



Ornamental helmets 飾り兜 Families with boys display ornamental helmets to celebrate “Boys ‘ Day” on May 5th. The traditional name for the day is “Tango-no-sekku” which was originally one of the seasonal ceremonies in the emperor’s court. Sometimes the gorgeous set of ornaments includes both helmet and armor to celebrate the day.

People in ancient times believed this armor was a kind of charm which protected families from evil, and it was also a symbol of success. Armor was usually passed down from generation to generation by the eldest sons as family treasures. Samurai families, in particular, dedicated their armor to Shinto shrines when they prayed for their achievements and victory especially in war.

Nowadays, artisans produce new armor in the traditional ways of medieval Japan, but the styles have become more decorative than practical. Gradually, not only samurai families but also ordinary people started to introduce this custom as a celebration display for boys.