

On January 26<sup>th</sup> the Olympia Kato Sister City Association in cooperation with Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle the held “Oshogatsu in Olympia” to celebrate the New Year.



Oshogatsu in Olympia showcased Japanese New Year's festivities to Olympians alongside the centennial celebration and cherry tree planting to commemorate the anniversary of the gift of cherry trees from Japan to the United States. The honorable Steven Buxbaum, Mayor of Olympia, the Honorable Karen Fraser, Washington State Senator, the Honorable Sam Hunt, Washington State Representative, and the Honorable Allen Miller, President of the Olympia-Kato Sister City Association participated in the centennial celebration ceremony. During the ceremony, as a symbol of friendship between Japan and the United States, a ceremonial shovel was passed from Senior Consul Tomoko Dodo to Mayor Steven Buxbaum. With this gesture, the City of Olympia accepted a gift of cherry trees that will grow into the future, as a symbol of the friendship between Japan and the United States, at the Percival Landing Park, Yashiro Garden, and the Memorial Fountain in the City of Olympia.



Also, at Oshogatsu in Olympia, over 2000 citizens of Olympia experienced a wide variety of Japanese culture at the main stage. Performances included *mochitsuki*, Okinawan taiko drumming, a choir performance by the Yelm Elementary School Choir, and a *Soran-bushi* dance, as well as the Japanese art of comedic storytelling, *rakugo*.



Thank you to everyone who made this event a success.