



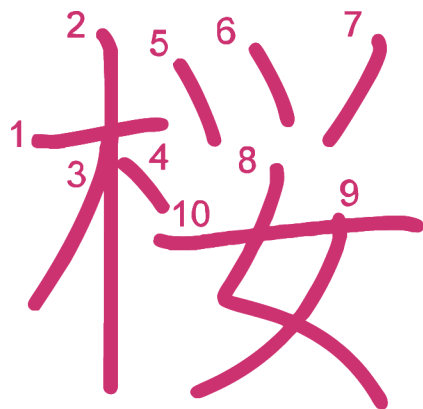
JAPAN INFORMATION
AND CULTURE CENTER
在米国日本大使館広報文化センター

TEACHING TUESDAY

KANJI - CHERRY BLOSSOM

Sakura, or cherry blossoms, are one of Japan's most recognizable symbols. However, the story behind the kanji of sakura 桜 is a bit muddled. There are several theories about the history of the kanji. One such theory comes from the old kanji used for sakura, 櫻. The left radical 木 is for tree, the top 貝 for a type of pale pink sea shell, and the bottom 女 for woman. The story goes that the pale pink of sakura blossoms was similar to the beautiful sea shells that use to encircle the necks of women. Therefore, it was associated with delicate, protective symbolism.

Be sure to get your flower viewing in this cherry blossom season and enjoy the 桜祭 sakura matsuri around Washington DC!



Meaning: Cherry Blossom

Kun'yomi: Sakura さくら sah-koo-rah

On'yomi: Ou; You オウ; ヨウ oh-oo;
yoh-oo