こんにちは皆さん！今月、十月三十一日で日本語ハウスは「百物語～ナイト」の行事はあります。皆さんはクーキーを食べてお茶を飲みながら、一番好きな怪談を話しましょう！

Good afternoon everyone! On October 31st, the Japanese (Larson) House will be hosting Hyakumonogatari Night! This event will allow students to come to the house and enjoy treats and tea while listening to traditional haunting Japanese ghost stories and tales.

Sincerely,

Your Larson House Residents

Instead of focusing on festivals or events happening in Japan this month, we decided to conduct more in depth research about the culture of “Hyakumonogatari” and the history of the ceremony.

“Hyakumonogatari kaidanka” has been reported to have started around the Edo period, beginning around 1603 AD. The history of the game itself has not changed: usually a large group of people will sit around inside a room and each person will recount a ghost story, horror tale, or supernatural encounter. They will then go to the third room (there are three rooms in this setting) and stand in front of a mirror before blowing out a candle and returning to the first room. When everyone has told their story and all the candles are blown out, the darkened room is supposedly visited by a spirit. It was also believed that by blowing out a candle after each story eventually a spirit would be summoned.

“Hyakumonogatari kaidanka” became popular within the samurai class. It has been said that the samurai class first began to use the “kaidan” (meaning “scary/horror stories” or accounts of the supernatural”) in “Hyakumonogatari Kaidanka” as part of a test of courage to introduce the newest samurai warriors into the army.

Aside from the samurai class, “Hyakumonogatari Kaidanka” also gained popularity among the other aristocratic warrior classes, and soon after, the working class and lower class. Originally, the kaidan were personal accounts from villagers or family members. However, as

the “Hyakumonogatari Kaidanka” gained more attention and popularity within Japan, the stories began to include themes like karma, from the Buddhist term Karm, as well as a heightened desire to tell more realistic stories of horror.

In the modern day people usually describe horror stories in Japanese as 怖い話 (romanized as “kowai hanashi”) or ホラーの話 (romanized as “horaa no hanashi”). 怪談 (romanized as “kaidan”) is used in special cases to create an old-fashioned setting for the listeners. “Hyakumonogatari Kaidanka” is still a huge part of Japanese culture in the modern day and is widely used as the American equivalent of Halloween.