

Hanamatsuri

This Japanese flower festival celebrates the birthday of the Buddha Shakyamuni's birthday in 565 AD. The flowers commemorate the Buddha's birth in a garden. Floral shrines are made and an image of the Buddha is bathed and placed in them.



- ① Sit down with the children and show them the series of pictures overleaf. You may wish to lay the sheets out either on a table or the floor, and then read the story.
- ② Ask the children the following questions and discuss them:-
What part of the story did you like?
What part of the story didn't you like?
How do we celebrate the birth of a baby?
- ③ Talk about how we feel when a new baby arrives into your family.

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The Japanese Flower Festival in Japan is known as Hanamatsuri. This festival is in celebration of the Buddha's Birthday. According to Buddhist tradition, Prince Siddhartha Gautama (Sakyamuni Buddha), the son of King Suddohana and Queen Maya, was born on 8 April 566 B.C. in the garden of Lumbini, in Nepal.



On this day, in Buddhist temples, an interesting ceremony takes place, Kanbutsu-e (The Bathing of Buddha). Originated from China, Kanbutsu-e started in Japan in the year 606, in Nara.



On a flower decorated altar (hana mido), symbolizing the Lumbini garden, a small statue of Buddha, Tanjoubutsu (Buddha's Birth), is placed in a shallow metal bowl.



The ceremony recreates the legend that at birth, Buddha was sprinkled with perfume by two Dragon Kings. Another version of the legend is that a gentle perfumed nectar rain bathed the baby Buddha. So, the temple visitors are invited to pour on the statue sweet tea, ama-cha, made from hydrangea leaves.



Today this festival is celebrated by children visiting the Shrine of the Buddha.