



# The Japanese Friendship Doll Program



In 1927, over 5 million people sent a message for global friendship.  
We are sending the same message today.

In February 1927, Americans sent 12,739 American dolls to Japan, in time to celebrate a Japanese festival with a 1,000-year-old tradition called *Hina Matsuri*-The Doll Festival. Dr. Sidney L. Gulick originated this simple idea. He called it the *Doll Plan*. He believed the friendly face of a doll would sow seeds of peace in the minds of children. Other Americans, 2.7 million people from church groups, girl scouts, boy scouts, and entire communities were compelled to join.

*“The spirit of childhood shall show us the way to friendship that lasts and to peace that shall stay.”* from *Dolls of Friendship* by Sidney Gulick

After receiving such an astounding gift, Japanese people commissioned the best doll makers of the time to make fifty-eight, 32 inch tall dolls. Because there were fewer in number, the dolls were made over-sized, the size of a 5-year-old Japanese girl, and each with a unique *kimono*. They arrived in the U.S. in late November, in time for Christmas 1927.

All the dolls, American and Japanese, came with passports costing 1 cent, one-way tickets costing 99 cents and many letters from both Japanese and American children with wishes of friendship. In Spokane there is one of the original 1927 Japanese Doll Ambassadors, Miss Tokushima at the Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture.

Spokane and Nishinomiya established as Sister-City bond in 1961. Due to this long friendship, Mukogawa Women's University (MWU) in Nishinomiya invested in a branch campus at historic Fort Wright. In the fall of 1990 MWU students began coming to Spokane to study English and American culture. Mukogawa also created the Japanese Cultural Center (JCC) and Museum whose mission is to provide resources and promote studies about modern, traditional and historic Japan.

Inspired by Dr. Gulick's simple idea and Spokane's own original 1927 Japanese doll ambassador Miss Tokushima, in 1993 the JCC and MWU began sending dolls with other Japanese cultural artifacts (donated from the people of Japan) and educational materials to the children of the U.S. As of 2004 there have been 519 recipients in all 50 states and Washington D.C. who are learning in a personal way an alternate history of U.S. Japan relations and about each person contributes to global peace.

## Recommendation

→ Recipients in the Japanese Friendship Doll Program & gifted Japanese Ambassador doll(s) please consider~

- The Friendship dolls, their mission and story are to be *integrated into curriculum* as dolls are not just a display item. One-page lesson plan, educational materials and custom artifacts are included. Duration of lesson entirely up to recipient.
- The contact person is the guardian or *Japanese Friendship Doll Liaison* and ensures staff and students are introduced to the doll(s) and educational materials. If staff changes, please designate another *Liaison*.
- The goals of the program are to enhance Japanese studies and give a *personal connections* of global friendships.
- The dolls are permanent gifts. Recipients are invited to call on us anytime to help develop Japanese units, participate in international exchange opportunities e.g., New Year Greeting Card Art Contest. Our resources are available and are free.
- Open to schools or institutions which reach/education children.
- There is no cost or implied message of reciprocation.
- We request *feedback* on the reactions to the dolls which are shared with the Japanese donors to aid future donations.

PLEASE PRINT RETURN ASAP

Candidate/Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal/Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Friendship Doll Liaison \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

*How would integrate and/or benefit from the doll(s), their story and education materials in your curriculum?*

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Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Address:

Phone:

FAX:

Email-

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