

The Furin, poetic charm for the summer season

A *furin* is a small Japanese wind chime, which is traditionally hung from the eaves of a house during the summer. It has the shape of a bell with the clapper in the center of the chime. A strip of paper, called the *tanzaku*, hangs from the clapper.

When the wind blows, the *tanzaku* causes the clapper to strike the sides of the chime, thus making the *furin* toll.

Japanese people enjoy that *furin* changes the wind into sound.



●Originated from a Chinese fortune telling tool

The *furin* originated from a Chinese tool called a “*Senfutaku*,” which was hung in a bamboo forest, and was used to tell if things would be good or bad, from the direction of the wind and the sound that it made.

The tools came from China to Japan together with Buddhism. They were hung from the four corners of temples eaves and at noble families houses in Japan. Called



“*Futaku* (wind-bell)” they were intended to ward off evil spirits. It was said that within hearing range of its booming sound, people would be protected from disasters and the evil spirits. But the sound of the *futaku* was very different from that of the *furin*.

Then in Kamakura period, the *futaku* was transformed into the *furin* and became very popular.

●Start of the *furin* boom

Though most *furins* were made of bronze, glass *furins* appeared in the Edo period.

Glassworks artisans in Nagasaki made *furins* and started selling them in Osaka, Kyoto and Edo (Tokyo).

Glass was valuable, so the cost of a *furin* was two to three million yen, using today’s standards.

In the late Edo period, people in Edo learned to make glass, so common people were able to enjoy the refreshingly smooth sound of a glass *furin*.





Traditionally, “Edo *Furin* made of glass” and “Nanbu *Furin* made of Nanbu ironware” have been popular, as well as “Hibashi *Furin* made of fire-iron.”

● **Careful consideration of the *Furin* learned from people in the old days**

Though the sound of the *furin* might be charming in its own way, there may be many people who consider it noisy.

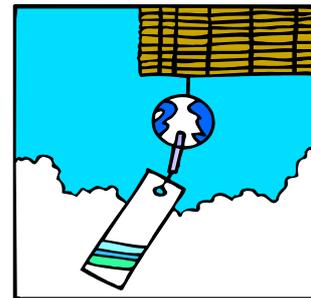
It is said that people in Edo, who had a love for the *furin*, paid careful attention to others. They made a point of taking in the *furin* before going to bed, and also in days of wind and rain, so as not to be a nuisance to others.

This is why the *furin* was loved and became widely used.

● **Fascination of the *furin***

Why does the jingle of a *furin* give us a settled, relaxed feeling?

The vibrating body of a *furin* emits sounds of different frequencies, because of its complicated shapes. If they are overlapped, they produce fluctuations. Also the *tanzaku* flaps erratically in the wind. Being stimulated by these overlapping and erratic sounds along with fluctuations, people feel comfortable with the sound of the *furin*, since our bodies have the rhythm of such fluctuations, which relates to the rhythm of life in nature.



Let light breezes make them ring. In the stifling summer heat, a jingle from these bells means cool breezes.