Significance of Traditional Japanese New Year's Foods for Japanese Youth

Cecelia Wright

SENIOR HONORS THESIS
Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements of the College Scholars Program
North Central College

May 13, 2019

Approved: [Signature]
Thesis Director Signature

Date: May 13, 2019

Approved: [Signature]
Second Reader Signature

Date: 5/13/2019

Professor Fukumi Matsubara
Professor Kristin Geraty
Significance of Traditional Japanese New Year’s Foods for Japanese Youth

Cecelia Wright

North Central College
Abstract

The New Year’s holiday is culturally significant in Japan. However, recent studies have found that New Year’s food traditions have become simplified and the frequency of participation in holiday activities has decreased in Japan and other East Asian countries. This study examines the connection of Japanese youth to New Year's traditions, especially food traditions. Surveys and semi-structured interviews were conducted with college-aged Japanese youth in Japan and in the U.S. (while they studied abroad). The online survey collected data regarding participation in traditional New Year’s activities. In-person interviews explored personal experiences as well as perceived changes in New Year’s traditions in more depth. Data was summarized on the surveys, and the interviews were transcribed and qualitatively coded to identify recurring themes. The results support previous research, showing that although yearly New Year’s traditions continue, practices have been simplified and participation has decreased.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table of Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results and Discussion</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significance of Traditional Japanese New Year’s Foods for Japanese Youth

In Japan, despite steady influences from China, Korea, and the West, traditional foods and cooking still remain intact (Ishige, 2001). In fact, *washoku*, the traditional food culture of Japan, was added to UNESCO’s intangible heritage list in 2013, notably for New Year celebrations (“Washoku” UNESCO). Included in the umbrella term of *washoku*, the traditional food culture of Japan, is the rice cake, mochi, a meaningful component of the rituals for Japan’s most important annual festival, the New Year (Ishige, 2001). On New Year’s morning mochi is used in a soup called *ozouni*, as well as made into a decoration called *kagamimochi*. Mochi, as well as other New Year’s foods, has important religious and cultural significance with links to the Shinto religion of Japan (Ishige, 2001).

New Year’s celebrations have common threads across Asia, including Japan, China, Malaysia, and South Korea. This can be seen most easily in each country's New Year’s traditions and foods, in rice cake dishes, offerings at family altars, and so on. In addition to sharing common traditions, there are also commonalities in how the celebration of the New Year is changing. In Japan there is concern that involvement of youth in New Year’s traditions is decreasing; trends of youth disengagement and the simplification of New Year’s traditions are visible in other Asian countries as well.

This project focuses on the Japanese New Year, and not other countries’ New Year traditions, because while the New Year is celebrated across Asia, with similar practices and roots from China, Japan is still quite unique in its practices. As such, this study focuses primarily on Japanese New Year’s food traditions, also taking into account non-food-related New Year’s activities. The Japanese New Year, because it is widely considered to be the most important
holiday of the year for Japanese people, is a good indicator of youth participation in holiday
traditions in general.

There currently exists a gap in research concerning Japanese New Year trends, especially
recent research that focuses on a younger demographic. Because Japan has a unique food culture
known for its sense of tradition, it is a topic worth exploring. As with other traditional practices
that are dependent on younger generations to propagate, the celebratory practices surrounding
the New Year in Japan rely on youth participation. In order to begin to understand current trends
among Japanese youth, this study will address the gap in the research and discuss its context to
other Asian countries celebrating the New Year.

Research Question

The purpose of this study is to investigate how connected Japanese youth are to their
New Year’s traditions, especially food traditions, and to explore attitudes towards those
traditions. The articles most closely related to this research topic in regards to Japan are older, so
this study aims to see if the study’s results will match the results and predictions of these older
articles as well as the more current studies done in other Asian countries. By understanding how
connected Japanese youth are to their New Year’s food traditions, one can gain insight into how
connected Japanese youth are to their traditions in general, especially their food traditions.

A Traditional Japanese New Year

A Japanese family celebrates the New Year together, eating a soup with rice cake called ozouni
on New Year’s morning as well as premade boxed symbolic New Year’s dishes called osechi for
the first few days. Families also participate in hatsumoude, one’s first Shinto Shrine or Buddhist
temple visit of the year. They decorate with items such as *kagamimochi*, a New Year’s decoration consisting of stacked rice cakes and a bitter orange.

**Literature Review**

Rice-based foods, altar offerings, and similar myths reveal common traditions during the New Year throughout Asia. Furthermore, common trends concerning the New Year can be seen throughout Asia, namely modernization, simplification, and a lack of youth engagement in New Year’s traditions.

The New Year in China, also known as Spring Festival or Lunar New Year, is described as the most important festival in China (Yeung, 2010). The popular New Year food, *nian gao*, a rice cake, is seen as a symbol of “a most auspicious start and for lasting health which is an age-old custom among the Chinese” (Yeung, 2010). The Chinese New Year is strongly practiced in countries with Chinese immigrants and people of Chinese descent, for example in Malaysia. In regards to the Chinese New Year, practices are overall the same across mainland China and in other countries celebrating the Chinese New Year. There is a lot of symbolism present in Chinese New Year’s foods in general, for example in the Chinese New Year cake, *nian gao*, a dish made from steamed glutinous rice flour, which also symbolizes unity among family and friends (Muhammad, 2018). This traditional food is eaten in mainland China as well as in Malaysia. One tradition is to offer rice cakes at family altars to a Kitchen God just before the New Year begins so that the Kitchen God gives a favorable account of the household to the Jade Emperor (Choo, 2011).
During the Korean New Year, or Seolnal, tteok-kuk, a thinly sliced rice cake in broth is eaten to bring good luck. Seonal is a time to pay one’s respects to their ancestors. One does this through placing food offerings such as rice and red bean porridge on a table along with an ancestral tablet (Koehler, 2010). There are also beliefs in a Kitchen God called Jowan who informs the heavens about the family and returns on New Year’s Day. Family members place rice gluten on the mouth of the fireplace to seal Jowan’s lips from saying anything bad about the family.

New Year’s celebrations throughout Asia are seeing changes. This includes reliance on older generations to participate in food traditions, increased eating out during the New Years, and modern cooking equipment leading to less time needed to prepare traditional foods and a decrease in familial bonding through food traditions. Such examples show a decrease in traditional practices.

According to a survey administered to female college students in Japan about the preparation and consumption of New Year’s dishes, in more than fifty percent of the households, the food preparation was handled by the wife alone, and for women under thirty-five the study found a tendency to rely on their parent's generation for help preparing traditional New Year’s foods (Manabe and Hashimoto, 1999). This shows reliance on older generations to participate in the New Year’s food culture, reflecting how younger generations are increasingly reliant on older generations in order to participate in traditions.

Traditionally New Year’s food is prepared and eaten in the home, but Japanese youth are increasingly opting to eat out instead. Survey of Eating-Out During the New Year Period from 1986 to 2005 by Nagura, Ogoshi, and Moteki investigated how much people eat out during the
New Year in Japan over a twenty-year span. This study focused on college and university students. Eating out during the New Year increased over the 20 years, this was partially due to the increase in eating out in general, but also because of the following reasons: eating out is becoming an increasingly popular way to take part in New Year’s food traditions, and also, as this was a college/university age group studies, respondents also cited that they ate out because of their part-time job.

Across Asia, there is a trend of modernization for New Year Celebrations. In Malaysia, modern equipment and technology are changing the preparation and consumption of festival foods (Muhammad et al, 2018). The results pertain to the major festival foods of Malay, Chinese, and Indian people in Malaysia, such as the Hindu festival of Deepavali, the Malay festivals Hari Raya Aidilfitri and Hari Raya Aidiladha, and the Chinese New Year. These effects were measured for Malays, Chinese, and Indians in their prospective festivals. Some of the negative aspects found were a decrease in social bonding and interaction in festival food culture. This is due to modern tools and equipment making festival food preparations require less time and fewer people, so what once provided a social bonding experience, particularly with families, now does not.

The practice of eating New Year’s food is still strong in Japan. A 1999 study found that ninety percent of respondents ate traditional New Year’s dishes. Seventy percent of respondents, however, bought at least some of the dishes, showing a trend of simplification (Manabe and Hashimoto, 1999). The main foods eaten were ozouni and osechi-ryouri. Overall the study concluded that there was a decrease in the variety of New Year's foods eaten and that these food traditions were becoming simplified. Even though the study predicted that families celebrating
New Year's with traditional New Year's food would still continue, the tradition will gradually lose its importance as it becomes simplified (Manabe and Hashimoto).

Past studies have shown that the length of New Year’s celebrations has decreased in Japan. Traditionally, New Year's food is eaten from the first to the third of January. However, a study exploring the New Year's eating habits of female college students over a twenty-year span from 1978 to 1998 found that the New Year's food eating frequency decreased, especially after the first day of the New Year (Niizawa and Nakamura, 2001). People are increasingly only eating osechi on the first day of the New Year. Over the twenty-year span the number of subjects eating osechi decreased, although most ate osechi at least one of the three days.

Participation in New Year’s food traditions in Asia in general has decreased, specifically among the youth demographic. In a study focusing on youth of different ethnicities in Malaysia, including residents of Chinese, Malay, and Indian backgrounds, seventy-seven percent of the Chinese participants, and a majority of the other ethnicities represented in the study, “explicitly expressed that they are less able to prepare their own festival foods” (R. Muhammad, 2015). There are responses such as “Mothers always cook and prepare the nian gao and yee shang [a salad-like dish made from raw fish and vegetables] for Chinese New Year, [so I] don’t bother to learn”. Muhammad et.al. attributes the decline in traditional New Year’s food knowledge among youth in part to modernization, commercialization, and a disinterest in traditions.

There are many reasons why youth participation has decreased, from the effects of modernization to shifting values. A study that compares attitudes towards the Chinese New Year between young and middle-aged people in Shanghai found both similarities and differences in their attitudes. (Yang, 2008). Both groups expressed the importance of celebrating the New Year
and having family reunions, but the older group placed more importance on family gatherings than the younger group did. In addition, they younger group used the Spring Festival as an opportunity to visit friends and peers more than the older group did. The reasons for these generational differences are thought to be because of social development and modernization, generation gaps, and differing social responsibilities.

**Methodology**

To investigate the importance of traditional New Year's food for Japanese youth, surveys and one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted. The survey questions define the situation of the participant, the situation being a quantitative understanding of the participant’s background and how actively they participate in various New Year's traditions, while the interview aims to understand the participant’s “experiences and attitudes” (Bricki and Green, 2007). In this study quantitative surveys are first conducted, followed by qualitative interviews. Both the survey and interview questions were first written in English, then translated into Japanese with the help of a native Japanese speaker to ensure the language was natural and reflected the English meaning as closely as possible.

This study focuses on the college-aged population in part because of the existing research on youth in other countries and because they represent the youth population and are a predictor of future trends in Japan. The purpose of the survey is to better understand the holistic New Year's practices of young-adults from a quantitative point of view.

**Survey Methods**
The survey was conducted in March of 2018. Survey participants were found through a university in the Kansai region of Japan. Access to the survey, which was anonymous, was given to University students via teachers on a purely volunteer basis. The International Center at that school solicited teachers and gave information about the survey to said teachers. The survey was administered in Japanese electronically through the survey site, SurveyMonkey, accessed by web-link or QR code.

The survey began with a consent and debriefing form with the option for the participant to opt out at any time (see Appendix A). The first few questions ascertained demographic information such as the person’s age and sex. This was followed by questions such as if respondents ate traditional New Year’s dishes during the last New Year’s celebration, what kind of food they ate, and questions gauging respondent’s frequency of participation in New Year’s activities (see Appendix C). The questions were quantitative in nature. For example, the survey used a Likert scale to gauge the importance of participation in New Year's traditions, asking “How important is eating New Year’s food like osechi ryouri for you?” with a Likert scale from one to five, answers ranging from “not at all” (number 1), “neither important nor unimportant” (number 3), and “extremely important” (number 5) (see Appendix C). Questions that do not focus on New Year's food, but rather on other typical New Year's traditions were also included. This allows for a more holistic view of the respondent's New Year's celebration practices from which to go into more detail about New Year's food specifically.

After conducting the survey, tallies measuring the frequency of common responses were taken. This allowed for the percentages of responses for questions such as family structure and importance placed on New Year’s food to be calculated.
Interview Methods

In addition to the survey, one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted to address the research question: how connected Japanese youth are to their New Year’s traditions, especially food traditions, and what attitudes they have towards those traditions. Semi-structured interviews utilizing open-ended questions focus on an explanation of situations and allow for flexibility in covering topics (Remer & Van Ryzin, 2011). As such, semi-structured interviews were used to study the significance of traditional Japanese New Year’s food for Japanese youth. The interview participants were selected separately from how the survey participants were selected, as such there is no purposeful overlap between participants in the survey and participants in the interview. The interview participants were selected in such a way as to include a diverse balance of genders, ages, and home-regions. Participants were primarily but not exclusively Japanese students who had study abroad experience in America. As the interview was conducted in Japanese, interviewing participants with experience studying abroad in America ensured that any language issues that occurred could be avoided with the ability to use English if necessary. This resulted in fewer misunderstandings and more in-depth explanations. Participants were interviewed in various locations in Japan and at a small college in Midwestern America.

The interview had similar questions to the survey; part of what differentiated them was the survey's quantitative nature and the interview's qualitative nature. For the interview, like the survey, questions that cover typical New Year's traditions as well as the main questions focusing on New Year's food were included. The interview asks the open-ended question “How important is eating New Year's food during the New Year to you?” with follow-up questions such as “why
do you feel it is important/unimportant etc.?” (see Appendix D). In other words, the qualitative interview explores with more depth the “why” aspect of Japanese youth and New Year's food traditions.

Interviews were conducted in Japan from April until August of 2018. Interviews in America were conducted in September of 2018. Interviews were conducted in public spaces such as cafes or school lounges in order to create a casual atmosphere. The interview participants were given a consent and debriefing form to read and sign prior to the interview, and interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants (see Appendix B). Basic demographic information such as sex, age, religion, and home region was collected before the main questions were asked.

The interview recordings were transcribed while removing identifying information and assigning numbers to the interview participants. Then a qualitative coding method (Bricki & Green, 2007) was used to organize the data into themes. After the interviews were transcribed, the transcripts were read through to identify frequently occurring phrases, practices, or opinions. The identified themes were turned into codes and applied to the interviews. After dividing the information by each code, or theme, patterns within each code as well as how the different themes connect were identified.

For example, participants often mentioned how instead of making New Year’s food, the traditional dishes were bought or supplemented with Western style delivery foods. This pattern of response was given the code “simplification”, as the time-consuming task of hand-making traditional foods was simplified through purchasing foods. This was how other themes such as “low participation” and “modernization” were selected. Once the code was created, words
associated with said code were assigned to the code. In the instance of “simplification”, words such as “store” or variants of the verb “buy” were selected. From there patterns within the coded items are identified, for example buying traditional New Year’s foods or buying Western foods. This was done in the coding program Dedoose.

Results and Discussion

The results discussed below focus on significant results, since in the survey and interview there were many questions and a large amount of data. The survey results provide an image of the situation of Japanese youth. It has a larger sample size than the interview, and asks questions that allow for quantitative measurement of items such as importance placed on eating New Year’s food and the frequency of participation in New Year’s activities.

Survey Responses

Twenty-eight college students participated in the survey. Question numbers 1 through 6 measured demographic information. There were 18 female and 9 male participants. Ages range from 18 to 22, with the average age being 19. Altogether participants are from 10 different prefectures (Figure 1), with half of the respondents being from Kyoto prefecture, and 17 different hometowns. The majority of 28 survey participants are either Buddhist (n=13) or Atheist (n=11). Seventy-nine percent of the participants come from two parent homes (see Appendix C). Seven percent of the participants were from single mother homes, 7% from a two-parent home with at least one grandparent, and 7% from a single mother home with at least one grandparent.
Figure 1. Hometown Prefectures for Survey Participants

One of the questions gauged how much participants participated in several traditions, including hatsumoude, decorating with kagamimochi, listening to the joya no kane ceremony, and eating New Year’s food. Hatsumoude involves visiting a Buddhist temple and/or a Shinto shrine for the first time during the New Year. Kagamimochi is a traditional decoration made up of two rice cakes stacked together with a small orange on top. Joya no kane is a ceremony where Japanese temples where a bell is struck 108 times on the New Year. For each question, there were 5 options to choose from: never participate, participated only as a child, sometimes participate, participate almost every year, and participate every year. Table 1 shows the number of responses and percentages for each question. The results show that the majority of participants participate in hatsumoude and eat New Year’s foods, with a little over half of the participants
decorating with kagamimochi at least almost every year. Listening to the Joya no kane ceremony had the least participation out of the activities listed, with only 29% participating every year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never participated</th>
<th>Participated only as a child</th>
<th>Participate sometimes</th>
<th>Participate almost every year</th>
<th>Participate every year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hatsumoude (n=27)</td>
<td>2 [7%]</td>
<td>1 [4%]</td>
<td>3 [11%]</td>
<td>10 [37%]</td>
<td>11 [41%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kagamimochi (n=27)</td>
<td>6 [22%]</td>
<td>2 [7%]</td>
<td>4 [15%]</td>
<td>4 [15%]</td>
<td>11 [41%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joya no kane (n=14)</td>
<td>5 [36%]</td>
<td>2 [14%]</td>
<td>0 [0%]</td>
<td>3 [21%]</td>
<td>4 [29%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Year’s Food (n=15)</td>
<td>0 [0%]</td>
<td>0 [0%]</td>
<td>0 [0%]</td>
<td>3 [20%]</td>
<td>12 [80%]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. New Year’s Activities Participation

The tradition with the highest participation was eating New Year’s foods, with 80% eating New Year’s food every year. Unlike the other activities, where at least a few respondents marked that they never participate or sometimes participate, the fact that participants only selected that they participate almost every year or every year shows that this is a major part of celebrating the New Year. Forty-one percent of participants do hatsumoude every year and 41% of participants decorate with kagamimochi every year, marking them as practices that, while not having as high a participation percentage as eating New Year’s foods within this group, still are important New Year’s practices. From these participation rates, one can conclude that by measuring participation in these categories, one can gain a general understanding of one’s New Year participation.

Regarding hatsumoude participation, while only 15 of the respondents identified as Buddhist or Shinto (Figure 2), the majority of the respondents still celebrated with the practice of
hatsumoude sometimes (n=3), almost every year (n=10), or every year (n=11). This shows that one does not have to adhere to a categorizable religion in order to go to temples and shrines.

In a question asking participants to select the foods they ate during the 2018 New Year, respondents were allowed to select multiple answers with the options of soba, ozouni, and osechi, the most common New Year’s foods. As Figure 3 shows, the most common response is consuming all three of the food options (n=15). Ninety-six percent (n=27/28) of the respondents ate at least one of the food options during the 2018 New Year.

Figure 2. Religious Affiliation of Survey Participants

In a question asking participants to select the foods they ate during the 2018 New Year, respondents were allowed to select multiple answers with the options of soba, ozouni, and osechi, the most common New Year’s foods. As Figure 3 shows, the most common response is consuming all three of the food options (n=15). Ninety-six percent (n=27/28) of the respondents ate at least one of the food options during the 2018 New Year.
This question ties back to the 80% yearly participation rate in New Year’s food. This, combined with 96% of the respondents eating at least one of the three food options in the 2018 New Year, again reiterates how big a tradition food is for the Japanese New Year. It also shows that these three foods, soba, osechi, and ozouni are foods to focus on when researching New Year’s food traditions.

Next participants were asked who was in charge of preparing and/or purchasing New Year’s food items. In terms of the preparation of the food, the majority of the persons in charge is the mother of the household. The person or persons in charge were always family members, not, for example, a friend of the respondent. This shows that celebrating the New Year with traditional food is more of a family event rather than something done with friends. Figure 4 shows the person or persons in charge of New Year’s food in each household by percentage.
From Figure 4 one can see that the main person or persons in charge of the food is someone older, like a parent or a grandparent, or the participant working with an older family member to purchase or prepare food. From this one can infer that the tradition of eating New Year’s food is reliant on older generations, not the youth.

Lastly, participants were asked to rate how important *osechi* (an assortment of traditional New Year’s foods) is to them on scale from one to five (1=extremely unimportant, 3= neither important nor unimportant, 5= extremely important). Twenty-five out of 28 participants selected either “important” or “extremely important” for their answer (Table 2). Three participants responded that eating New Year’s food was neither important nor unimportant, and none chose below three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Important is <em>Osechi</em> to You?</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Unimportant</td>
<td>0 [0%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimportant</td>
<td>0 [0%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Important Nor Unimportant</td>
<td>3 [11%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>11 [39%]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4. Person(s) in Charge of New Year’s Food*
Table 2. How Important is Osechi to You?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Important</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data again shows the importance food plays in Japanese New Year’s traditions. New Year’s food consumption has a high participation rate in this group, and 71% of respondents (n=20/28) ate osechi during the 2018 New Year. This shows that for Japanese youth, New Year’s food, especially osechi, is an important component of the Japanese New Year.

Interview Responses

Ten participants of Japanese ethnicity and nationality, primarily university students, participated in the interview. Ages ranged from 18 to 22 years-old with an average age of 21. There were 4 male and 6 female participants, labeled M1 through M4 and F1 through F6 accordingly. Participants were from 7 different prefectures and 9 different cities (Figure 5). For more detailed demographic information, see Appendix F.
When respondents were asked if they thought Japan’s New Year’s traditions were changing, 6 of the 10 respondents talked about how *osechi* is being hand-made less and less, with families either purchasing it or not eating it at all. Traditional New Year’s celebrations include making New Year’s foods and *kagamimochi* decorations, as well as other decorations, by hand. Participant M2 said people who purchase their New Year’s foods are just going through the motions, implying that people who make their food and decorations by hand have a more thoughtful approach to celebrating the New Year. Three participants mentioned how people send New Year’s cards less and less, instead sending texts or using social media to wish people a happy New Year, often in a shortened, less formal way. Participants also mentioned how younger people are going shopping during the New Year’s, celebrating with friends instead of family, and celebrating with a party-like atmosphere. For response summaries see Appendix F.
When looking for these above-mentioned changes throughout each interview, nine out of the ten respondents mentioned purchasing New Year’s food and decorations as a trend in general or in reference to their own families’ traditions, contrasting with the past practice of making foods and decorations. Some respondents talked about how they bought kagamimochi or ate ozouni at a shop instead of making it at home.

These results show the simplification of New Year’s traditions, especially through purchasing foods and decorations. Family members such as grandparents and mothers are usually in charge of handling the food during the New Year’s celebrations, which is represented in the survey data, so the trend of purchasing foods and decorations shows that the simplification of New Year’s traditions is a trend that affects not just the younger generations, but the older ones as well.

Six of the participants identified as Atheist (Table 3). Three identified as Buddhist and 1 identified as both Buddhist and Shinto. Eight out of the 10 participants regularly do hatsumoude during the New Year. The 2 participants who did not do hatsumoude identified as Atheist. That being said, one of the Atheist participants, Participant F5, who does not generally participate in hatsumoude, said they would if friends invited them. Two-thirds of the Atheist participants still participate in hatsumoude despite the fact that it involves visiting a Buddhist temple and/or a Shinto shrine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Regularly Participate in Hatsumoude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>3 [30%]</td>
<td>Yes (3) [30%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist and Shinto</td>
<td>1 [10%]</td>
<td>Yes (1) [10%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>6 [60%]</td>
<td>Yes (4) [40%] No (2) [20%]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Religion Affiliation of Interview Participants

This trend of Atheists participating in hatsumoude is also seen in the survey results, and can be seen as reflecting how hatsumoude, while on its surface is intrinsically religious and connected to Shinto and Buddhist faiths, is not necessarily viewed as something only done by people who clearly identify as Shinto or Buddhist. Participating in hatsumoude with friends was a common response, though some participants also participated with family. Participating with friends, for example in the case of participant F5, who is Atheist and does not do hatsumoude but would if friends invited him, suggests a social element to this New Year’s tradition. In sum, hatsumoude can be seen as a tradition valued for its social aspect, and not necessarily for its spiritual aspect.

All respondents described in detail various New Year’s traditions they participate in on an average New Year. During the 2018 New Year, however, 5 out of the 10 respondents did not celebrate New Year’s, or did not celebrate New Year’s to the extent that they normally do. Each respondent had different reasons for not participating, such as being busy studying for college entrance exams, working through the New Year holiday and being too far from home to visit, participating only partially due to visiting family in New York, and opting to celebrate with friends instead of family. When respondents celebrated with friends, respondents primarily did hatsumoude, and no other traditions. A common thread in some of these responses is being away from home and/or not being with family during the New Year’s holiday. The 5 respondents who did participate to the extent that they normally do all celebrated with family and/or relatives and ate traditional foods, which were often handmade.
The commonality among respondents who did not celebrate the New Year in 2018 appears to be that they were not with their family, suggesting that respondents’ participation is tied to being around other family members and that respondents may not participate in New Year’s traditions in the absence of family. After all, many of the New Year’s traditions described throughout this paper—making and eating osechi, decorating with kagamimochi, etc.—are commonly associated with being done with family.

There are numerous examples of respondents’ New Year’s celebrations embracing modern trends. Participant F2 mentioned their mother, grandmother, and other female relatives buying foods such as pizza and fried food through delivery as well as preparing traditional foods. Participant M3, in addition to visiting a Shinto shrine with friends for hatsumoude, went to Shibuya, a famous commercial and business ward in Tokyo to ring in the New Year with what the respondent described as a party-like atmosphere similar to what New York City has on New Year’s Eve. Participant F6 still ate traditional foods and such, but also went to Universal Studios Japan with some of their family. Replacing New Year’s cards with text messages was also mentioned multiple times.

These examples show how traditional New Year’s practices have changed, being adapted to a modernizing world. An important note is that it does not appear that modern trends are replacing the traditional New Year, but are rather combining with traditions. For example, people may no longer eat solely osechi and other strictly New Year’s foods during the New Year, but for the most part people are still eating traditional foods. The food may be purchased instead of hand-made or it may be eaten with fried chicken and pizza, but it is still a staple part of the New Year.
Conclusion

This study investigates how connected Japanese youth are to their New Year’s traditions and explores their attitudes towards those traditions. Three main patterns emerged in this study: simplification, modernization, and low participation. In regards to simplification, traditions like hand-making food and decorations were simplified, with people purchasing these items instead. For modernization, many modern trends were present in New Year’s celebrations, combining with traditional New Year activities. These trends include sending happy New Year texts instead of cards, eating delivery foods such as pizza, and celebrating with friends in a party atmosphere. Finally, participation among interview respondents was low, and this study suggests that respondents’ participation is tied to being around other family members and that respondents may not participate in New Year’s traditions in the absence of family.

Past research about the Japanese New Year shows results similar to this study, with a high rate of purchasing New Year’s foods and a prediction that New Year’s food consumption would continue but become more simplified (Manabe and Hashimoto, 1999). In addition, reliance on older generations in order to participate in food traditions was seen in past research (Manabe and Hashimoto, 1999) and can also be seen in this study’s survey measurements of who was in charge of New Year’s foods, where in the majority of the respondents’ families the mother alone was in charge. Niizawa and Nakamura found that *osechi* consumption was decreased (2001), and while this study shows that *osechi* is still commonly eaten and valued, low participation rates in New Year’s activities supports these findings. In sum, the conclusions made in past research about the Japanese New Year are found currently in Japanese youth in the context of this study.
This study’s results also match some of the findings concerning New Year’s traditions in other Asian countries. Chinese, Malay, and Indian youth in Malaysia were found to be less knowledgeable about their festival foods, including New Year’s foods, in part because of a reliance on older generations (Muhammad, 2015). Survey results also reflect this through the responsibility of older family members to be in charge of food for the New Year. Yang found that younger people in Shanghai used the Chinese New Year as an opportunity to visit friends and peers more than older people (2008), and celebrating the New Year with friends was also seen in this study’s interview data. These common findings reinforce that, despite Japan’s unique New Year’s culture, its situation is relatable to other Asian countries.

In this study, through the patterns of simplification, modernization, and low participation, one is able to understand how connected Japanese youth are to their New Year’s traditions, and to their traditions in general. Findings in this study suggest that while New Year’s traditions continue among Japanese youth, practices are changing. Findings of low participation suggests that Japanese youth may not have strong ties towards New Year’s traditions. However, the fact that Japanese youth value these traditions is evident among the survey participants in the high importance placed on osechi, the frequent consumption of New Year’s foods, and high participation rates in other New Year’s activities. The high percentage of interview participants that plan on continuing New Year’s traditions in the future, even if they are not participating currently also shows that Japanese youth value their New Year’s traditions. In sum, from this study one can infer that while Japanese youth may not maintain New Year’s traditions in the same way as was done in the past, or participate regularly in all the traditional activities, they still value their traditions and will continue them into the future. Finally, as the New Year is the
most important holiday of the Year in Japan, findings in this study can be applied to Japanese traditions in general.

**Limitations**

There were some limitations to this study. For the survey, sample size was small (n=28) and sex distribution was skewed (females= 18 males=9). As a result, correlational statistics could not be employed as a part of data analysis. In addition, the limited regional diversity possibly affected the results. The majority of survey participants were from western Japan main island, Honshu, with 14 participants alone from Kyoto Prefecture. Interview participants were primarily from northern Japan or the eastern coast of Honshu. Finally, this study almost exclusively used university students as its subjects, which does not cover all of Japanese youth. As such, one cannot make definite conclusions concerning New Year’s participation among Japanese youth based on the results of this research. To address the limitations in this research, future research would include a larger sample size including non-university students, a more even distribution of males and females, and greater diversity in home regions. Doing so would allow for statistical analysis to be conducted and more definite conclusions to be made.

**Implications**

Japan is a country known for its traditional culture. As was stated in the beginning of this study, the traditional food culture of Japan was added to UNESCO’s intangible heritage list in 2013, notably for New Year celebrations (“Washoku” UNESCO). In this study, however, among the youth population one can see a decline in participating in New Year’s traditions. While this may seem to be a worrying trend, within the confines of this study, New Year’s traditions are not
necessarily disappearing, rather changing and becoming more simplified. If future research corroborated the trends seen in this study, one would be able to predict the future of the Japanese New Year and take measures accordingly to preserve key aspects of the traditional Japanese New Year and other traditions.
References


Appendix A

Survey Consent Form

Participation Consent

This survey, for persons ages 18 years old and older, asks you to answer questions concerning New Year's foods. By answering these questions, I believe participants think about and deepen their understanding of Japanese food culture and traditions.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes. Because you are taking this survey online, it is anonymous, there is no way to know who the respondent is. The survey is optional, so those who do not wish to participate do not have to answer.

If you have any questions or comments about this survey or study, please contact the surveyor, Cecelia Wright (clwright@noctrl.edu) of North Central College.

Participants 18 years and older and wish to participate in this survey, please click "to the survey" below. Other please click "Finish".

Thank you for your cooperation.
Appendix B

Interview Consent Form

Consent Form to Participate in Research

This interview, for persons ages 18 years old and older, asks you to answer questions concerning New Year's traditions and foods. By answering these questions, I believe participants think about and deepen their understanding of Japanese food culture and traditions.

The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes.

The interview will include your name, but at the time of data processing the data will be made anonymous with personal identification markers removed. Participation in this interview is voluntary, so if you wish to stop please say so at any time.

If you have any questions or comments about this interview or study, please contact the interviewer, Cecelia Wright (clwright@noctrl.edu) of North Central College.

Participants 18 years and older and wish to participate in this interview, please sign below.

Thank you for your cooperation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>日 月   年</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>日 月   年</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>日 月   年</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Survey Questions (English)

Demographics

1. Age

2. Sex

   a. Male
   b. Female

3. Religion

   a. Buddhism
   b. Shintoism
   c. Christianity
   d. Atheism
   e. Other (please specify)

4. What is your hometown?

   a. Prefecture
   b. City/town

5. Please describe your household (i.e. Mother, Father, older sister, Grandmother, etc)

Survey Questions

6. Please indicate how often you participate in the following New Year's traditions.
SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE NEW YEAR’S FOODS
FOR JAPANESE YOUTH

35

a. Hatsumoude

I. Never
II. When I was a child
III. Sometimes
IV. Almost every year
V. Every year

b. Decorating with kagamimochi

I. Never
II. When I was a child
III. Sometimes
IV. Almost every year
V. Every year

c. Listening to Joyanokane ceremony

I. Never
II. When I was a child
III. Sometimes
IV. Almost every year
V. Every year

d. Eating New Year's food

I. Never
II. When I was a child
III. Sometimes
IV. Almost every year
V. Every year

7. Please select which if any of the New Year's activities you participated in from the previous question this New Year (2017-2018).
   
e. Decorating with *kagamimochi*.
      I. On what day and with who?
   
f. Listening to *Joyanokane* ceremony
      I. Where and with who?
   
g. Doing *hatsumoude*.
      I. On what day and with who?
   
h. Eating New Year's food.
      I. On what day and with who?
   
i. Other (please explain)
      I. On what day and with who?

8. Please select which foods you ate during this New Year's celebration. If you did not, please continue to number ten.

   j. *Toshikoshi soba*
   k. *Ozouni*
   l. *Osechi ryouri*
      I. What kind? (For example, *kamaboko, kinton, kuromame, tadukuri*)

9. Who was in charge of preparation/ purchasing of these New Year's food items?
10. How important is eating New Year’s food like osechi ryouri for you?

Likert scale

1= Not at all  3= neither important nor unimportant  5= extremely important

Survey (Japanese)

サーベイ

デモグラフィックの質問

1. 年齢

2. 性別

   a. 男
   b. 女

3. 宗教

4. あなたの実家はどこにありますか。

   a. 県
   b. 市（または、区、都など）

5. 家族構成を書いてください（例えば、母、父、姉、祖父など）。

Survey Questions

6. 下記のお正月の行事に参加しますか。適当な答を選んでください。
SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE NEW YEAR’S FOODS FOR JAPANESE YOUTH

a. 初詣
   VI. 全くしない
   VII. 子供の時した
   VIII. 時々
   IX. ほとんど毎年
   X. 毎年

b. 鏡餅を飾る
   VI. 全く飾らない
   VII. 子供の時飾った
   VIII. 時々
   IX. ほとんど毎年
   X. 毎年

c. 城屋の鐘を聞く
   II. 全く聞かない
   III. 子供の時聞いた
   IV. 時々
   V. ほとんど毎年
   VI. 毎年

d. 正月料理を食べる
   VII. 全くべない
VIII. 子供の時食べた
IX. 時々
X. ほとんど毎年
XI. 毎年

7. 2017年の年末から2018年の新年に掛けて、下記のことをしましたか。しなかった場合は何も書かないでください。

a. 鏡餅を飾る。何日に誰と（誰が）しましたか。

b. 城屋の鐘を聞く。どこで誰としましたか。

c. 初詣。何日に誰としましたか。

e. 正月料理を食べる。何日に誰としましたか。

f. その他（説明してください）何日に誰としましたか。

8. この年末年始、食べた料理を選んでください。何も食べなかった場合、9番に進んでください。

a. 年越しそば

b. お雑煮

c. おせち料理

i. どんなおせち料理を食べましたか。例えば、かまぼこ、きんとん、黒豆、田作りなど。
9. 今年のお雑煮やおせち料理は、誰が作りましたか。あるいは、誰が買って来ましたか。

10. おせち料理などのお正月料理は大切だと思いますか。

Likert scale

1 = 全然大切ではない。 3 = どちらでもない  5 = 非常に大切
Appendix D

Interview Questions (English)

Demographics

1. Gender
2. What is your age
3. Do you have a religious affiliation?
4. Where is your hometown (Prefecture, town)?
5. Please describe your household (Mother, Father, older sister, etc.)

General New Year's Questions

1. Describe your typical New Year's celebrations.
2. Tell me about some New Year's traditions you have. For example:
   a. *hatsumoude*
   b. Family gatherings
   c. *Kagamimochi*
   d. *Joya no Kane*
   e. *Otoshidama*
   f. *Toshikoshisoba* (New Year’s Eve)
   g. New Year’s cleaning
      i. What days did you do above?
      ii. With whom did you do above activities
iii. What period of time did you celebrate the New Year (approximately from X date to X date)

3. How did you celebrate New Year’s this year?

**New Year’s Food (Osechi Ryouri)**

1. This New Year, did you eat *osechi ryouri*?
   a. Ozoni, toshikoshisoba, mochi
   b. What kind of ozouni soup, mochi shape?
   c. Who made the food? Or, who purchased the food?
   d. Who did you eat above-mentioned food with?
   e. What day did you eat above-mentioned foods on?

2. Why do you eat these foods?

3. How important is eating New Year’s food during the New Year to you?

**Changing Traditions**

1. Is how your older family members spend New Year’s different from how you spend New Year’s?

2. Do you think you celebrate New Year’s differently than other people your age?

3. Has how you celebrate changed from when you were younger?

4. Do you think the way people celebrate New Year’s is changing?
   a. If so, how?

**Noting American Study Abroad Experience [current American exchange student]**

1. Before coming to America this time, had you ever been to a foreign country?
2. Now you are here [in America] as an exchange student, correct?

3. When did you arrive in America?

4. How long do you plan on being in America?

5. What is your purpose in studying abroad in America (to learn English, because you have an interest in American/Western culture)

6. Has your interest in the language/ culture of America/ West affected the way you view your own Japanese culture?

7. (If above answer is positive) Does this affect how you think and feel about whether or not you participate in traditions (especially like eating traditional foods or going to temples and shrines)?

**Noting American Study Abroad Experience [past exchange student]**

1. You studied abroad in America. Can you tell me how long you were there?

2. What would you say was your main purpose of your going to America (English, American/Western culture)?

3. Has your interest in the language/ culture of America/ West affected the way you view your own Japanese culture?

4. (If previous answer is positive) Does this affect how you think and feel about whether or not you participate in traditions (especially like eating traditional foods or going to temples and shrines)?

**Noting Abroad Experience/ Foreign country influences [Non-exchange student]**

1. Do you have any interests in English or Western culture?
2. Have you ever been abroad?

3. (If yes) What was your purpose in going to x country? (travel, study abroad, If English speaking country, to learn English, to experience culture)

4. Has your interest in [language/ culture of America/ West/ Foreign countries] affected the way you view your own Japanese culture?

5. (If previous answer is positive) Does this affect how you think and feel about whether or not you participate in traditions (especially like eating traditional foods or going to temples and shrines)?

Closing Question

1. Do you plan on keeping/ not keeping these traditions in the future?

Interview Questions (Japanese)

インタビューの質問

1. 何歳ですか。

2. 宗教はありますか。

3. 実家はどこですか。県： 市：

4. 家族構成を教えてください。

普通のお正月

1. xさんのお宅のお正月について教えてください。どんなことをしますか。

   a. お正月飾りをしますか。
b. 初詣

c. 除夜の鐘（Joya no Kane）

d. おとしだま

e. かがみもち

f. 年越しそば（おおみそか）

g. おおそうじ

a. 何日にしますか。

b. 誰としますか。

c. いつからいつまでお正月のことをしますか。

2. 今年のお正月（7か月前）何をしましたか？

Or 今年のお正月はどうでしたか。

おせち料理の質問

3. この年末年始、おせち料理を食べましたか。

a. おそうに、年越しそば（おおみそか）、もち、

b. What kind of soup, mochi shape?

c. 誰がつくりましたか。あるいは、誰が買ってきましたか。

d. 誰と食べましたか。

e. 何日に食べましたか。
SIGNIFICANCE OF TRADITIONAL JAPANESE NEW YEAR’S FOODS FOR JAPANESE YOUTH

4. どうしてそのような物を食べるのででしょうか。

3. お節料理を食べる事はxさんにとってどれぐらい大切ですか？

Changing Traditions

1. お正月の祝い方ですが、年配のご家族やしんせきの方々とxさんの祝い方は同じだと思いますか。違うと思いますか。どこが違いますか。

2. 同い年の人とxさんの祝い方は同じだと思いますか。違うと思いますか。どこが違いますか。

3. Personal changes/trends Xさんのお正月のすごし方は子供の頃から変わっていますか。
   a. If yes: どんな風に変わっていますか。

4. Overall trend 日本のお正月の伝統は変化していると思いますか？
   a. If yes: なぜそう思いますか。どのように変化したと思いますか。

Noting American Study Abroad Experience [current American exchange student]

1. 今回この国へ来る前までに、外国に行ったことがありますか。

2. 今留学生として勉強していますね。

3. いつアメリカに来ましたか。

4. どれくらい、アメリカにいる予定ですか？
5. Xさんがアメリカで勉強する目的は何ですか。（英語を習うことや、アメリカや欧米の文化に興味を持っているなど）

6. アメリカの文化・英語への興味は、自分の日本文化に対する考えに影響を与えると思いますか。

7. その興味は日本の伝統に基づいた自分の行動（特におせち料理の習慣とか神社やお寺に参ることとか）に影響を与えると思いますか。

Noting American Study Abroad Experience [past American exchange student]

1. メリカで留学生として勉強しましたね。どのぐらいアメリカにいましたか？

2. Xさんがアメリカで勉強した目的は何ですか。

3. アメリカの文化は自分の日本文化に対する考えに影響を与えると思いますか。

4. その興味は日本の伝統に基づいた自分の行動（特におせち料理の習慣とか神社やお寺に参ることとか）に影響を与えると思いますか。

NON EXCHANGE-STUDENT

1. 英語や欧米文化に興味を持っていますか。

2. 海外に行ったことはありますか。

3. Xさんがxに行く目的は何ですか。（旅行、留学生にして、英語を習うこと、文化に興味を持っているなど）
4. 前に述べた興味、アメリカの文化や英語とかは、自分の日本文化に対する考えに影響を与えると思いますか。

5. その興味は日本の伝統に基づいた自分の日常の行動（特におせち料理の習慣とか神社やお寺に参ることとか）に影響を与えると思いますか。

最後

1. Does New Year's traditions 将来、伝統的なお正月の行事を続けるつもりですか。

Does NOT do New Year's traditions 将来、伝統的なお正月の行事を今のようにしないと思いますか。
Appendix E

Survey Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Sex of Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Count of Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Age of Survey Participants

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>19.07143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>median</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mode</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>range</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Mean, Median, Mode, and Range for Age of Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shinto</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist/Shinto/Christian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Religious Affiliation for Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th><strong>Hatsumoude</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Participate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated Only as a Child</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes Participate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8. Hatsumoude Participation among Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Decorating with Kagamimochi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Participate</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated Only as a Child</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes Participate</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate Almost Every Year</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate Every Year</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 9. Participation in Decorating with Kagamimochi among Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Jyoya no Kane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Participate</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated Only as a Child</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate Sometimes</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate Almost Every Year</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate Every Year</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10. Participation in Listening to the Jyoya no Kane Ceremony among Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Eating New Year's Food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Participate</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated Only as a Child</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate almost every year</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate Every Year</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 11. Participation in Eating New Year’s Food among Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Labels</th>
<th>Count of Prefecture</th>
<th>Count of City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fukui</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Echizen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fukuoka</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunzen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ishikawa</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashima</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kyoto</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 12. Prefecture and City Count for Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefecture</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fushimi</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyoto</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miyazu</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uji</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nara</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nara</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hirakata</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katano</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minoh</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toyonaka</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saga</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tosu</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiga</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(blank)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shizuoka</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shizuoka</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakayama</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakayama</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Figure 6. Family Structure of Survey Participants

- 2 parent home: 79%
- Single parent home (mother): 7%
- 2 parent home + grandparent(s): 7%
- Single parent home (mother) + grandparent(s): 7%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 parent home</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>single parent home (mother)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 parent home + grandparent(S)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent home (mother) + grandparent(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. Family Structure of Survey Participants
## Appendix F

### Interview Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Hometown Prefecture</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>Family Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant F1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>Grandmother, Grandfather, younger sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant M1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>Kanagawa</td>
<td>Yokohama</td>
<td>Mother, Father, younger brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant F2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>Hokkaido</td>
<td>Asahikawa</td>
<td>Mother, Father, twin older brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant F3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Buddhist and Shinto</td>
<td>Fukushima</td>
<td>Iwaki</td>
<td>Mother, Father, younger brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant M2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>Fukushima</td>
<td>Koriyama</td>
<td>Mother, Father, older brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant F4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>Kanagawa</td>
<td>Yokohama</td>
<td>Mother, Father, older sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant F5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>Iwate</td>
<td>Miyako</td>
<td>Mother, Father, older brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant F6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>Shizuoka</td>
<td>Yaizu</td>
<td>Mother, Father, younger sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant M3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Sunigami</td>
<td>Mother, Father, younger sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant M4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>Iwate</td>
<td>Shizukuishi</td>
<td>Grandmother, Grandfather, Mother, Father, older brother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. Demographics for Interview Participants

### Do you think that Japan’s New Year’s traditions are changing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Response (Responses are Summarized)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant F1</td>
<td>My thoughts are that once my grandmother and grandfather are gone, if there aren't things like making osechi it's now very like New Year's. Also things like gatherings, writing Chinese characters for the New Year, families that do that will continue to decrease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant M1</td>
<td>While it's not changing for me, depending on the household it is. Because I have my grandparents it hasn't changed for me, but when they're gone, I wonder what we'll do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>When my grandmother was a child, department stores were closed during the New Year, but now they are open and people go shopping during the New Year. Recently younger people do fukubukuro (a special New Year's clothing sale), but my grandmother says that didn't happen in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>In the past the New Year was always celebrated with family, but recently there are a lot of people who celebrate with friends. There are people who don't eat osechi, and shimenawa (a New Year's decoration) is simplified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>My grandparents celebrate the New Year very traditionally, and traditionally everyone always made their own osechi and ozouni. But my mother and father's generation gradually, they buy these at supermarkets and stores merely to go through the motions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F4</td>
<td>In the past every household made their own osechi, but now people can buy osechi at department stores and such.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F5</td>
<td>People send fewer New Year's cards. In the past osechi was homemade, but now people can buy it instead of making it. People also used to wear kimono a lot, but now there are few people who wear kimono for New Year's.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F6</td>
<td>Traditionally the New Year is celebrated with family, but now younger people are celebrating with friends in a noisy, party-like atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>More people are celebrating in a more western style like he did (going to a New York City-like atmosphere in Shibuya, Tokyo, to ring in the New Year. People are not sending New Year's cards but instead sending texts or using social media to say &quot;Happy New Year&quot;, often in a shortened, less formal way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>People are sending New Year's cards less and less, with more and more people just sending text messages. In the past, osechi was always eaten, but now osechi is bought more often instead of home-made or is not eaten at all. Osechi has become more minor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Summarized Responses of Interview Participants Regarding the Question “Do you think that Japan’s New Year’s traditions are changing?”