

Takarabako

たからばこ

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Feature

Amada Yoshimasa

"Finally I was able to see
all around me."



Reincarnation
of The Japan Forum
Newsletter

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Takarabako

Resources and Information for Teachers of Japanese-language and Culture

With this issue, the *Japan Forum Newsletter* published by the Japan Forum since October 1993, will come out under a new title as *Takarabako* (*takarabako* means treasure chest).

Ten-Year History

For more than ten years, the *TJF Newsletter* was published in 16 pages, twice-annually as a means for sharing the Japan Forum purpose and objectives and explaining educational, cultural, and language-related ideas behind its programs with readers. In that endeavor, each issue included feature articles on a particular theme and provided information beneficial for Japanese-language teachers in elementary and secondary schools overseas, mainly in North America and Oceania. Then, from June 1999 (No. 13), two more issues, each of 8 pages, were added annually. These two issues presented the two series "A Day in the Life" (published since March 1995, No. 4, to introduce various aspects of Japanese daily life culture) and "The Way We Are" (published since February 1999, No. 12, introducing the lives of Japanese high school students). These two issues were printed in full color and in gatefold format to facilitate posting in classrooms.

From the June 2001 (No. 21) issue, these two series were replaced with "Meeting People" and "Japanese Culture Now." The "Meeting People" series focused on an individual, introducing both his or her thinking and way of life and aspects of Japanese life and culture associated with the subject of the article. Ideas were also provided for activities to encourage learners to think about themselves and their own circumstances. The "Japanese Culture Now" series introduced recent topics and cultural trends among Japanese young people.

New Content

Prompted by the great popularity of these two series among our readers 80 percent of whom are Japanese-language teachers overseas, TJF decided to shift to a full-color, 8-page format published four times a year. This change has brought into being *Takarabako*, an information bulletin for elementary and secondary teachers engaged in Japanese language education, education for understanding Japan and global education.

Four pages of each issue of *Takarabako* will be devoted to introducing and providing the kind of content covered in these series thus far and widening their scope. Three pages will present various ideas and teaching plans for using these materials in the classroom. The content will include material through which elementary and secondary school students can broaden their awareness of language and culture and also of themselves, through understanding of Japan and Japanese. One page will be set aside for news from the Japan Forum. Each issue, we hope, will be a veritable treasure chest of ideas for classroom activities and resources for use in lessons plans.

The Japan Forum will continue to present the ideas and thinking behind Japan Forum programs as well as introduce the content of its programs in a special feature issue of *Takarabako* to be published each year, as well as in the separately published English-language version of its annual report, which will be sent to foundations and other organizations in Japan and overseas with which TJF is associated. We would like to thank readers for their steady support through the ten-year history of *The Japan Forum Newsletter* and look forward to their continuing enjoyment of its reincarnation as *Takarabako*.

The *Takarabako* Web site will open in mid-October this year. Back issues of the series published in the *TJF Newsletter* will be available here:
<http://www.tjf.or.jp/takarabako/index.htm>

あま だ よし まさ 天田喜應

Amada Yoshimasa

“Finally I was able to see all around me.”

▶▶▶ <http://www.tjf.or.jp/takarabako/index.htm>



Four pages of *Takarabako* will be devoted to introducing and providing a wide variety of resources and information, mainly about the lives and culture of Japanese young people. Three pages will present various ideas and teaching plans for using these materials in the classroom. This issue features Amada Yoshimasa, the model of prize winning work of the seventh TJF “Lives of Japanese High School Students: Photo and Message Contest.”



1 My name is Amada Yoshimasa. I am 18 years old. I live in a temple (*tera*¹) in Shizuoka prefecture where my father is a priest. I spent three years at Minobusan High School,² a boarding school located in Yamanashi prefecture run by the Nichiren sect of Buddhism,³ in order to study to become a priest. This spring I entered the Rissho University Faculty of Buddhist Studies in Tokyo.



2 My family. When the temple parishioners (*danka*⁴) gather for a temple function, my father does a lot more than just conduct the service.⁵ He tries to get everyone to have a good time by singing songs with them and serving them food he cooks himself. My older brother says, “Father’s services are just like Johnny’s pop star concerts.⁶ He’s all for the audience participation-type of event and he gets right down there with everyone else.” I think my admiration for my father is what made me decide to become a priest.

3 During class. Minobusan High School was established over seven hundred years ago by Kuonji, a temple with a long and distinguished history that stands at the head of all the temples belonging to the Nichiren sect of Buddhism. The school is small and has only about twenty students per year. Future priests from all over Japan attend classes here while boarding and training at Kuonji or other temples nearby. Aside from the regular high school curriculum, we also take classes on Buddhism. We learn about things we will need to know in the future such as how to conduct funeral ceremonies and various other services.





4 Morning prayers.⁷ We must sit in formal kneeling position (*seiza*⁸) for the hour and a half to two hours the service lasts. At first none of us could stay in this position for even five minutes, but we slowly got accustomed to sitting for longer and longer periods of time. It takes over a month to be able to sit correctly through the whole service.



5 Playing the *ryuteki*.⁹ At school I joined the tea ceremony, dance, and basketball clubs. I also studied *gagaku*¹⁰ music, since it is a required part of Buddhist temple ceremonies, and played instruments including the *sho*¹¹ and *ryuteki*.



6 At the convenience store. We had one or two days off every one to two months. On those days we went out to do things like buying CDs, going bowling or singing karaoke. At karaoke I often sing songs by bands like TUBE¹² or The Trabryu.¹³ Since I had very little chance to go out, I always made sure to look nice whenever I went shopping or for karaoke.

Evaluations of Yoshimasa by those around him



Father: As a parent I am of course sometimes compelled to scold him. Usually when a parent scolds a child, the parent is himself feeling irritated and inevitably acts somewhat unreasonable. But even when he knows I am being unfair Yoshimasa just looks a little wistful and puts up with it.



Mother: He's just like his father. I have never seen him get angry.



Older brother: He really wants to become a priest and he is very eager to learn. I think he is better than I am at attracting and leading others, probably because he is gentle and open-minded.



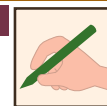
A junior student at high school: During services Amada-senpai knows how to perform the required movements very gracefully. He also has good leadership skills and is very understanding. Once, when I was so discouraged by the harshness of the training that I wanted to quit, he was sympathetic and listened attentively to what I had to say. I was quite impressed to realize that he was the kind of person who tries to guide others by caring about them and making the effort to see things from their point of view.

7 During services. In the future, I want to be able to do things for my temple like entertaining the parishioners with my own cooking whenever there is a service and arranging the flowers myself. I want the temple to be an enjoyable gathering place for the whole community and a force from which citizens can work together for world peace. Though Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam all differ in terms of their historical background, social environment, and teachings, the spirit of their prayers is still the same. I think that the important thing is to try to understand each other and to transcend our ethnic and religious differences so we can be tolerant of each other as human beings, just the same as we would be tolerant of our own children.



Photos: Yoshida Tadamasa (1, 2, 3, 4), Kurihara Hirofumi (5, 6, 7)

Yoshimasa's Essay



Finally I was able to see all around me.

Right after the entrance ceremony on the first day of high school we attended a welcoming ceremony for new boarders held at the temple where we were to stay. That night the older students shaved our heads with barber's clippers. Our training for the priesthood started the next day. Every morning we got up at five and attended prayers for about an hour and a half to two hours. After prayers were over we had breakfast and then cleaned the temple halls before going to school. After school we came back to do another round of cleaning, followed by dinner, baths, and evening prayers. There was no time at all to rest. During our first year the second-year students taught us in great detail how to clean, how to speak respectfully to our elders, how to serve food at mealtimes, and the like. I found cleaning the hardest task. We had to work very quickly to get the job done in time and sometimes I would get cramps in my legs. My hands got red and chapped from rinsing the mops in icy cold water in the winter.

Every day we all wanted to go to school as soon as possible, as school was the only place we could get any sort of break. Some students were emotionally unable to go on because they couldn't adjust to the new life and became unbearably homesick. Others had to leave because their knees



Photo: Yoshida Tadamasa

become inflamed from sitting in the *seiza* position too long. There were twelve boarders at the temple including myself when we started out, but only six, or half, were able to graduate.

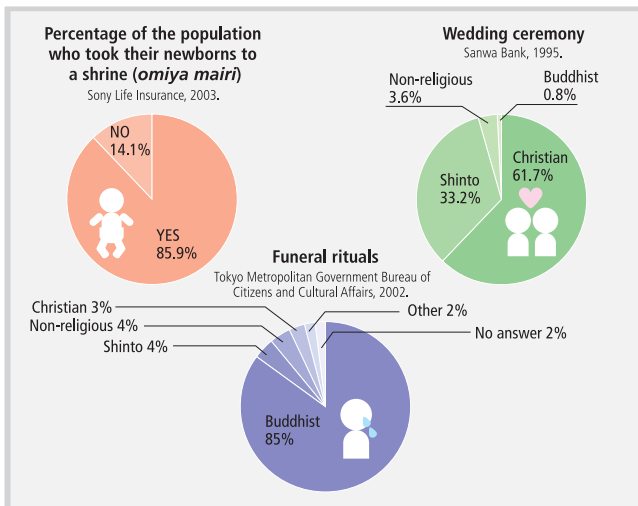
I felt like quitting many times as well. The first year was very hard physically, since I was on the move the whole day through. I don't know whether I could do it again if I had to. But I was able to get through it all right as long as I did what the older students said so I would not get scolded. My second year was psychologically hard, since I had to instruct and take care of the younger students while at the same time continuing to learn from the older students. During this year I experienced firsthand how hard it is to teach others. If you cannot teach well your efforts are wasted, since the younger students get confused and soon stop listening to you. I learned that you have to adjust your approach according to each student and pay attention to their individual feelings. During my third year I was made one of the leaders of the student body. As I did this work I became aware of how difficult it is to be at the head of a group. If those in the lead do not set a good example, those who are following them will become careless and sloppy. You also cannot lead others if you do not have firm ideas and convictions of your own.

During my first year I could only see one way: ahead. In my second year I became able to look back at the way I had come as well as to see what was coming up. Finally, in my third year I was able to see all 360 degrees around me. I think it was the experience with leadership that made this new perspective possible.

- 1 Tera (寺):** A Buddhist temple. A place enshrining images of the Buddha and used as a setting for ascetic training and religious services.
- 2 Minobusan High School:** Religious schools make up 27% of all privately run high schools in Japan. Of these schools, 60% are Christian, 33% Buddhist, 2% Shinto, and 5% other. Out of 120 Buddhist high schools, only about five schools offer programs enabling students to attain the priesthood upon graduation. (From *Shukyo kyoiku shiryō shū* [Source Materials on Religious Education], Kokugakuin University Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, ed., Suzuki Shuppan, 1993).
- 3 Buddhism:** Historical accounts say that Buddhism was introduced to Japan from India via China and the Korean Peninsula in 538 A.D. The Nichiren sect was founded in the mid-thirteenth century by the Japanese priest Nichiren (1222-82) and is one of the largest of the 157 Buddhist sects registered with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. There is no single standard course for attaining priesthood in Japan, candidates must instead work to fulfill the conditions established by the individual sect to which they belong. Buddhist priests in Japan may marry.

According to the *Nihonjin no kokuminsei chosa* [Study of the Japanese National Character] (1998) conducted by the Institute of Statistical Mathematics, the proportion of Japanese who say they belong to a religion or have some sort of religious faith stands at 33 percent, a figure which has remained nearly unchanged for the past forty years. The 2003 *Shukyo nenkan* [Religion Yearbook], issued by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the total number of followers of various religious organizations in Japan is approximately 216 million (note: the total population of Japan is 120 million). Of this figure, 49.9 percent are Shinto, 44.2 percent Buddhist, 0.9 percent Christian, and 5.0 percent other faiths including Muslim and Hindu. Some Japanese consider themselves affiliated with a Shinto shrine and a parishioner of a Buddhist temple simultaneously. Although Shinto celebrations and rituals such as *omiya mairi* (the first visit made to a shrine after the birth of a baby), *shichigosan* (ceremonies held for three- and five-year-old boys and three- and seven-year old girls in order to celebrate their health and growth), and *hatsumode* (the first visit made to a shrine at New Year's) are a familiar part of Japanese life, a majority of people also observe Buddhist traditions such as O-Higan and O-Bon and choose funerals conducted in Buddhist style, an indication of how firmly Buddhism is entrenched in daily life.

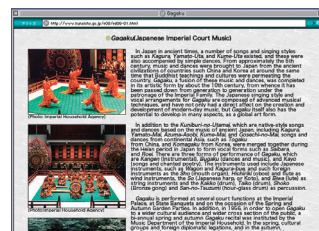
Figures



- 4 Danka (檀家):** Parishioners/lay members of a particular temple who attend its services and participate in its administration and management.
- 5 Buddhist memorial services in honor of the dead:** Services held every seven days during a forty-nine day period immediately following a person's death and on designated anniversaries thereafter.
- 6 Johnny's (ジャニーズ事務所):** A talent agency that manages SMAP as well as many other popular male performers and singing groups.
- 7 Prayers:** The act of praying and chanting sutras while sitting formally in front of a Buddhist image or altar, usually performed in the morning and at night.
- 8 Seiza (正座):** Literally, "the proper way to sit." Ways of sitting formally vary from culture to culture. In Japan, when assuming a formal sitting posture, for example while in a Japanese-style room or during Buddhist services, one sits in the manner as shown in the photo.
- 9 Ryuteki (竜笛):** See photo 5. A horizontal flute made of bamboo. A *gagaku* instrument.
- 10 Gagaku (雅楽):** The name given to the style of traditional music handed down within the Japanese imperial court, often performed at the beginning and end of Buddhist memorial services.
- 11 Sho (笙):** A woodwind instrument made of wood and bamboo. One of the most commonly seen of the *gagaku* instruments.



For details on the content of notes 9 to 11, see the following web sites.



<http://www.kunaicho.go.jp/e08/ed08-01.html>
(Imperial Household Agency web site)



<http://www.nihongagakukai.gr.jp/instruments-j.html>

- 12 TUBE (チューブ):** A four-member band that made its debut in 1985. Most of their songs, including the hit *Season in the Sun*, are set in summer.



<http://www.tube.gr.jp/>

- 13 The Trabryu (虎舞竜):** A four-member hard rock band that made its debut in 1982.



<http://www.trabryu.com/>

Activities

Goals:

- ❖ To encourage students to identify with Yoshimasa by reading his photo essay.
- ❖ To have students acquire basic knowledge of Japanese schools of religion and about Buddhism.
- ❖ To have students relate Yoshimasa's experience to their own lives, and to have them become aware of their own growth by learning to express in Japanese how they became able to do something that they had been unable to do before.

Time required:

Two class periods

Items to be learned:

- First class period (Beginning level)
 Conducting simple self-introductions
- Second class period (Beginning level)
 ~のとき、~でした。でも、~のとき、~になりました。
 (Intermediate level)
 ~のとき、V(potential form)ませんでした。
 でも、~のとき、V(potential form)ました。
 ~のとき、~でした。でも、~のとき、V(potential form)ようになりました。

● Lesson flow

First class period

Explanation of goals: Today I will introduce you to a Japanese high school student named Amada Yoshimasa. By studying his example, you will be able to learn/review how to talk, in Japanese, about yourselves.

- Show photo 1 to the students and tell them, これは、天田よしまさくん です。天田くんは 高校せい です。でも すこし とくべつな ことがあります。なんでしょう。 (This is Amada Yoshimasa. He is a high school student, but something about him is a little bit different from other high school students. What do you think it is?) (Use either English or Japanese, depending on the students' age and level of Japanese proficiency.)

Have students brainstorm on possible answers. Show them photo 7 next as a hint. After having them think some more, give them the answer and write おぼうさん* の たまご (literally an "egg of a priest," i.e., an aspiring or novice Buddhist priest) on the blackboard. Explain the meaning of the word たまご (someone who is working toward a certain profession) using visual aids.

Key point

The students should find it surprising that Yoshimasa, who looks just like any other high school student, is actually studying to become a priest.

* Also sometimes called *bozu* 坊主. *Bozu*, which means a priest, also means a person with a shaved head ⇒ 坊主頭 (*bozu atama*): a shaved head. Also means a young boy.

[Note] It is said that priests shave their heads following the example of Sakya-muni, the founder of Buddhism, who shaved his head upon entering the religious life.

- Distribute the photos and captions. Tell the students a little about Yoshimasa.

Key point

The goal is to have students learn about Yoshimasa as well as about Japanese religious schools and Buddhism. Make sure students realize that even people aiming for the priesthood still enjoy themselves by engaging in activities such as sports or shopping.

Key point

If necessary, show students a map of Japan so that they may see where Shizuoka (Yoshimasa's home) and Yamanashi (the location of his high school) prefectures are and realize why it is necessary for him to be a boarding student.

- Show photo 2. Talk about Yoshimasa's family.
 天田くんのかぞくは、お父さん、お母さん、お兄さん、天田くんの4人かぞくです。お父さんはおぼうさんです。(There are four people in Yoshimasa's family, his father, mother, elder brother, and himself. His father is a priest.)
- Show photos 3 and 4. Ask the students, "What do you see in the photos?" and have them brainstorm on the answer. Write the students' responses on the blackboard (may be in English). Anything that the students know or are capable of learning how to say in Japanese should be written in Japanese. Proceed similarly with the rest of the photos.

Examples

Photo 3

女のせいとが います。(There is a female student in the photo.)
 かみが ながい です。(Her hair is long.)
 いすに すわっています。(They are sitting on chairs.)
 先生は 男のひと です。(The teacher is a man.)

Photo 4

きものを きています。(They are wearing a kimono.)
 たたみに すわっています。(They are sitting on a tatami mat.)

- Show photo 5.
 天田くんが かっこうで することは なんですか。(What kinds of things does Yoshimasa do at school?)

Key point

As one option, have learners fill in a worksheet devised according to their age and Japanese proficiency.

Examples

()さどろ ()ふえ ()ダンス
 ()フルート ()サッカー ()すいえい
 ()たいこ ()バスケットボール

- Show photo 6.
 天田くんは やすみの日に なにを しますか。(What does Yoshimasa do on his days off?)

Key point

As one option, have learners fill in a worksheet devised according to their age and Japanese proficiency.

Examples

()かいもの ()えいがをみる ()ボーリング ()コンサート
 ()カラオケ ()べんきょう ()デート ()ピクニック

7. Show photo 7.

天田くんは しょうらい、なにに なりたいですか。(What does Yoshimasa want to be in the future?)

8. Distribute worksheet (on page Activity-3) to be completed in class.

Key point

Have students refer to the English captions in order to recognize any Japanese terms they do not know.

Key point

The worksheet was designed so as to allow students to learn how to talk about themselves based on Yoshimasa's example.

9. Distribute Yoshimasa's essay and instruct the class to read it as homework.

Second class period

Explanation of goals: Today, we will discuss what you thought about the essay you read and then try to talk in Japanese about similar experiences from your own life.

1. Ask students to discuss the essay. Finally, point out some of the things Yoshimasa learned from his harsh training (e.g., the difficulty of leading or teaching others; the realization that personal growth comes from overcoming obstacles) and ask students to apply these ideas to their own lives. (May be conducted in English.)

Key point

Ask students whether they have ever had similar kinds of experiences. Stimulate their thinking by relating something from your own life.

Example

"When I first started working part-time at a restaurant I didn't like it because all I did was wash dishes. It was only after I was assigned to bring food to the customers that I realized how difficult it was. I even practiced at home and soon got better at it."

2. Encourage students to express the ideas brought up so far using Japanese. Write the following sentences on the blackboard. 一年生のとき、まえしか みえませんでした。二年生のとき、まえと うしろが みえるようになりました。三年生のとき、360ど まわりが みえるようになりました。Begin by introducing them to sentence pattern A ~のとき、~でした。でも、~のとき、~になりました, providing explanations as necessary.

Key point

Depending on students' Japanese proficiency, pattern B ~のとき、~V (potential form) ませんでした。でも、~のとき、~V (potential form) ました or C ~のとき、~でした。でも、~のとき、~V (potential form) ようになりました may also be used.

3. Make up several sentences using the patterns, then copy the words corresponding to the pattern blanks (~) onto separate cards and post these cards up on the blackboard in scrambled order. Let students practice the patterns by playing a game asking them to reassemble the cards back into the correct sentences. Let them compete either individually or in teams.

Key point

Choose vocabulary that is appropriate to students' age and Japanese proficiency.

Card Examples

Pattern A

ちゅうがくせい シヤイ こうこうせい おしゃべり

一年生 ほけつ 二年生 レギュラー

あかちゃん しんちょう50cm こうこうせい 180cm

Pattern B

あかちゃん あるけませんでした 1さい あるけました

ようちえん ほん が よめませんでした

しょうがっこう ほん が よめました

3さい およげませんでした 5さい およげました

Pattern C

子ども ほうれんそう が たべられません

こうこうせい たべられる ように

一年生 すうがく が わかりません

二年生 わかる ように

ちゅうがくせい にほんご が はなせません

こうこうせい はなせる ように

4. Have students write their own experiences down on paper using the sentence patterns they have learned. Ask for volunteers to read their work aloud. Let students add explanations in English as necessary.

Key point

The goal is to have students master the sentence patterns ~のとき、~でした。でも、~のとき、~になりました。

Key point

Writing about their experiences is intended to prompt students to become more aware of their own development and growth.

Other activities

1. 「あこがれる人」ちようざ



Yoshimasa: ぼくは 父に あこがれて、おぼうさんに なるうとおもいました。(I decided to become a priest because I look up to my father so much.)

Interview others about people they look up to. Total, categorize, and present the results.

① あこがれる人は だれですか。(Is there anyone you look up to? Please tell us who he or she is.)

② どうしてですか。(Why?)

	Yourself				
①					
②					

「あこがれる人」ちようざの けっかを はっぴょうします。いちばん おおかったのは、_____で、〇〇人中〇〇人でした。

その りゆうは、_____、_____、_____でした。

つぎは_____で、〇〇人中〇〇人でした。

その りゆうは、_____、_____、_____でした。

これで はっぴょうを おわります。(拍手)

(I will now present the results of my research on people we look up to. The greatest number of people looked up to _____. The total was 〇〇 people out of 〇〇. People gave the following reasons for their choice: _____, _____, _____. Second place was _____. A total of 〇〇 people out of 〇〇 looked up to this person. People gave the following reasons for their choice: _____, _____, _____. This concludes my presentation. (Applause))

2. せいざ



Yoshimasa: あさ、1じかんはんから 2じかん、せいざを します。
(Every morning we sit formally for an hour and a half to two hours.)

Let's all try to sit formally. How long can you do it?

Have each student say, わたしは ～分 できました (I was able to sit for _____ minutes), while keeping a record of their results.

[Note] The westernization of daily lifestyles in recent years has led Japanese to become more accustomed to sitting on chairs than formally on the floor. For those unused to the posture, the few occasions including Buddhist services that still require sitting formally can be quite a trying experience. More recently, Buddhist services have begun provided chairs in order to accommodate such people along with others who have trouble with their legs.

There are various ways to prevent one's legs from going numb while sitting in this posture: shift the center of your weight slightly to the front, keep your heels apart, place the large toe of one foot on top of the other, or open your knees slightly.

3. 一日のせいかつ

Talk about Yoshimasa's daily schedule, and then have students describe their own. Have them also interview another classmate in order to write down theirs.

Example questions

_____さんは なんじに おきますか。それから、なにを しますか。なんじから なんじまで がっこうで べんぎょうしますか。(What time do you get up? What do you do after you get out of bed? From when until when do you spend at school?)

	天島くん	あなた	_____さん
am			
5:00	おきます		
5:30~7:00	あさの ごんぎょう*を します		
7:30~8:00	あさごはんを たべます		
8:00~8:30	そうじを します		
8:45	がっこうに いきます		
pm			
0:20~1:00	ひるごはんを たべます		
4:00	がっこうから かえります		
4:00~6:30	そうじを します		
7:00~7:30	ばんごはんを たべます		
8:00~9:00	よるの ごんぎょうを します		
9:00~9:30	おふるに はいります		
9:30	ねます		

* ごんぎょう=prayers

* Please enlarge approximately. An enlarged version is available at <http://www.tjf.or.jp/takarabako/index.htm>

●ワークシート:じこしょうかい



ぼくは、あまだ よしまさ です。18さい です。

あなたの なまえは? なんさい?

ぼく/わたしは _____ です。
_____ さい です。



ぼくの こうこうは、ふるい がっこう です。700ねんまえに たてられました。ちいさい がっこう です。せいとの かずは 60にん です。ぶっきょうの べんぎょうを します。

ぶっきょう=Buddhism

あなたの がっこうは どんな がっこう?

れい:おおきい ちいさい あたらしい ふるい たのしい きびしい

ぼく/わたしの がっこうは、 _____ がっこう です。
_____ の
べんぎょうを します。



がっこうで、さどう、ダンス、バスケットボール、ふえを します。

さどう=tea ceremony ふえ=a flute

あなたは?

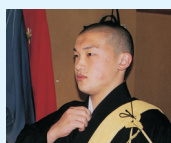
がっこうで、 _____ を
します。



やすみの ひは、かいもの、ボーリング、カラオケに いきます。
やすみの ひは、おしやれを します。

あなたは、やすみの ひに なにを する?

やすみの ひは、
_____ を します。



しょうらいは、おぼうさんに なりたいです。そして、おてらを たのしい ばしょにして、みんなで、へいわの ために はたらかたいです。へいわの ために、ゆるすことが たいせつだと おもいます。

しょうらい=future おぼうさん=a priest ゆるす=to forgive

あなたは、しょうらい、なにに なりたい?

しょうらい、 _____
に なりたいです。

あなたの じこしょうかいが できたよ!!

(Activity supervisor: Murano Ryoko, Professor, Gakushuin University)