



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

# TEACHING TUESDAY

## FUKUWARAI

Fukuwarai (福笑い), literally meaning “lucky laugh,” is another popular Japanese New year's game. Similar to pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey, the objective of the game is for a blindfolded player to place cut-outs of eyes, nose, and mouth on an outline of a face.

This game became popular late in the Edo period (1603-1868), and people began playing it as a New Year's game during the Taisho era (1912-1926). The face usually depicted is the comical, round face of Otafuku, also known as Okame. She is described a humorous, good-hearted woman, who brings a smile wherever she goes, making her the perfect subject for Fukuwarai. Recently, other faces, such as those of popular actors, comic-book heroes, and more, have become popular.

Part of the reason the game has become a staple of New Year's is the saying “笑う門には福来る”( わらうかどにはふくきたる good fortune and happiness will come to the home of those who smile). This saying is popular around New Year's, where laughter is considered the best way to bring in good fortune with the New Year. Similar to the laughing festivals Teaching Tuesday from back in January, fukuwarai is seen as good luck and a fun way to start the New Year.

You can print your own fukuwarai to play on New Year's here:  
<http://www.kids-idea.com/en/game/fukuwarai/fukuwarai1-a4.html>