The Japanese Cherry Tree: Global Roots and Local Blossoms

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NCSS STANDARDS

VI. Power, Authority, and Governance.
   b. explain the purpose of government;
   f. identify and describe factors that contribute to cooperation and cause disputes within and among groups and nations.

VIII. Science, Technology, and Society.
   e. suggest ways to monitor science and technology in order to protect the physical environment, individual rights and the common good.

IX. Global Connections.
   a. explore ways that language, art, music, belief systems, and other cultural elements may facilitate global understanding or lead to misunderstanding;
   f. investigate concerns, issues, standards, and conflicts related to universal human rights, such as the treatment of children, religious groups, and effects of war.

X. Civic Ideals and Practices.
   f. recognize that a variety of formal and informal actors influence and shape public policy;
   i. describe how public policies are used to address issues of public concern.

OVERVIEW

Formally designated as Japan’s national flower, the cherry blossom or sakura with its dramatic, short-lived beauty is viewed as a symbol for “the poetry of the Japanese soul.” In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Japanese cherry trees sent as gifts from Tokyo, Japan to Washington D.C. became an essential part of the U.S. capital city’s character and landscape. The first official cherry blossom festival was celebrated in the U.S. in Washington D.C. in 1935. Since then, year after year sakura matsuri have marked the coming of spring in urban parks and botanical gardens, offering a joyful social occasion for celebration, contemplation, culture and community.

Proceeding from the premise that we are all “growers” of international peace, this lesson engages teachers and students in developing and participating in a cherry blossom festival. It centers around cherry trees as a means of studying the natural world and as a symbol for understanding Japanese aesthetics and culture. The lesson involves a class of children in contemplating the renewing power of spring and learning about Japanese American heritage and community. Background material explains how cherry trees helped inspire individuals, community organizations and governments in Japan and the United States to sustain a friendship. It's a friendship that, like the cherry trees, has endured through trial and error, war and peace, and the ups and downs of dollars and yen, for over a century.

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL OR COURSE PLACEMENT

The lesson is geared for students in 3rd grade but can be adapted for all elementary grade levels or designed as an all school event. Specific aspects of the lesson entail interdisciplinary subject areas including language arts, music, history, geography, visual arts, botany and environmental science.

RECOMMENDED TIME ALLOTMENT FOR INSTRUCTION

Can be used in a single class period or as a series of lessons and activities, for up to three weeks, culminating with a teacher directed field trip and festival, to be held in a grove of cherry trees. Schedule the lessons and activities so that the culminating festival occurs in April or when the cherry trees are in bloom.

OBJECTIVES

Knowledge—Students will:

• identify the cherry blossom as the national flower of Japan.
• understand how the spring cherry blossom festival keeps Japanese American cultural heritage alive and cultivates U.S. Japanese friendship.
• recognize that private citizens, the Japanese American community, parks, botanical gardens and Japanese corporations help maintain large groves of cherry trees and sponsor sakura matsuri in the U.S.
• acknowledge the role of individuals and governments in fostering international understanding.
• analyze why government maintains quality control and health standards for plants to be imported and exported.

Attitude—Students will:

• appreciate the transitory beauty of cherry trees.
• identify character traits from a folk tale.
• appreciate gift giving in Japanese culture and etiquette and its role in demonstrating respect and returning favors.
• recognize the role of annual celebrations in keeping international friendship and cultural roots alive.

Skills—Students will:

• sing the folk song Sakura in English and Japanese.
- learn to identify cherry trees and examine petals under a microscope or magnifying glass
- make cherry tree maps of their communities.
- fold paper cherry blossoms, write cherry blossom tree haiku.
- develop, produce and participate in a sakura matsuri festival.

**MATERIALS/RESOURCES NEEDED**

box of drinking straws
ball of string
pink tissue paper
magnifying glasses and/or microscope
large butcher paper or roll of white paper
pastels, crayons or markers

Appendix 1: Learn A Story of U.S.-Japan Friendship (1 copy for teacher)
Appendix 2: Listen to A Cherry Blossom Folk Tale (1 copy for teacher)
Appendix 3: Sing a Japanese Folk Song—Sakura (1 copy per student).
Appendix 4: Create a Cherry Blossom Chain (1 copy per student)
Appendix 5: Make a Cherry Blossom Crest (1 copy per student)
Appendix 6: Explore Cherry Blossom Botany (1 copy per group leader)
Appendix 7: Enjoy Cherry Blossom Haiku

**VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT**

export—something sent out to another country
festival—a day or time of celebration, often held annually, that features entertainment, feasting and fun. Flower festivals are often a way of celebrating a spirit of renewal and the transitory nature of beauty.
banami—Japanese word for a festive picnic under the cherry blossoms; literally, “flower viewing”
import—something brought in from another country
mortar—a bowl used to pound and crush spices and food such as rice.
sakura matsuri—Japanese words for cherry blossom festival
symbol—something concrete that stands for something that can not in itself be pictured.
transitory—temporary, fleeting, ephemeral

**INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES**

Background for the Teacher: This lesson provides teachers with instructions for creating a unit about Japanese cherry trees that culminates with a two hour sakura matsuri or cherry blossom festival. To allow for informal and formal learning, create a sense of unity/community and include a range of experience (from spontaneous play to quiet contemplation), the festival has been designed to include three parts. These three parts are small group interdisciplinary activities (75 minutes), spontaneous play or picnic snack (15 minutes) and a culminating ceremony (30 minutes).

Cherry trees are usually in bloom for little more than a week. In Japan, people seize the brief window of opportunity and take to the groves where large and small groups spread out their mats and blankets for feasts and festivities known as banami. The banami are spontaneous and informal. They can involve a picnic, games, songs and even jokes. In the United States, the sakura matsuri or cherry blossom festivals, tend to be more structured with planned entertainment and activities to introduce Americans to Japanese culture. Many Japanese Americans participate in sakura matsuri as a way of keeping their cultural traditions and heritage alive.

Cherry blossom festivals can be poignant events, especially when the participants are sensitive to the bittersweet qualities of joy and sadness that are evoked as blossoms fall and scatter with the wind. Following are step-by-step directions for creating a two hour Japanese cherry blossom festival with students to convey a spirit of celebration, contemplation, culture and community in the springtime of the year.

A. **Plan the Logistics.** Start planning a cherry blossom festival well in advance of April. Identify a local cherry grove (or tree) within walking, bus or train distance of your school. If necessary, contact local authorities to arrange to hold your class cherry blossom festival there (e.g. for local botanical gardens, contact the Education Department). Select a date and, if possible, an alternate date (in case of rain) for your cherry blossom festival. Obtain directions and a map, preferably one which identifies where cherry trees are situated within the park, garden or yard.

B. **Conduct Classroom Activities** (start three weeks prior to festival).

1. **Introduce the experience by letting children know that the class will be planning a Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival.** Make a list on a piece of large paper of things children already know about the topic and any questions they might have about Japanese cherry trees and festivals. Keep the list for referral until after the festival. (30 minutes).


   a. After you have finished, ask children to write down their wishes and hopes for the friendship between Japan and the United States and for peace between nations. Collect the wishes and
set them aside for use in the Cherry Blossom Festival.

b. Use a world map and pointer and have children trace the path cherry trees took to get from Tokyo to Seattle by boat, and from Seattle to Washington D.C. (45 minutes).

3. Pass out copies of Appendix 3: Sing A Japanese Folk Song—Sakura to each child. Teach and sing the song in English and Japanese.

4. Introduce cherry trees as a symbol of spring and renewal by reading aloud Appendix 2: Listen to a Cherry Blossom Folk Tale. Lead the class in discussing character traits and reverence for the ancestors. (30 minutes).

5. Pass out copies of Appendix 4: Create a Cherry Blossom Chain. Set aside the finished chain for use in the Cherry Blossom Festival.

6. Follow directions in Appendix 5: Make a Cherry Blossom Crest and use it to stamp invitations for parents to attend the Cherry Blossom Festival. Decorate napkins, picnic cloth(s), a program of events and other materials by stamping them with the cherry blossom crest stamp.

One Week Before the Festival:
Send home permission slips and invitations to parents to attend the festival. Encourage children to dress in spring colors for the festival (white, pink, green, yellow, violet).

C. Develop a Festival. Develop a plan and familiarize yourself with it before holding the cherry blossom festival. A festival might be divided into three parts including small group activities (75 minutes), spontaneous play or picnic snack (15 minutes) and a culminating ceremony (30 minutes).

1. Small group activities. Set up three or more “stations” under the cherry trees, leaving enough space between stations to allow children to concentrate on their own activities. Include a science station (See Appendix 6: Explore Cherry Blossom Botany), a writing station (See Appendix 7: Enjoy Cherry Blossom Haiku) and a sketching area. The sketching area can be stocked with a long scroll and craypas or pastels so that children can create a mural of a Japanese cherry grove. Use a sidewalk, table or other flat surface for stretching the scroll and sketching.

Solicit parent volunteers, older students or colleagues (such as the art specialist, reading or science teacher) to “staff” the stations. Divide children into three small groups to rotate between activities, spending 25 minutes at each station.

2. Closing Ceremony. Pass out copies of children’s wishes for world peace and U.S.-Japan friendship prior to starting the ceremony. Select six children to read the haiku from Appendix 7.

a. Have children form a circle/ring, holding the cherry blossom chain.

b. Set the tone by talking about cherry blossom trees as living plants that make our community richer and more beautiful. Let the children know that our ceremony will be concluding our study of cherry blossom festival.

c. Have the six selected children read aloud while standing in place, the cherry blossom haiku by Basho, Issa and Buson and any original haiku written at the festival.

d. Lead children in singing Sakura in English and Japanese (Appendix 3).

e. Make appreciation statements (children take turns saying what they like about cherry blossoms).


g. Conclude the ceremony with a time to contemplate the cherry blossoms (three minutes of total silence).

D. Concluding Classroom Activity. Review the list of questions that students drew up at the beginning of the unit. Have all the children’s questions been answered? What else do students know about Japanese cherry trees now?

Display the scroll depicting a cherry tree grove in the classroom or hall. Write a group description of what happened at the cherry blossom festival and display it beneath the scroll. Hang student wishes for world peace and friendship between the United States and Japan from the boughs of the cherry tree depicted on the scroll. Display photographs of the children’s cherry blossom festival.

ASSESSMENT

Students will demonstrate an understanding of Japanese cultural arts by writing haiku, folding paper cherry blossoms, discussing a folk tale, singing the traditional folk song, Sakura and creating and participating in a cherry blossom festival.

EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT

A. Obtain a map of the cherry grove where you plan to hold the festival and place it on the overhead projector. Pass out paste and green and pink construction paper and have students create maps, using pink “circular” symbols to situate the cherry trees. If you are able to work with a talented parent or artist in residence, make a class quilt depicting the cherry grove.
B. Use the following stories from children's literature to reinforce aspects of cherry blossom festivals as:

1. Celebrations of Japanese American cultural heritage. *Konshibito: I am a Japanese-American Girl*, a recipient of the NCSS Carter G. Woodson 1996 Elementary Honor Book Award, follows young Lauren Kamiya as she and her school mates prepare for the annual Cherry Blossom Festival and introduces Japantown, a center for buying and selling Japanese goods in San Francisco. Have children list components that will be part of the festival (wearing of kimono, taiko drumming, shakuhachi flute playing, traditional Japanese dances etc.).

2. Community picnics and flower viewing. *Under the Cherry Blossom Tree*. This retelling of a traditional Japanese tale emphasizes the communal and fun loving spirit of hanami (cherry blossom viewing and picnics). A miserly landlord is so irritated by the celebratory behavior of his tenants that he inadvertently swallows a cherry pit. The cherry tree that grows out of his bald head is only the beginning of his problems.

C. For Internet information about Washington D.C.'s *Sakura Matsuri*, including detailed descriptions of entertainment, crafts and exhibits, the address is: http://www.gwisp.com/matsuri/

Try conducting an Internet word search of *Sakura* to see just how widespread the humble cherry tree has become as a symbol. The Sakura Friend Club is a great forum for American and Japanese children to communicate and establish penpal connections.
SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES


CITATIONS/BIBLIOGRAPHY


Fleeting Blossoms, Enduring Roots:
A Story of U.S. Japan Friendship

DEVELOPED BY LISA GARRISON

Can there be a gift that keeps on giving? In Japan, contemplation of nature and appreciation of the natural world are important traditions. Perhaps then, it is not surprising that in the early part of the twentieth century, the Mayor of Tokyo, Japan's capital and largest city, presented a gift of 3,000 cherry trees to the city of Washington D.C. as a token of lasting friendship.

Few people realize that American children planted some of the Japanese cherry trees given to the United States. The year was 1908 and the children planted the trees in their school yards in the city of Washington, D.C. on Arbor Day. Arbor Day is an annual event in late March set aside to beautify local communities and improve soil and air quality by planting shade trees in towns all across the country.

The story of these cherry trees all started at the turn of the century, when a leading botanist from the U.S. Department of Agriculture traveled to Japan as part of a program that sponsored “plant explorers,” enabling government scientists to travel the globe in search of seed plants for distribution throughout our country. The explorers looked for plants, crops and trees to make the United States more agriculturally self-sufficient and environmentally interesting.

Enchanted by the beauty of the flowering cherry trees that grew along rivers and roads in Japan, the botanist imported a variety of them to the United States. To popularize Japanese cherry trees in America, he invited school children to plant them. Eighty-three young students, representing public schools in Washington D.C., helped wrap the roots of the young cherry trees in cloth and tie them with twine. They dug holes and planted the saplings on Arbor Day.

Although the children from Franklin School didn’t have a school yard, they planted their tree in the public park across the street. At the closing ceremony in Franklin Park, the botanist first spoke of his vision that part of Washington D.C. be turned into a “Field of Cherries.” At the time, 7,000 acres in the capital of the United States was still an urban wetlands, attracting mosquitoes, collecting sewage, and spreading diseases such as malaria and typhoid. The situation embarrassed Congress to such an extent that they created a Commission to reclaim the marshland in hopes of making the U.S. capital city more attractive to visitors from all over the country and world.

Mrs. Helen Taft, then the First Lady of the United States and the wife of President William Howard Taft, worked on this effort right alongside the Commission and park planners. She was inspired by the children’s tree planting and in no time at all she shared the dream of a large-scale cherry grove in the U.S. capital city. To this end, she began talking with Japanese diplomats and business leaders in New York and Washington D.C. about importing Japanese cherry trees to plant in the city’s soon-to-be-constructed Potomac Park.

In Japan, Tokyo’s Mayor Yukio Ozaki was delighted by the American First Lady’s interest in cherry trees. In those early decades of the twentieth century, travel and commerce between Japan and the United States seemed to be increasing by the day. Without fail, Americans who visited Japan were deeply impressed by the country’s love of nature. Why not make a gift of trees from Tokyo, the capital of Japan, to the capital of the United States as a means of strengthening ties across the ocean? What better way to ensure that the friendship between the two countries develop deep roots and beautiful blossoms than by planting thousands of Japanese cherry trees in the tidal basin of the Potomac River?

In Japan, 2,000 trees were selected and sent by steam ship across the Pacific Ocean to Seattle. Upon arrival, the trees were hastily inspected and then shipped by train from the west coast to the east coast and on to Washington D.C. Trucks met them at the train station and quickly transported them to the Department of Agriculture storehouse for inspection. Government scientists looked the trees up and down. They were dismayed at their age (old!) and size (large!) and at the condition of their roots (severely pruned!). Worse yet, the trunks appeared to be infested with insect pests. The scientists recommended that the trees be burned immediately.

What a sad day! For weeks, the press had covered the story of the Japanese cherry trees and their expected arrival. Delicacy and diplomatic sensitivity were essential to avoid further public embarrassment. The U.S. Secretary of State immediately wrote the Japanese ambassador in Washington to explain that agriculture in the states had suffered extensive damage to trees and crops as a result of insects introduced from abroad. New and rigorous inspec-
tion procedures had been developed to prevent such situations from ever happening again. He expressed deep regret that the U.S. government had no other choice in this circumstance than to burn the cherry trees.

When the Mayor of Tokyo, in the U.S. capital city for the anticipated tree planting ceremony, learned that the trees were to be burned, he lost no time in getting to work on Plan B. Upon his return to Japan, Mr. Ozaki hastily arranged for a new shipment of trees to be prepared. This time, the Japanese government made sure that younger saplings were selected, chosen carefully from along the banks of the Arakawa River that flows through Tokyo. Many precautions were taken to ensure that the trees would arrive in the U.S., pest-free and healthy. By the end of January 1912, a new shipment of thousands of cherry trees was bound for Washington D.C.

As one of the largest and most beautiful Japanese cherry groves in the United States, the trees quickly became a part of the landscape in Washington D.C. and from the very start, their presence drew many visitors to the city early each spring. In fact, citizens became so fond of the cherry trees, that when the construction of the Jefferson Memorial in the Tidal Basin required the removal of several trees, people actually chained themselves to tree trunks and staged “sit-ins” in the holes were cherry trees had been uprooted. To pacify the public, officials had to alter their landscaping plans in order to re-plant the cherry trees in question and expand the original grove.

The friendship between Japan and the United States was sorely tested during World War II, when the two countries fought on opposite sides in a bitter war. Some Americans were so angered by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii that they vandalized Japanese cherry trees in Potomac Park. But the cherry trees, with their fleeting blossoms and enduring roots, have reminded us to focus on the long run in resolving short-term disagreements. In the war, American bombs dropped on Tokyo devastated the Japanese capital and destroyed many of the city's cherry trees. When peace was finally restored, in a gesture of friendship, the United States sent cuttings from the Japanese cherry trees in Potomac Park to restock Japan's tree nurseries.

During the war, Americans of Japanese heritage were interned in camps in the western part of the United States because the government believed they might pose a security risk. Many Japanese Americans lost everything they owned and at war's end had to begin their lives all over again. Despite the hardships they suffered, after the war Japanese Americans participated in U.S. relief efforts to help Japan get back on its feet. Hundreds of packages of powdered milk, diapers, food and clothing were organized by Japanese Americans in San Francisco and sent to Tokyo, to be distributed through the U.S. military channels that coordinated the city's relief and reconstruction.

Eventually the recipients of such gifts in Japan learned of the role Japanese Americans played in sending food and clothing, gifts that saved lives and rebuilt morale during those difficult days. One man in particular, Mr. Ato, the President of the Fujisya Company's Fujimi Kimonos, a century-old, family-owned kimono factory in Tokyo, wanted to acknowledge America's generosity by giving back to Japanese American communities in the United States. To this day, his factory donates cherry blossom kimonos to the sakura matsuri in San Francisco, Hawaii and Washington D.C. to be worn by each festival's appointed cherry blossom queen.

Gift giving in Japan communicates the importance of the relationship between the giver and the recipient of the gift. Since their planting in 1912, Washington's cherry trees have served as a living symbol of the lasting friendship between Japan and the United States.

Can there be a gift that keeps on giving?
APPENDIX 2: LISTEN TO A CHERRY BLOSSOM FOLK TALE

Background for the Teacher

Formally designated as Japan’s national flower, the cherry blossom or sakura with its dramatic, short-lived beauty has long symbolized the obligation of the samurai warrior to die honorably for his lord at a moment’s notice. The cherry tree is an apt metaphor for “the poetry of the Japanese soul,” the cyclical but transitory, rapidly changing, and ever precious nature of life.

In contemporary Japan, cherry blossom viewing picnics (called hanami) and festivals (known as matsuri) occur throughout the spring. A National Cherry Society, Sakura no Kai raises public awareness of the need to take care of cherry tree groves and maintain the traditional celebrations they inspire. Even after the blossoms have faded, people return to cherry groves to witness petals scattered by the wind and rain, demonstrating the country’s profound appreciation for that which is withered, transitory or impermanent (an aesthetic concept referred to as sabi).

Many legends have evolved to explain the cherry tree’s capacity to evoke renewal and transformation. In one version, a maiden causes trees to bloom and appears as a fairy being who awakens cherry trees from their icy slumber with her delicate breath. In other versions it is an old man of noble character who brings a dying tree back into bloom. In this retelling of a traditional tale, an old man and woman are rewarded with prosperity and the blessings of a prince because of their devotion to a small dog.

The Old Ones Who Made Trees Blossom*

For many years, an old man and woman lived together in a village with their trusty little dog, Shiro. Shiro loved to eat rice cakes, which is why each day the two pounded steamed rice into sticky little cakes which Shiro ate with great gusto.

The neighbor next door was far less appreciative of Shiro and threw stones at the little dog every time he left the house. One day while attempting to ready the soil for spring planting, the old man was puzzled when Shiro began barking and frantically digging a large hole. “Shall I help you dig?” asked the old man and, expecting no reply, he set about finding a spade so he could dig right along side his dog. Soon his spade hit something hard and in no time at all he had uncovered a pot full of gold coins. Thanking Shiro, he gathered up the coins and headed home to tell his wife of their great good fortune.

In addition to his habit of harassing Shiro, the next door neighbor could never mind his own business and from his window had observed Shiro locate the buried treasure with great interest. So it was that the next day he knocked on the door and asked the old woman and man if he could borrow Shiro for the day.

Pleased about this sudden interest in Shiro and hoping that it meant their neighbor had experienced a change of heart about the little dog, the two readily agreed and Shiro trotted off next door to spend the day. The neighbor took Shiro into his field. “Find me gold” he threatened the dog, “or I’ll beat you with my spade.” As soon as Shiro began digging in a certain spot, the miserly neighbor tied him up, took his spade and continued to dig alone. When his spade hit something in the ground, he made haste to dig it up, but all it turned out to be was some badly decaying garbage. Furious, he hit Shiro over the head and with one deadly blow, killed him.

Grieving with sorrow, the old man and woman buried Shiro’s body in their field and planted a pine tree on top of his grave. Each day when they visited his grave, they watered the pine tree and in just a few years, were pleased by the full grown tree. “Let’s make a mortar from the trunk of this tree”, suggested the old woman. “We can use it to pound rice cakes in honor of Shiro.” So the old man chopped down the pine tree and from its trunk built a mortar. The old woman filled the mortar full of steam rice and as she began pounding to make the cakes, the grains of rice turned into gold coins. The two were deeply grateful at their good fortune.

Having seen it all by peering through a window, the next door neighbor was red with envy and greed. He soon found an excuse to borrow the mortar from his two kind neighbors. “Of course you can use it for the day,” the old woman responded to his request with generosity. As he piled steamed rice into the mortar, the greedy neighbor was already counting his money. He thought, “When I pound this rice, it will turn into more gold than I can imagine.” But as soon as he touched the steamed rice, he began to pound the rice into terrible smelling garbage. Furious, he grabbed his ax, chopped the mortar into tiny pieces and threw it in his stove.

When the old man went to retrieve his mortar, he was saddened to find that it had disappeared, leaving only ashes and smoke. Sorrowfully he requested the ashes and walked back home. In the middle of winter, the trees stood silent and bare in his garden. Quietly, he cast the ashes about the garden, thinking all the while of Shiro. As he did, cherry trees began to bloom. People came from near and wide to see the sight and a nearby prince heard the story of a tree that bloomed in winter and marveled at the thought.

Now in this prince’s garden there was a cherry tree which bloomed without fail in early spring, bringing great joy to his family and friends. On this particular year, when the tree failed to show its petals, he sent for the old man and woman in the hope that they might revive it. Carrying a bowl of Shiro’s ashes, the two journeyed to the prince’s
garden and the old man climbed the tree and scattered them high up in the branches. Immediately the cherry tree bloomed with the most delicate and beautiful flowers imaginable.

Ecstatic to have his favorite tree alive again, the prince showed his appreciation by giving gifts to the old man and woman, including a great deal of gold. He formally named them “The Old Ones Who Make Trees Blossom” and for years to come all those who met them, felt renewed by their presence.


Ideas for Discussion

1. **Looking at Character Traits and Moral Principles.** What qualities did you admire about the character of the old man and woman that made them such fine people? (They were kind and grateful to their dog. They were humble and hardworking. They were generous and willing to share with their neighbor). What were the qualities of the neighbor that got him nowhere? (He was a peeping Tom, unable to mind his own business and envious of his neighbor’s wealth. He flew into rages, taunted and eventually killed Shiro).

2. **Reverence for the Ancestors.** Introduce **obon** as the Japanese name for a summer festival generally held in mid-July (mid-August in some areas) during which people express their gratitude to their ancestors. There is a Buddhist belief that during **obon**, the spirits of the dead come back to earth. Customs during **obon** help people welcome the spirits, entertain them and bid them farewell. Cleaning the grave sites and presenting offerings on a spirit altar are common practices.

How did the old man and woman show their appreciation of Shiro after he died? (They buried him in a field and planted a pine tree on his grave. They made a mortar from the trunk of the pine tree to make rice cakes in his memory. The old man scattered his ashes in the garden and shared his ashes with the prince).

How do we show respect and acknowledgment for our ancestors and other people (or pets) who have died?
APPENDIX 3:
SING A JAPANESE FOLK SONG—SAKURA

Eng. by K.F.R.

Sa-ku-ra! sa-ku-ra! Ya-yo-i no
Cherry trees, cherry trees, Bloom so bright in
so-ra wa, Mi-wa-ta-su ka-ghi-ri;
April breeze Like a mist or floating cloud;
Ka-su-mi ka? ku-mo ka? Ni-o-
Fragrance fills the air around, Shadows
izo izu-ru; izo ya!
flit along the ground. Come, oh, come!
izo ya! Mi-ni yu-ka-n.
come, oh, come! Come, see cherry trees!

© 1956, Cooperative Recreation Service, Inc., Delaware, Ohio

Sa-ku-ra, Sa-ku-ra,
Ya-yo-i-no so-ra wa
Mi-wa-ta-su ka-ghi-ri
Ka-su-mi ka? Ku-mo ka?
Ni-o-izo izu-ru;
I-za ya! I-za ya!
Mi-ni yu-ka-n.
APPENDIX 4:
CREATE A CHERRY BLOSSOM CHAIN

The following activity is a *sakura* paper folding activity that has been adapted for use in creating a cherry blossom chain or ring that can be held by students in the festival’s closing ceremony as they circle around singing *Sakura*.

Prior to the cherry blossom festival have each student fold several flowers using the directions below. A small group of students can then “string” the blossoms to create a long chain by alternating 3” pieces of drinking straws with the cherry blossoms and stringing them, using a plastic needle or paper punch. Store or display the chain in the classroom but don’t forget to bring it to the festival.

Materials Needed:
- 1 to 3 pieces of 4” tissue or construction paper per child;
- drinking straws cut into 3” pieces, two for each blossom;
- string, and large needle or paper punch.

1. Fold a 4” square piece of tissue paper into a triangle.
2. Follow the diagram at right.
3. Cut on the dotted lines. Open the 5 petal flower
4. Cut a long piece of string, allowing approximately 18 inches per child in the class (for a class of 30 children make the string 45 feet long). Punch holes in the flowers and string them. Set the cherry blossom chain aside for use in the *sakura matsuri* ceremony.
APPENDIX 5:
MAKE A CHERRY BLOSSOM CREST

Create a Cherry Blossom Crest.
This stamp can be used on cloth to decorate banners, picnic blankets or costumes or on paper to make invitations to your cherry blossom festival.

1. Cut a two inch square from a Styrofoam cup
2. Use a pencil to draw a design of a cherry blossom on the Styrofoam square.
   Let the point imprint the design.
3. Create a stamp pad by putting a used sponge in a dish. Pour pink water soluble water color tempera paint or food coloring over the sponge. Press the Styrofoam square so that the side you imprinted is against the sponge. Press your “stamp” carefully on the object you wish to stamp.

APPENDIX 6: 
EXPLORE CHERRY BLOSSOM BOTANY

During the first part of the cherry blossom festival, small
groups of children can rotate between interdisciplinary
activities. One of the activities can be a botany area.

1. Set up a place where children can gather to take notes,
sketch, use magnifying glasses and, if possible, look at
specimens under a microscope.
2. Have children collect petals and leaves from the
cherry tree that have fallen to the ground.
3. Explain to the students that the flowers are the repro-
ductive part of the plant and that they contain male
and female parts. Use the microscope or magnifying
glass to examine the parts of the cherry blossom,
including the style, carpel and petal.
4. Explain that leaves are generated from the tree’s core.
Through its leaves, a cherry tree receives light and
turns it into food. Examine a cherry tree leaf under a
microscope or magnifying glass. Identify the parts of
the leaf, including its veins, serrated edge, stem and
glands.
5. If there is time, have children sketch close-up draw-
ings of cherry blossoms and leaves.

Cherry Blossom Tea
is enjoyed in Japan
when the cherry
trees bloom
APPENDIX 7:
ENJOY CHERRY BLOSSOM HAiku

The following cherry blossom haiku were translated into English by Robert Hass, a former poet laureate of the United States. Cut the haiku into strips and hand them out to students in the circle at the beginning of the final ceremony. Have students read the haiku aloud.

1. From all these trees
   In the salads, the soup, everywhere
   cherry blossoms fall.
   —Basho

2. The end of spring
   lingers
   in the cherry blossoms
   —Buson

3. What a strange thing!
   To be alive
   Beneath the cherry blossoms
   —Issa

4. The oak tree:
   not interested
   in cherry blossoms.
   —Basho

5. The cherry blossoms fallen—
   and spit out blossoms—
   The Yoshino Mountains
   —Buson

6. Very brief:
   Gleam of blossoms in the treetops
   on a moonlit night.
   —Basho

Citation: The above haiku can be found in The Essential Haiku: Versions of Basho, Buson, Issa, edited with verse translations by Robert Hass. Hopewell, NJ: The Ecco Press, 1994. Haiku 1 (p. 44), Haiku 2 (p. 122), Haiku 3 (p. 156), Haiku 4 (p. 17), Haiku 5 (p. 22), Haiku 6 (p. 48).