

Dictation Contest (PRJr, 初級) No. 720

Hey, guys! How are you doing?

We are already in the last week of January, but did you have a good New Year? Did you do anything special? Some people go on a trip somewhere, and other people just stay home, but I think almost everybody goes to visit a shrine. It's probably the most common New Year's tradition in Japan.

Did you take part in any other traditions? Does your family have its own New Year's tradition? Let me know, okay? See you next time!

Dictation Contest (PR 1, 中級) No. 720

Hello, everyone! Welcome back to PR1.

Today, we will listen to a short daily conversation. Let's begin!

Jun: Have you ever been to Northern Japan?

Kay: No, I've never been there. How about you?

Jun: Many times! I go to my dad's hometown for vacation. My grandparents live there.

Kay: Really? How is it?

Jun: It's enjoyable. My grandparents' house is far from the city, so it's really quiet and cold.

Kay: I see. There must be a lot of nature around it.

Jun: Yes, there is. I go on walks every day.

Kay: What else do you do there?

Jun: Nothing much. The stars at night are really nice to look at, though.

Kay: I love stars. Now I want to go to Northern Japan.

Well, that's it for today. See you next time, bye-bye!

Dictation Contest (PR2 上級) No. 720

Hello everyone, and welcome back to PR2!

I hope everyone is doing amazing in the New Year!

Today we will learn about a constellation in the sky, the Corvus and Crater. It is based off of ancient Greek mythology, which I will read to you shortly. Corvus is the name of a mischievous and naughty crow, and Crater refers to a cup. Take a listen.

According to the myth, the god Apollo sent Corvus, the crow, to fill a cup — known as a crater — with water from a nearby spring. On the way, the crow saw a tree filled with unripe figs. Instead of fetching the water and coming back later, he waited for the figs to ripen. When they did, he gorged on the delicious fruit.

Corvus knew that Apollo wouldn't be happy with him. So he filled the cup with water, then grabbed a water snake in his talons. He brought both back to Apollo, and blamed the snake for blocking his way. But Apollo wasn't fooled. Instead, he was angry and vengeful. He cast crow, cup, and snake into the heavens, forming three constellations. As extra punishment, he decreed that the crow would suffer from thirst — with the water-filled cup forever just out of reach.

The constellations are in the southeast at nightfall in the spring. Corvus contains four moderately bright stars that form a shape that resembles a sail. Crater, to the upper right, looks like a goblet — but you really need dark skies to see it.

Both of them sit on the back of poor Hydra, the water snake — an innocent victim of the wrath of the gods.

All right, that is it for today. Do you think it was fair for Apollo to cast the water snake into a constellation? Let me know next time! See you!