

<Japanese Words and Phrases> — *Tsuyu* (Rainy Season) —

The period from late May to mid-July every year is a period of special climatic conditions, and is called *tsuyu* (the rainy season). During this period, most of Japan, with the exception of Hokkaido in the north and the Ogasawara Islands in the south, gets a great deal of rain.

The beginning of the rainy season is called *tsuyu-iri*; the period when the rainy season finishes and summer begins is called *tsuyu-ake*.

Rice is the *shushoku* (staple food) of the Japanese, and the high volume of rain during the rainy season and high temperatures and sunshine of summer are essential to producing rice. The rainy season is a very busy time for rice farmers, who are engaged in *taue* (rice planting).

<日本のことば>

つゆ 梅雨

「梅雨」とは、北の北海道と南の小笠原諸島を除く大部分の日本の地域において見られる特有の気象で、5月下旬から7月半ばにかけて毎年巡ってくる、雨の多い時期のことです。

梅雨に入ることを「梅雨入り」、梅雨が終わって夏になることを「梅雨明け」と言います。日本人の「主食」は米で、米づくりには梅雨の豊富な水と夏の高い気温や日照は欠かせません。梅雨の時期は農家にとっては「田植え」で大忙しです。