace and our mutual understanding. We presented dolls which were sent from Japan this year too.

I would like to introduce the dolls which were displayed on the stage. The beautiful Japanese dolls were donated by a famous doll maker, Shosuke Genga. He donates a doll he makes every year since his daughter was a student of our university. Also look at these cute handmade dolls. They were made mainly by Mukogawa high school students and their parents at doll making classes held by Mukogawa. The participants of the doll making class always make twin sisters. And one of them is sent to Spokane, and the other stays in Japan. So these dolls have a twin sister in Japan. If you receive one of these handmade dolls, please write a letter to her twin sister in Japan. Send it to JCC, then we are happy to send it to Japan.

2013 Friendship Doll recipients are: Children’s House Montessori, Hamblen Elementary, Roosevelt Elementary, Westgate Christian School, Spokane, Washington, Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Port Washington, Wisconsin, and Davenport School of the Arts, Davenport, Florida. We hope that the recipients feel they are connected to Japan through the dolls whenever they see the doll.
Mukogawa Family Festival

Wednesday, April 24, 2013
3-5pm
Commons building at Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute
4320 W Owens Ridge Rd, Spokane WA 99224

Lively, fun environment
with Japanese activities by MFWI students!

Admission is free – all are welcome!
(Kingyo sukui and foods have $1.00 charges only while supplies last!)

Any questions, please contact JCC at JCC@mfwi.edu or 328-2971

Announcements

Don’t forget! Ikebana Classes
We still have available spots for the flower arrangement classes taught by Ellen Krehbiel. Come check it out!

Cooking Class Success!

Thank you Ryuhei Tanaka for sharing your experience with us and teaching proper ways of preparing and cooking different types of Japanese foods.

And thank you to all our participants for the class!

Girl Scouts Hina Matsuri

Over 30 Girl Scouts and their families came to the Japanese Cultural Center for their very own Hina Matsuri.

Mukogawa students helped the Girl Scouts with various activities: dress up in yukata, make calligraphy, fold many origami, and make their own hina display. Thank you all for a wonderful time!

Open House in the Tea Room

April 9, 16, 23, & 30
Times available: 3-4pm & 4-5pm

We enjoy making Usucha (Japanese powdered green tea) and drinking it with Japanese sweets.

Reservation Required, Limited Space call Candie to RSVP 328-2971