

## Hinamatsuri, Japanese Girl's or Dolls Day

*by Varditer Harutyunyan*

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, IWAY ladies celebrated the Japanese Girl's or Dolls day known as Hinamatsuri, along with the ladies of IWA of Georgia who joined in via zoom.



IWAY member Yoko Shimo hosted the celebrations at her home, which she had decorated with Hina dolls (Emperor and Empress).

Hinamatsuri is one of the five seasonal festivals marked in Japan. It is celebrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March of each year. The Japanese prepare well ahead by decorating their homes, hotels and shops with Hina dolls. Tradition says that the decorations and figurines should be lined up in seven rows and placed according to a set rule, each at its a special designated place.

The dolls are handmade, their prices vary according to their quality. In ancient times, when the Japanese observed the lunar calendar, the festival was also known as "The Peach Festival", as peach trees blossomed during the festival season. Nowadays the Japanese commemorate by using artificial peach flowers in their decorations.

Hinamatsuri is one of the favorite festivals in Japan, special dishes are prepared to mark the day; Yoko Shimo kindly prepared some Japanese Sushi and Sakura mocha, with an Armenian twist to it. Authentic Sakura mocha is usually covered with Sakura leaves, but as we do not have sakura leaves in Armenia, Yoko covered it with vine leaves, the taste was similar. Each one of the ladies brought along a dish, there were Japanese, Armenian and Syrian food laid on the table making of the event a real international one.

Varditer introduced the ladies to the history and customs of the Hinamatsuri festival explaining that it dates back to the "Heian period" in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, she also talked about the song especially sang on the occasion of this festival. Our IWAY ladies had a go at singing the Japanese "Uresii Hinamatsuri" song.

The event was full of activities, making Japanese origami (paper folding) crane and flamingo was one of these activities, Yoko, then introduced us to the "singing bowls vibration therapy", which

is known to have a relaxing and stress reducing effect, Kristina Grigoryan tried it on her head, and Hermine Sarkissian on the body.

The event was full of joy, lively, high on emotions, laugh and positive energy. No one wanted to leave Yoko's home. Thank you everyone for participating and special thanks to our lovely Yoko for organizing this event, and informing us more about Japanese culture.

International Women Association of Yerevan, 2021

