

# Japan Now: November 2024

*Japan Now* is the email newsletter of the Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage

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## Shichi-Go-San



“**Shichi-Go-San**” is the name of a traditional Japanese custom that celebrates the milestones of children reaching the ages of seven (shichi), five (go), and three (san). It is a special occasion for families and is common to take pictures at a photo studio or to visit shrines or temples to make wishes for the growth and happiness of their children.

The origins of Shichi-Go-San date back to the Heian period (794-1192). In those days, when medical care was less developed, the survival rate of infants was lower than it is today, and the healthy growth of children was more important to parents than anything else. Therefore, when children reached the milestone ages of 3, 5, and 7, they were dressed up in formal kimono, thanked the gods for their growth, and prayed for their healthy days to continue.

Today, it is a family event held every year from October to November, especially on **November 15**. Originally, however, it was held as separate ceremonies: the kamioki-no-gi, the hakamagi-no-gi, and the obitoki-no-gi.



### **Kamioki-no-gi (Age 3)**

At the age of three, a “Kamioki-no-gi” was held to commemorate growing out a child’s hair that would have been routinely shaved up until then.

This is a ceremony that marks the transition from being an infant to being a toddler.

Originally, this ceremony was performed for both boys and girls, but today, in many areas it is only for girls.



### **Hakamagi-no-gi (Age 5)**

At the age of five, a ceremony called “Hakamagi-no-gi” was held to celebrate the transition from being a toddler to a child. It was held for both boys and girls during the Heian period (794-1185) when girls also wore hakama, but during the Edo period (1603-1868) it was changed to a celebration for boys of samurai

families.

### **Obitoki-no-gi (Age 7)**

At the age of seven, Obitoki-no-gi is celebrated mainly for girls, who would start wearing obi sashes to tie their kimonos like adults instead of wearing children’s kimono.

If you visit Japan during this time of year, you may see children dressed in formal attire with their families looking down at them warmly, proud to see them growing up.



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## **Courtesy Call to Seward City Mayor Sue McClure**

On Thursday October 17th, 2024, Head Consul Hamada met with Mayor Sue McClure of Seward and some of her city staff to discuss the long-standing sister city relationship Seward has with Obihiro, Japan.

As the recent exchanges between Obihiro and Seward were highlighted there was also opportunity to discuss topics such as the South Central Mayor's Energy Coalition, challenges to tourism, seasonality of workers, and upcoming port development. It is always exciting to see the potential for deepened cultural and economic ties across Alaska's numerous connections to Japan.

The Consular Office of Japan looks forward to continued cooperation with Mayor McClure and the City of Seward.



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## The application for the 39th JET program is open until Nov. 15th

The JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Program is a Japanese-government sponsored program that hires people to go and work at local schools, boards of education, or municipal government offices throughout Japan.

Every year, successful applicants fill one of two positions in the thousands of openings across every prefecture in Japan. ALTs, Assistant Language Teachers, are hired to assist with language education at a school or schools ranging from Pre-K to 12th grade. CIRs, Coordinators of International Relations, work in larger government facilities or administrative offices and organize cultural events, translate, and interpret. CIRs are expected to be highly proficient in both English and Japanese, but for ALTs, Japanese proficiency is not required (though it helps!)

Any US citizen that holds a Bachelor's Degree on or before June 27th, 2025 is welcome to apply!

For more information about eligibility, visit [JET Program USA website](#).

**Apply Now**



**LIVE AND WORK IN JAPAN** 🇯🇵

**APPLICATIONS OPEN**  
**UNTIL NOV. 15, 2024**  
AT 11:59 PM HAWAII-ALEUTIAN STANDARD TIME

**Questions?**  
Contact us on Facebook or reach out at:  
✉ [jet-ak@se.mofa.go.jp](mailto:jet-ak@se.mofa.go.jp) ☎ (907)-562-8424

**WHERE TO APPLY**  
Apply online at  
<https://www.jetapplication.com/>  
For up-to-date information about the JET Program, visit  
<https://jetprogramusa.org/>

2025 JAPAN EXCHANGE AND TEACHING PROGRAM USA

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## Interview with a JET Participant

In August, six new Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program participants from Alaska left for Japan to start their new lives and assist in English education at schools in Japan.

We had the pleasure of hearing from [Moriah Parker](#), who has been placed at two elementary schools in the heart of Tottori Prefecture.

[Read Full Interview](#)

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