



Jeff 先生と
Let's learn the world!



Hello, everyone! This is Jeff. As we enter December, we realize that we have come to the end of another year. We look upon the snow that has begun to accumulate on the peaks of Mount Gozu, see the countless waterfowl that have flocked to Lake Hyouko, and hear Christmas tunes playing in our local supermarkets. Speaking of which, what does Christmas mean to you? There are several similarities between Western and Eastern Christmas, for example, Christmas lights, Christmas trees, presents, and, of course, Santa Claus coming to town. However, I would like to point out one thing to my Japanese friends: There is no tradition involving cake or fried chicken on Christmas. At all. Anywhere.

There is one more large difference that I should note: For Christians in America and around the world, Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of God.

So, then, what about Santa? Christmas trees? Where did these traditions come from? Actually, from the 3rd to 10th century AD, Christmas was a much more solemn event. During the middle ages, Christmas gained popularity, and the people would sing and dance

through the streets, as well as began exchanging presents. By the 13th century, even kings were joining in the festivities. The Christmas traditions we now exercise come from many different countries beginning around this time. For example, the story of Santa Claus is based on a real individual, Saint Nicholas.

Christmas trees were decorated in multiple countries, but they gained mainstream popularity beginning in the early 19th century. Also in the 19th century, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* was published, and due to its widespread popularity Christmas became a time for generous giving towards those less fortunate.

Everyone celebrates Christmas in their own way. Dear reader, how do you celebrate Christmas? As for me, being a Christian, myself, I attend a church service on Christmas Eve, do a small gift

exchange with my wife

Christmas morning, skype with my family in America, and eat dinner with my wife's family. I truly count

myself fortunate, being so far apart from my own family, to have a family that has taken me in as one of their own.

May you all have a merry Christmas, and a happy new year. - Jeff

