On March 3, it was Hina-matsuri, doll festival. At school we made small dolls, and Alex made a collage to celebrate. Beautiful old dolls were displayed in the entrance to school for about a week. The dolls were originally used to ward off sickness and oni. Nowadays they just display the dolls for fun.

By March the Ume (plum) blossoms began to bloom. The first ones we saw were on the way to Uji, and the ones shown here are at Go-sho. We passed one day on the way to Genki-land.

On March 5, I had a piano recital. I was supposed to help with the opening greeting, and later play two songs, “nabe nabe” and “kaeru no uta”. Daddy accompanied me for the second song. At the end of the concert I played tambourine and sang with about 10 other friends “bokura wa minna ikiteiru”. I practiced every day for a week, especially for my solo and duet. Daddy tried to give me some last minute coaching before getting on stage, but I just told him “I will do it my way” and did! My teacher led me on stage, and sat me in my seat. Then I looked around for Mama. She was sitting in the center of the audience. I played my song looking at her instead of the keyboard for the first part (I knew it so well by then I didn’t need to look at the keys). Everything went like we practiced. Mama and Daddy were very proud of me.
It was especially fun to stand back stage, especially looking at the monitor. Here is a picture of me with my teacher. She always knew that I could do it.

It was a very long day, but I liked to watch the other friends playing, and insisted on staying through the whole five hours, with only a few breaks here and there to walk around in the stores outside, and do ayatorii (cat’s cradle). I’ve learned to make houki (broom), hashigo (ladder), among other things, and today I learned gomu (elastic band) while I waited for my turn to play.

(March 14)

This past weekend we went to Tokyo to go skiing with Oba-chan. We went to snow country by shinkansen,
and stayed overnight at a ryokan where they served food in our room. I took a lesson and skied with Mama on both days we were there.

(March 31)

On the weekend before Grandma visited we went to a wedding on Saturday, visited Mrs. Michida on Sunday, and then drove out with Ken, Miki, their son Koh, and Mrs. Michida to Kutsuki-mura on Monday. When we arrived at Kutsukimura, we went straight to the river and threw stones into the beautiful clear stream for a while. Then we had pizza at Ma-chan’s place, and after that we visited a dairy farm and had delicious fresh milk, and ice cream. Koh is a few months younger than Wally.
At the end of March, Grandma came all the way from Australia to visit us. Wally still remembers Grandpa and asked about him for the first day.

Grandma stayed for about 10 days and went to see many temples with Daddy and Mama when she wasn’t working. On the weekend, we all went to Osaka to watch the second to last day of the Sumo Tournament. There were lots of people watching the action on the small dohyou (platform). During some of the bouts people called out the names of their favorite sumo wrestler. Wally and I joined in. The last bout was between Kaio and Asashouryu. There was a lot of shouting for that one, and after Asashouryu beat Kaio lots of cushions flew in the air.