

# Large round mirror-shaped rice cakes, the first temple and shrine visit of the New Year, New Year soup with rice cakes and vegetables

● **Toshigamisama** God of the incoming year (refer to the picture on the right)

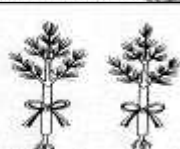
It is said that this was a remnant as one of New Year's event which took place in old times for bountiful crops and family's safety of a new year. It is covered with fern fronds like a coat. This fern frond symbolizes a wish to be gifted with children.

It has a rice-cake in its hand.



● **Otoshidama**(New Year's Gift)The original meaning of this custom is a happiness expression of New Year and usually the older persons give some goods to inferiors. The children are given money into paper bag, so-called "Pochibukuro" in family or in the neighborhood. In old times, not money but

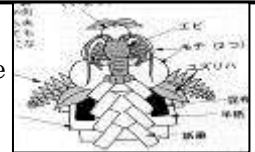
rice-cake was given. It was believed that we were one-year older after eating a rice-cake.



● **Kadomatsu/Matsukazari**(New Year's pine and bamboo decorations) It is a land mark when "Toshigamisama" is coming down along this pine tree. "Kadomatsu" is displayed at company or shopping store while "Matsukazari" at standard home.

● **Shimekazari** (Sacred straw festoon) It is said that this decoration which injects such wishes as health, happiness and prosperous business drives away the ill luck.

● **Kagamimochi** (Large round mirror-shaped rice cakes) This rice cake is shaped like a heart and



white rice cake presents soul of the universe. It is displayed at shelf of god, family altar and recess where people think important. It is believed that people get the special power if they eat the rice cake displayed at above places in New Year.

● **Osechiryori**(Foods prepared for New Year)

It is especially cooked dishes which people eat with celebration when New Year comes. New Year (season) is one of the most important seasonal festivals. People cook the dishes made from foods materials having meaning of happiness and put them in tiered lacquer boxes (Jjubako).



● **Jjubako**(Tiered lacquer boxes) 4 tiered lacquer-boxes are formal one but recently the number of boxes is not fixed. The food which represents happiness is put in the first box, simple an hors d'oeuvre in the second box, food made from seafood or meat in third box and dishes made from mountain in fourth box. However, recently a lot of people buy the ready-made dishes put in boxes with reasonable price.

● **Ozooni**(New Year soup with rice cakes and vegetables) Breakfast begins with this dish from Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>. You can choose your ozooni from two flavors, Kanto (Eastern style) and Kansai (Western style). The cooking ingredients of New Year's dishes are depending on the region. It is interesting for you to cook and change this dish in your own way.

●**Hatsumode**(The first temple and shrine visit of the New Year)

At temple or shrine, people appreciate safety in previous year and pray for wish in the new year. We can see recently a lot of foreigners visit to temple or shrine as a New Year event

★**How to pray at shrine?**

1. Make a bow in front of shrine gate.
2. Purify your mind and body by bathing at building for cleaning hands and rinsing mouth.
3. First get water with a long-handled ladle by right hand and pour water over your left hand for purification.
4. Do the opposite of what you did in No.3, right hand & left hand.
5. Grasp a long-handled ladle by right hand and put water on your left hand. And then rinse your mouth.
6. Wash out left hand and the handle with the remainder of the water.
7. The passage is for God. Walk along side of the passage.



8. Stand before the altar and Throw money into an offertory box.
9. Tinkle a bell if available.
10. Make 2 bows and hand-clap 2 times. And then pray for wish again.
11. Make final bow.

★**How to pray at temple?**

1. Bow at the gate. 2. Throw some coins into the wooden box at main hall and then bow again. 3. Bow at the gate again. 4. No clap is necessary at temple.

●**Hatsuyume** (First Dream of the Year) It is the dream in the first night of the year. It is said that if this dream is splendid, good luck will last over the course of a year. People in old times slept with pictures of Seven Gods brought “Treasure ship” (which means of Happiness) under their pillows. Seven Gods are coming from not only Japan but also India and China.

●**Kakizome**(The first calligraphy/writing of the Year)

It is a traditional event held normally on January 2<sup>nd</sup> and People write auspicious words or phrases with a brush. It was originally held at imperial court as one of New Year’s events. On January 10, this Kakizome event will take place at Japanese language class of FICEC. Please write your wishes in Japanese letters, Hiragana or Kanji, with brush.

**Disaster prevention drills in foreign language (English & Chinese) in Fujimino city on December 2**

Wail of siren at 08:30 on December 2. First, protect your head by protective actions such as huddling under a table. Wait for one minute as it stands. And then leave for the park or school designated as evacuation centers. We wish a lot of foreign residents will join this drills.

**A deadline is looming. Scholarship assistance for the children of single-parent family as entrance pay.**

The new school life will start from April! Let’s give your child a very good start in nice school life. In Saitama prefecture, the subsidy system was established to promote the happiness and well-being of children of single-parent and low-income family at school (Junior high school) entry. Those who have been rearing child of parentless or single-parent family are eligible. In addition, this subsidy requires tax-exemption family in fiscal year 2012. The subsidy payment is Yen 10,000 per child. ●Make an application for the subsidy at Kosodate-shien-ka, bringing the passbook of ordinary deposit with own name. Be sure to make an application by Dec. 28. It’s unacceptable when overdue.