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# THE TINY NEWSLETTER

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ISSUE 2 – FEBRUARY 2016

## Happy February!



*Due to various unfortunate health factors in January, we only have the English newsletter for February.*

February has many festivals and in this newsletter, we are going to introduce a Japanese Festival and an International Festival.

### Setsubun (節分)



Setsubun is the day before the beginning of spring in Japan. Previously, Setsubun was associated with the Lunar New Year (which is introduced below). Setsubun is associated with a ritual to cleanse the evil from the old year and drive away evil spirits for the coming year. Setsubun originated from China and was introduced to Japan in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The custom of Mamemaki (豆まき) is usually performed by the *toshiotoko* (年男) of the household (the male who was born on the corresponding animal year on the Chinese zodiac), or else the male head of the household.

Roasted soybeans (福豆 *fuku mame*) are thrown either out the door or at a member of the family wearing an *Oni* (demon) mask, while the people say "Demons out! Luck in!" (鬼は外! 福は内! *Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!*) and slam the door. This is still common practice in households but many people will attend a shrine or temple's Spring festival where this is done. The beans are thought to symbolically purify the home by driving away the evil spirits that bring misfortune and bad health with them. Then, as part of bringing luck in, it is customary to eat roasted soybeans, one for each year of one's life, and in some areas, one for each year of one's life plus one more for bringing good luck for the year to come.

## **Chinese Lunar New Year (旧正月)**

Chinese Lunar New Year is an important Chinese festival celebrated by Chinese people all over the world at the turn of the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar. It is also known as the Spring Festival (春節), the literal translation of the modern Chinese name. Celebrations traditionally run from the evening preceding the first day, to the 15th day of the first calendar month. The first day of the New Year falls on the new moon between 21 January and 20 February. Often, the evening preceding Chinese New Year's Day is an occasion for Chinese families to gather for the

annual reunion dinner. It is also traditional for every family to thoroughly cleanse the house, in order to sweep away any ill-fortune and to make way for good incoming luck. Windows and doors will be decorated with red color paper-cuts and couplets with popular themes of "good fortune" or "happiness", "wealth", and "longevity". Other activities include lighting firecrackers and giving money to unmarried relatives in red paper envelopes.



## Updates

### **1. Creation of online readings of our books**

We have added several online readings on our [site](#), please feel free to look at them. We will be adding more each month!

### **2. Crafts with storytelling sessions in Kobe**

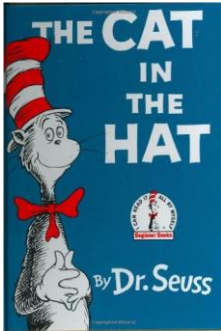
This event has not been finalized due to several personal factors and might be postponed. However, I will definitely keep all members informed!

### **3. New books**

We have added the Dr Seuss series and will be adding the Arthur series, as well as more Berenstain books and Madeline books to our library.

# Monthly Book Shoutouts

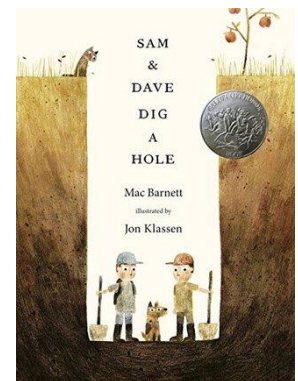
## 1. THE CAT IN THE HAT (by *Dr Seuss*)



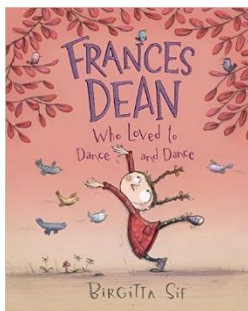
For ages 4-8, join the Cat in the Hat as he makes learning to read a joy! It's a rainy day and Dick and Sally can't find anything to do . . . until the Cat in the Hat unexpectedly appears and turns their dreary afternoon into a fun-filled extravaganza! The book strongly emphasizes the consequences of letting a stranger into a house while the adult is away and how the boy finally comes to his senses to realize that both he and Sally could get in trouble with their mother if he does not stop the Things from destroying the house. With rhyming words and colourful illustrations, both parent and child will find this cult classic a joy to read.

## 2. SAM & DAVE DIG A HOLE (By *Mac Barnett*)

For ages 4-8. Sam and Dave are on a mission. A mission to find something spectacular. So they dig a hole. And they keep digging. And they find . . . nothing. Yet the day turns out to be pretty spectacular after all. Attentive readers will be rewarded with a rare treasure in this witty story of looking for the extraordinary — and finding it in a manner you'd never expect. The humor here is mainly in the illustrations. The story is simple, it's highly memorable and just hilarious, and with only a few sentences per page, this is an ideal bedtime read.



## 3. FRANCES DEAN WHO LOVED TO DANCE AND DANCE (By *Birgitta Sif*)



For ages 4-8, this is a good book for a shy or timid child and also for us, as adults, to be mindful of the less outgoing child. In the story, Frances Dean loves to dance. She feels the wind and she dances. She hears singing birds and she dances. In her every waking moment, she is inspired to move. But as soon as anyone is around, Frances Dean's knees begin to tremble, butterflies start to flutter in her tummy, and she forgets how to dance. Will she ever find the courage to share her talent with others and feel free? The illustrations are wonderfully sketched and you can feel Frances Dean moving along in the book.

That's it for February, Happy Valentine's Day and have fun driving off the demons for Setsubun!

*Tiny Books for Tiny Folks.*