JAPANESE CULTURE

• GIFT CULTURE
Gift giving in Japan is deeply rooted in tradition with gifts given not only for social occasions, but also for social obligations -- gifts given when indebted to others, both family and business. The emphasis is on the act of giving rather than the gift itself. The value of the gift is of less importance than the presentation and thoughtfulness in which it is presented.

In Japan, gifts are given on anniversaries, weddings, births, graduations, and housewarmings. Children’s achievements are also celebrated with gifts. Though traditionally gifts are not given for birthdays or Christmas, this is becoming a modern Japan gift giving custom. Gifts or Omiyage (souvenirs) given to family, friends and co-workers are expected upon returning from a trip. After receiving a gift, the Japanese send a “thank you” gift called an O-kaeshi. These thank you gifts are common for illnesses, funerals, weddings and birthdays. The value of this gift usually equals half the value of the original gift.

• POP CULTURE
Japanese popular culture encompasses the modern popular culture of Japan. It includes Japanese cinema, cuisine, television programs, anime, manga and music, all of which retain older artistic and literary traditions, and many of their themes and styles of presentation can be traced to traditional art forms. Contemporary forms of popular culture, much like the traditional forms, are not only forms of entertainment but also aspects to distinguish contemporary Japan from the rest of the modern world. There is a large industry of music, films, and the products of a huge comic book industry, among other forms of entertainment. Game centers, bowling alleys, and karaoke parlors are well-known hangout places for teens while older people may play shogi or go in specialized parlors.

After the end of the US occupation in Japan in 1952, Japanese popular culture has been deeply influenced by American media. However, rather than being dominated by American products, Japan has localized these influences by imitating and partly appropriating the originals.

CHRISTMAS
• In Edo period, missionaries spread Christianity and Christmas to Japan. Christianity was forbidden afterwards, and only the culture that gifted presents in the day of Christmas penetrated people. The religious aspect of Christmas has disappeared before the Meiji period. The Christianity banned by the isolation policy of the Edo period and the gift culture peculiar to the Japanese have a great influence on the Christmas in Japan today.
• Originally in Japan, there is a year-end party where familiar people gather at the end of the year and enjoy delicious food and drinks. Christmas doubled as a year-end party after the religious aspects are gone.
• Christmas gifts custom made commercial. Lovers have a nice date better than usual, and it is a day to give each other a nice present. In families with children, it is a day to eat treats and cakes. People spend the day differently depending on generation.

HALLOWEEN
• Halloween in Japan is an event for adults to enjoy. Cosplay is becoming a very big culture as one of the Japanese pop culture, but it is not something that anyone can easily enjoy at any time because it sometimes involves passive image(geek). Halloween in Japan is an opportunity for anyone to enjoy cosplay. Halloween is relatively new and popular event in Japan because most of Halloween event in Japan started after 2000. Japanese people recognize that Christmas is the day for lovers, and Halloween is a day for himself/herself. It is interesting that Halloween event is on extension line of cosplay culture in Japanese idea. It is generally popular only among young people and it has spread rapidly because it is strongly related to Japanese pop culture.(Cosplay).
• The Halloween market and event are expanding every year, but people have anxiety to dirt and noise in the town.

WEB PROPOSAL
• I intend to use the research in the creation of a website to inform people how and why are Western holidays interpreted and celebrated in Japan.
• "As language and culture are deeply tied, I believe it is very useful for my language study."

REFERENCES
• Student learning Japanese
• SEO member
• Businessman working with Japanese companies