

# *Hatsu*



## 初 *hatsu*













The character *hatsu* (初) combines an element meaning “clothing” on the left and one meaning “blade” on the right; together they represent the idea of cutting cloth with scissors. Cutting the fabric to size is the first step in making a piece of clothing, and this character has thus come to express the idea of beginning and of first things.

New Year’s is a major holiday in Japan, and the character *hatsu* appears in many contexts as the year begins: *hatsu-hinode* (first sunrise), *hatsu-yume* (first dream), *hatsu-geiko* (first practice), *hatsu-uri* (first sale). These are just a few examples of the terms where the prefix *hatsu* indicates the first occasion of the year. These firsts are considered special, marking a break in the everyday routine—a time to step into the year with renewed resolve.

This is the first issue of *We Are Tomodachi* for 2016. We hope that this magazine will continue to help readers learn more about Japan over the year to come.

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