

About the Picture on the Front/Back Cover

In this book, the designs on the front/back cover are derived from two traditional festivals called “*Aomori Nebuta Festival*” and “*Sendai Tanabata Festival*,” which take place in the *Tohoku* area, the stricken area of The Great East Japan Earthquake.

The front cover picture shows “*Aomori Nebuta Festival*.” This festival is held for the 6 days from August 2nd in the city of Aomori, in which *nebutas*, the giant lanterns with human figures, are wheeled along the parade route, accompanied with dancers called *haneto*. It is said that this festival originates in a traditional ceremony called *toro-nagashi* (the placement of lantern offerings on the water), in which *kegare*, a form of taboo, is purified. It has a long history of 300 years, and *nebuta* lanterns have become larger and larger up to now.

The back cover picture shows “*Sendai Tanabata Festival*.” This festival is held for the 3 days from August 6th in the city of Sendai. In Japan, the opening day of this event, called *Tanabata* day (in Japanese old calendar), has a special meaning. It is believed that, in *Tanabata*, a wish comes true when you write your wish on paper strips and hang them on decorated bamboos. This festival was originated by the feudal lord *Date Masamune*, and has a long history of 400 years.

This year, in these festivals, people wished the restoration and prayed for their peace of mind. Thanks to all supports from around the world, both festivals were able to be held under such difficult circumstances after 3.11.

Dynamic Nebuta Lanterns Lighten the Summer Night (Aomori Nebuta Festival)



Source: Aomori Nebuta Executive Committee

Paper Cranes Decorate Bamboos in Tanabata Festival (Sendai Tanabata Festival)



Source: Sendai Tanabata Festival Support Association