

Famous People of Japan: Tetsuko KUROYANAGI

Purpose:

To become familiar with famous Japanese people.

Target Grade Levels: 4-12

Essential Questions:

- *Who is Tetsuko Kuroyanagi?
- *What has she contributed to Japan and other nations?
- *How did her book, Totto-chan, impact readers?
- *What was Tetsuko's role with UNICEF?
- *How was Tetsuko's railcar school different from other Japanese schools?

Rationale:

Students will learn how other countries benefited from Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. Because Tetsuko was expelled from first grade as a trouble maker and later became an international celebrity working for UNICEF, her story can provide inspiration for students.

Materials:

1. Copies of data sheet on Tetsuko Kuroyanagi. Pronounced: te-tsoo-koh koo-roe-yah-nah-gee (hard g as in go)
2. Copies of excerpts from Totto-Chan.
3. Paper for timeline.
4. Assessment
5. Rubric
6. Bibliography
7. Optional: several copies of the book Totto-chan by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi which is available in most bookstores.
8. Background information:
<http://metropolis.japantoday.com/bigInJapanarchive349/346/bigInJapaninc.htm>

Famous People of Japan: **Tetsuko KUROYANAGI**

Activities: Days One and Two

1. Introduce the lesson by asking students to identify some famous people in the United States. Ask them "Why are these people famous?" After discussing their answers inform them that there are also famous people in Japan and they are about to study one of them.
2. Teacher presents: Teacher will introduce Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, divide students into teams of 3-4, distribute copies of data sheet and excerpts .
3. Student investigation:
 - * Students read materials.
 - * Students should use the internet websites in bibliography if computer is available to learn more about Tetsuko.
 - * If copies of Totto-chan are available have students read other excerpts from the book that interest them.
 - * Encourage students to discuss how Tetsuko's name was a foretelling of her career and how her childhood impacted her adult life.

Activities: Days Three and Four

1. Teacher presents: Teacher should lead a 10-15 minute discussion to inquire about students' investigation and ask if they have any questions.
2. Student project:
 - *Students will collaborate to make a timeline of the events in Tetsuko's life.
 - *Timeline can be done horizontally on shelf paper, as a chart, as a mobile or as a slide show on a computer if students have access to a computer that has slide show software.
 - *Have students include one index card size illustration for each phrase on the timeline.

Activities: Day Five

1. Student reports: Each team will present their timeline. Allow 5-10 minutes following each presentation for audience to ask questions or add reactions to the presentation.

Famous People of Japan: Tetsuko KUROYANAGI

Assessment:

While this lesson may be assessed in various ways (including group collaboration, group report, group product, and teacher observation) an assessment test and rubric are provided for various forms of assessment.

Grade Adaptation: Target Grade(s) 4-12

Suggestions for other grade levels: Lower grade levels could listen to the teacher read from Totto-chan and illustrate their favorite part. After reading several chapters of Totto-chan, teacher could write one sentence from Totto-chan on a 9x12 sheet of white construction paper for each child to illustrate and paint. Teacher could have students trace a railroad car on 9x18 construction paper and draw how they think Totto-chan's classroom looked. Teacher could make timeline on sentence strips of Tetsuko's life with years beginning each strip and have students sequence the events in order. Teacher can then help them read the events.

Relationship to Social Studies Model:

Grades K-2, People in Societies, Benchmark A

I identify practices and products of diverse cultures.

Grades K-2, People in Societies, Benchmark B

I identify ways that different cultures within the United States and the world have shaped our national heritage.

Grades 6-8, People in Societies, Benchmark B

Analyze examples of interactions between cultural groups and explain the factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict.

Grades 6-8, People in Societies, Benchmark C

Explain how contact between different cultures impacts the diffusion of belief systems, art, science, technology, language and forms of government.

Famous People of Japan:
Tetsuko KUROYANAGI

Tetsuko Kuroyanagi

Date of Birth: 9 August 1933

Place of Birth: Setagaya-ku, Tokyo

Tetsuko Kuroyanagi has been living in the entertainment world for 40 years. She was called "a zip" because she always spoke. After she graduated Tokyo University, in 1979 entered "Tokyo Hoso gekidan". In some year, she made her debut with Kyoko Satomi and Michiko Yokoyama by "Senbo Ninbo Tonbo". and, now she is active in various fields as a chairwoman, writer, and goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Children's Fund. And she likes pandas very much.

The most famous program which she appears in is 'Tetsuko no Heya' which has been continuing more than 10 years. In this program, she talks with many guests about their view of life, careers, and hobbies. Her skillful art of talking has made this program live long.

In 1984, she published 'Madogiwa no totto-chan' and it became a best seller. She established a corporation of social welfare with the royalties. Since 1987, she has visited many countries and has been appealing to the public to help children suffering from war and disasters.

References:

Shintei Gendai Nippon Meiroku 1994 Vol 2

<http://www.inv.co.jp/~totto/profile.html>

<http://www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/information/famous>

Totto-chan

The Little Girl at the Window

Tetsuko Kuroyanagi

Translated by **Dorothy Britton**

The reason Mother was worried was because although Totto-chan had only just started school, she had already been expelled. Fancy being expelled from the first grade!

It had happened only a week ago. Mother had been sent for by Totto-chan's homeroom teacher, who came straight to the point. "Your daughter disrupts my whole class. I must ask you to take her to another school." The pretty young teacher sighed. "I'm really at the end of my tether."

Mother was completely taken aback. What on earth did Totto-chan do to disrupt the whole class, she wondered?

Blinking nervously and touching her hair, cut in a short pageboy style, the teacher started to explain. "Well, to begin with, she opens and shuts her desk hundreds of times. I've said that no one is to open or shut their desk unless they have to take something out or put something away. So your daughter is constantly taking something out and putting something away--taking out or putting away her notebook, her pencil box, her textbooks, and everything else in her desk. For instance, say we are going to write the alphabet, your daughter opens her desk, takes out her notebook, and bangs the top down. Then she opens her desk again, puts her head inside, gets out a pencil, quickly shuts the desk, and writes an 'A'. If she's written it badly or made a mistake she opens the desk again, gets out an eraser, shuts the desk, erases the letter, then opens and shuts the desk again to put away the eraser--all at top speed. When she's written the 'A' over again, she puts every single item back into the desk, one by one. She puts away the pencil, shuts the desk, then opens it again to put away the notebook. Then, when she gets to the next letter, she goes through it all again--first the notebook, then the pencil, then the eraser--opening and shutting her desk every single time. It makes my head spin. And I can't scold her because she opens and shuts it each time for a reason."

The teacher's long eyelashes fluttered even more as if she were reliving the scene in her mind.

It suddenly dawned on Mother why Totto-chan opened and shut her desk so often. She remembered how excited Totto-chan had been when she came home from her first day at school. She had said, School's wonderful! My desk at home has drawers you pull out, but the one at school has a top you lift up. It's like a box, and you can keep all sorts of things inside. It's super!"

Mother pictured her delightedly opening and shutting the lid of this new desk. And Mother didn't think it was all that naughty either. Anyway, Totto-chan would probably stop doing it as soon as the novelty wore off. But all she said to the teacher was, "I'll speak to her about it." The teacher's voice rose in pitch as she continued, "I wouldn't mind if that was all."

Mother flinched as the teacher leaned forward.

"When she's not making a clatter with her desk, she's standing up. All through class!"

"Standing up? Where?" asked Mother, surprised.

"At the window," the teacher replied crossly.

"Why does she stand at the window?" Mother asked, puzzled.

"So she can invite the street musicians over!" she almost shrieked. The gist of the teacher's story was that after an hour of almost constantly banging her desktop, Totto-chan would leave her desk and stand by the window, looking out. Then, just as the teacher was beginning to think that as long as she was quiet she might just as well stay there, Totto-chan would suddenly call out to a passing band of garishly dressed street musicians. To Totto-chan's delight and the teacher's tribulation, the classroom was on the ground floor looking out on the street.

Famous People of Japan: Tetsuko KUROYANAGI



There was only a low hedge in between, so anyone in the classroom could easily talk to people going by. When Totto-chan called to them, the street musicians would come right over to the window. Whereupon, said the teacher, Totto-chan would announce the fact to the whole room, "Here they are!" and all the children would crowd by the window and call out to the musicians.

"Play something," Totto-chan would say, and the little band, which usually passed the school quietly, would put on a rousing performance for the pupils with their clarinet, gongs, drums, and samisen, while the poor teacher could do little but wait patiently for the din to stop.

Finally, when the music finished, the musicians would leave and the students would go back to their seats. All except Totto-chan. When the teacher asked, "Why are you still at the window?" Totto-chan replied, quite seriously, "Another band might come by. And, anyway, it would be such a shame if the others came back and we missed them."

"You can see how disruptive all this is, can't you?" said the teacher emotionally. Mother was beginning to sympathize with her when she began again in an even shriller voice, "And then, besides ..."

"What else does she do?" asked Mother, with a sinking feeling. "What else?" exclaimed the teacher. "If I could even count the things she does I wouldn't be asking you to take her away." The teacher composed herself a little, and looked straight at Mother. "Yesterday, Totto-chan was standing at the window as usual, and I went on with the lesson thinking she was just waiting for the street musicians, when she suddenly called out to somebody, 'What are you doing?' From where I was I couldn't see who she was talking to, and I wondered what was going on. Then she called out again, 'What are you doing?' She wasn't addressing anyone in the road but somebody high up somewhere. I couldn't help being curious, and tried to hear the reply, but there wasn't any. In spite of that, your daughter kept on calling out, 'What are you doing?' so often I couldn't teach, so I went over to the window to see who your daughter was talking to. When I put my head out of the window and looked up, I saw it was a pair of swallows making a nest under the classroom eaves. She was talking to the swallows! Now, I understand children, and so I'm not saying that talking to swallows is nonsense. It is just that I feel it is quite unnecessary to ask swallows what they are doing in the middle of class." Before Mother could open her mouth to apologize, the teacher went on, "Then there was the drawing class episode. I asked the children to draw the Japanese flag, and all the others drew it correctly but your daughter started drawing the navy flag--you know, the one with the rays. Nothing wrong with that, I thought. But then she suddenly started to draw a fringe all around it. A fringe! You know, like those fringes on youth group banners. She's probably seen one somewhere. But before I realized what she was doing, she had drawn a yellow fringe that went right off the edge of the paper and onto her desk. You see, her flag took up most of the paper, so there wasn't enough room for the fringe. She took her yellow crayon and all around her flag she made hundreds of strokes that extended beyond the paper, so that when she lifted up the paper her desk was a mass of dreadful yellow marks that wouldn't come off no matter how hard we rubbed. Fortunately, the lines were only on three sides"

Puzzled, Mother asked quickly, "What do you mean, only three sides?"

Although she seemed to be getting tired, the teacher was kind enough to explain. "She drew a flagpole on the left, so the fringe was only on three sides of the flag."

Mother felt somewhat relieved. "I see, only on three sides."

Whereupon the teacher said very slowly, emphasizing each word, "But most of the flagpole went off the paper, too, and is still on the desk as well."

Then the teacher got up and said coldly, as a sort of parting shot, "I'm not the only one who is upset. The teacher in the classroom next door has also had trouble."

Mother obviously had to do something about it. It wasn't fair to the other pupils. She'd have to find another school, a school where they would understand her little girl and teach her how to get along with other people. The school they were on their way to was one Mother had found after a good deal of searching.

Mother did not tell Totto-chan she had been expelled. She realized Totto-chan wouldn't understand what she had done wrong and she didn't want her to get any complexes, so she decided not to tell Totto-chan until she was grown-up. All Mother said was, "How would you like to go to a new school? I've heard of a very nice

Famous People of Japan: Tetsuko KUROYANAGI

one."

"All right," said Totto-chan, after thinking it over. "But "What is it now?" thought Mother. "Does she realize she's been expelled?"

But a moment later Totto-chan was asking joyfully, "Do you think the street musicians will come to the new school?"

§The New School

When she saw the gate of the new school, Totto-chan stopped. The gate of the school she used to go to had fine concrete pillars with the name of the school in large characters. But the gate of this new school simply consisted of two rather short posts that still had twigs and leaves on them.

"This gate's growing," said Totto-chan. "It'll probably go on growing till it's taller than the telephone poles!"

The two "gateposts" were clearly trees with roots. When she got closer, she had to put her head to one side to read the name of the school because the wind had blown the sign askew. "To-mo-e Ga-ku-en."

Totto-chan was about to ask Mother what "Tomoe" meant, when she caught a glimpse of something that made her think she must be dreaming. She squatted down and peered through the shrubbery to get a better look, and she couldn't believe her eyes.

"Mother, is that really a train? There, in the school grounds!"

For its classrooms, the school had made use of six abandoned railroad cars. To Totto-chan it seemed something you might dream about. A school in a train!

The windows of the railroad cars sparkled in the morning sunlight. But the eyes of the rosy-cheeked little girl gazing at them through the shrubbery sparkled even more.

§ "I Like This School!"

A moment later, Totto-chan let out a whoop of joy and started running toward the "train school," call-ing out to Mother over her shoulder, "Come on, hurry, let's get on this train that's standing still."

Startled, Mother began to run after her. Mother had been on a basketball team once, so she was faster than Totto-chan and caught hold of her dress just as she reached a door.

"You can't go in yet," said Mother, holding her back. "The cars are classrooms, and you haven't even been accepted here yet. If you really want to get on this train, you'll have to be nice and polite to the headmaster. We're going to call on him now, and if all goes well, you'll be able to go to this school. Do you understand?"

Totto-chan was awfully disappointed not to get on the "train" right away, but she decided she had better do as Mother told her.

"All right," she said. And then added, "I like this school a lot."

Mother felt like telling her it wasn't a matter of

whether she liked the school but of whether the headmaster liked her. But she just let go of Totto-chan's dress, took hold of her hand, and started walking toward the headmaster's office.

All the railroad cars were quiet, for the first classes of the day had begun. Instead of a wall, the not very spacious school grounds were surrounded by trees, and there were flower beds full of red and yellow flowers.

The headmaster's office wasn't in a railroad car, but was on the right-hand side of a one-story building that stood at the top of a semicircular flight of about seven stone steps opposite the gate.

Totto-chan let go of Mother's hand and raced up the steps, then turned around abruptly, almost causing Mother to run into her.

"What's the matter?" Mother asked, fearing Totto-chan might have changed her mind about the school.

Standing above her on the top step, Totto-chan whispered to Mother in all seriousness, "The man we're going to see must be a stationmaster!"

Mother had plenty of patience as well as a great sense of fun. She put her face close to Totto-chan's and whispered, "Why?"

Totto-chan whispered back, "You said he was the headmaster, but if he owns all these trains, he must be a stationmaster."

Mother had to admit it was unusual for a school to make use of old railroad cars, but there was no time to ex-

Famous People of Japan: Tetsuko KUROYANAGI

plain. She simply said, "Why don't you ask him yourself? And, anyway, what about Daddy? He plays the violin and owns several violins, but that doesn't make our house a violin shop, does it?" "No, it doesn't," Totto-chan agreed, catching hold of Mother's hand. §The Headmaster

When Mother and Totto-chan went in, the man in the office got up from his chair.

His hair was thin on top and he had a few teeth missing, but his face was a healthy color. Although he wasn't very tall, he had solid shoulders and arms and was neatly dressed in a rather shabby black three-piece suit.

With a hasty bow, Totto-chan asked him spiritedly, "What are you, a schoolmaster or a station-master?"

Mother was embarrassed, but before she had time to explain, he laughed and replied, "I'm the headmaster of this school."

Totto-chan was delighted. "Oh, I'm so glad," she said, "because I want to ask you a favor. I'd like to come to your school."

The headmaster offered her a chair and turned to Mother. "You may go home now. I want to talk to Totto-chan."

Totto-chan had a moment's uneasiness, but somehow felt she would get along all right with this man.

"Well, then, I'll leave her with you," Mother said bravely, and shut the door behind her as she went out.

The headmaster drew over a chair and put it facing Totto-chan, and when they were both sitting down close together, he said, "Now then, tell me all about yourself. Tell me anything at all you want to talk about."

"Anything I like?" Totto-chan had expected him to ask questions she would have to answer. When he said she could talk about anything she wanted, she was so happy she began straight away. It was all a bit higgledy-piggledy, but she talked for all she was worth. She told the headmaster how fast the train went that they had come on; how she had asked the ticket collector but he wouldn't let her keep her ticket; how pretty her home-room teacher was at the other school; about the swallows' nest; about their brown dog, Rocky, who could do all sorts of tricks; how she used to go snip-snip with the scissors inside her mouth at kindergarten and the teacher said she mustn't do that because she might cut her tongue off, but she did it anyway; how she always blew her nose because Mother scolded her if it was runny; what a good swimmer Daddy was, and how he could dive as well. She went on and on. The headmaster would laugh, nod, and say, "And then?" And Totto-chan was so happy she kept right on talking. But finally she ran out of things to say. She sat with her mouth closed trying hard to think of something.

"Haven't you anything more you can tell me?" asked the headmaster.

What a shame to stop now, Totto-chan thought. It was such a wonderful chance. Wasn't there anything else she could talk about, she wondered, racking her brains? Then she had an idea.

She could tell him about the dress she was wearing that day. Mother made most of her dresses, but this one came from a shop. Her clothes were always torn when she came home in the late afternoon. Some of the rips were quite bad. Mother never knew how they got that way. Even her white cotton panties were sometimes in shreds. She explained to the headmaster that they got torn when she crossed other people's gardens by crawling under their fences, and when she burrowed under the barbed wire around vacant lots. So this morning, she said, when she was getting dressed to come here, all the nice dresses Mother had made were torn so she had to wear one Mother had bought. It had small dark red and gray checks and was made of jersey, and it wasn't bad, but Mother thought the red flowers embroidered on the collar were in bad taste. "Mother doesn't like the collar," said Totto-chan, holding it up for the headmaster to see.

After that, she could think of nothing more to say no matter how hard she tried. It made her rather sad. But just then the headmaster got up, placed his large, warm hand on her head, and said, "Well, now you're a pupil of this school."

Those were his very words. And at that moment Totto-chan felt she had met someone she really liked for the very first time in her life. You see, up till then, no one had ever listened to her for so long. And all that time the headmaster hadn't yawned once or looked bored, but seemed just as interested in what she had to say as she was.

Totto-chan hadn't learned how to tell time yet, but it did seem like a rather long time. If she had been able to, she would have been astonished, and even more grateful to the headmaster. For, you see, Mother and Totto-chan arrived at the school at eight, and when she had finished talking and the headmaster had told her she was a pupil of the school, he looked at his pocket watch and said, "Ah, it's time for lunch." So the headmaster must

Famous People of Japan: Tetsuko KUROYANAGI

have

listened to Totto-chan for four solid hours!

Neither before nor since did any grown-up listen to Totto-chan for as long as that. And, besides, it would have amazed Mother and her homeroom teacher to think that a seven-year-old child could find enough to talk about for four hours nonstop.

Totto-chan had no idea then, of course, that she had been expelled and that people were at their wit's end to know what to do. Having a naturally sunny disposition and being a bit absent-minded gave her an air of innocence. But deep down she felt she was considered different from other children and slightly strange. The headmaster, however, made her feel safe and warm and happy. She wanted to stay with him forever.

That's how Totto-chan felt about Headmaster Sosaku Kobayashi that first day. And, luckily, the headmaster felt the same about her.

§Totto-chan's Name

Totto-chan's real name was Tetsuko. Before she was born all Mother's and Daddy's friends and relatives said they were sure the baby would be a boy. It was their first child, and they believed it. So they decided to name the baby Toru. When the baby turned out to be a girl, they were a bit disappointed, but they both liked the Chinese character for toru (which means to penetrate, to carry far, to be clear and resonant, as a voice) so they made it into a girl's name by using its Chinese-derived pronunciation tetsu and adding the suffix ko often used for girl's names. So everybody called her Tetsuko-chan (chan is the familiar form of the san used after a person's name). But it didn't sound quite like Tetsuko-chan to her. Whenever anyone asked her what her name was, she would answer, "Totto-chan." She even thought that chan was part of her name, too.

Daddy sometimes called her Totsky, as if she were a boy. He'd say, "Totsky! Come and help me take these bugs off the roses!" But except for Daddy and Rocky everybody else called her Totto-chan, and although she wrote her name as Tetsuko in her notebooks at school, she still went on thinking of herself as Totto-chan.



Famous People of Japan:
Tetsuko KUROYANAGI

Handout A: ASSESSMENT

Name _____ **Score**

1. What is the name of Tetsuko Kuroyanagi's best selling book?

2. Why was Tetsuko's book so popular?

3. Other than her book, write two things Tetsuko Kuroyanagi is known for.

A. _____

B. _____

4. What role did Tetsuko Kuroyanagi play in UNICEF?

5. What similarities or differences do you see between the schools Tetsuko attended and American schools?

Answers: (cover when making test copies for students)

~~1. – Totto Chan, The Little Girl at the Window~~

2. – Japanese people could identify with Totto Chan's experiences.

3. – Donating money to charities in Japan and abroad, TV personality

4. – Goodwill Ambassador

Famous People of Japan: Tetsuko KUROYANAGI

Handout B: rubric OF UNIT ASSESSMENT

Name _____

Topic: Famous People of Japan: Tetsuko Kuroyanagi

Dear Parents,

Your child was assessed on the topic above using the items that are circled. Accompanying this summary is your child's written work on the topic. You may wish to go over the attached work to praise your child for his/her accomplishments and help him correct errors. Thank you.

group collaboration

	<u>3 points</u>	<u>2 points</u>	<u>1 point</u>	<u>0 points</u>
<u>Teacher</u>	<u>S</u> collaborated with group	<u>S</u> collaborated with group	<u>S</u> collaborated with group	<u>S</u> collaborated with group
<u>Observation</u>	all of the time	most of the time	some of the time	none of the time
<u>Group Report</u>	Contained all required elements	Missing 1 Or 2 required elements	Missing 3 Or 4 required elements	Missing more than 4 required elements
<u>Group Product</u>	Contained all required elements	Missing 1 Or 2 required elements	Missing 3 Or 4 required elements	Missing more than 4 required elements

understanding of topic

<u>Oral Report</u>	Contained all required elements	Missing 1 Or 2 required elements	Missing 3 Or 4 required elements	Missing more than 4 required elements
<u>Product</u>	Contained all required elements	Missing 1 Or 2 required elements	Missing 3 Or 4 required elements	Missing more than 4 required elements
<u>Written Report</u>	Contained all required elements	Missing 1 Or 2 required elements	Missing 3 Or 4 required elements	Missing more than 4 required elements
<u>Written Test or Quiz</u>	Answered all items correctly	Answered most items correctly	Answered some items correctly	Answered few items correctly
<u>Oral Test or Quiz</u>	Answered all items correctly	Answered most items correctly	Answered some items correctly	Answered few items correctly

You may keep your child's papers and the top of this summary . Please detach this section and return to school tomorrow so I know you received this information. Thank you.

I have received my child's work and assessment summary.

Parent Signature _____

Child's name _____

Famous People of Japan: **Tetsuko KUROYANAGI**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books:

The Encyclopedia of Pop Culture by Mark Schilling (Weatherhill, Inc., 2000)

Totto-chan, The Little Girl at the Window by Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, translated by Dorothy Britton (Kodansha International, 1996)

Internet websites about Tetsuko Kuroyanagi and other famous Japanese people:

<http://www.inv.co.jp/~tagawa/totto/profile.html>

<http://jin.jcic.or.jp/access/index.html>

<http://www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/information/famous/>

[http://metropolis.japantoday.com/bigInJapanarchive349/346/
bigInJapaninc.htm](http://metropolis.japantoday.com/bigInJapanarchive349/346/bigInJapaninc.htm)