

## STEP 準 1 級 課題英作文演習

Q : Give a brief answer to the following question in roughly 100 words (you may go a little over or be slightly short of the target).

- What do the Japanese do during *Shōgatsu*—the New Year holidays?

A : Although *Shōgatsu* means January, we generally celebrate it for the first three days or the first week of January.

*Shōgatsu* is the most important days for the Japanese. Schools and businesses close for one to two weeks, and many people who live away from their families return home to spend this time with their families. To prepare for *Shōgatsu*, a general house cleaning is done, and New Year's pine and bamboo decorations, sacred straw festoon, and round mirror-shaped rice cakes are set out. On New Year's Eve, bells speeding the old year are rung at temples and the New Year is welcomed by eating year-crossing noodles.

On New Year's Day, many wear Japanese-style garments and people go for the first temple or shrine visit of the New Year and pray for health and happiness in the new year. *Shōgatsu* is also enjoyed by reading New Year's cards and by children receiving New Year's gift.

(154 words)

