

Children's Day こどもの日

It's May! We've said goodbye to the snow, the temperature keeps rising day by day, the flowers are blooming and life is starting to flourish once again (for real this time). May brings with it the long-awaited "Golden Week", a period of 4 national holidays that often occurs all within one week! The last holiday of Golden Week is Children's Day on May 5th. Today we'll introduce you to some of the ways this holiday is celebrated so that you can join in too if you'd like!

The clue to what Children's day is all about is in the name - it's about respecting children's individual personalities and to celebrate their happiness. It was originally a day designated more so for boys as a counterpart to March's *Hinamatsuri*, a day celebrating girls. However in recent times it has taken on a more general meaning with both boys and girls being represented in the traditional decorations for the holiday.

Speaking of decorations, around this time you might see some *koinobori*, a pole with 3 or more carp-shaped windsocks attached to it. These decorations are put up for Children's

Day, and represent the family unit. The topmost and largest carp is black, and



represents the father of the family, the second carp is red and represents the mother. Following are smaller carps in blue, orange or green representing the children in the house with color and position representing their relative age. Originally the red carp represented the eldest son and any others after represented only the male children, but in recent years there's been a shift in cultural values that has led to this becoming a representation of the entire family unit.

Some families might also display a samurai doll and/or a *kabuto*, a traditional samurai battle helmet inside their house as signs of strength and vitality in the hope that their children will grow up to be strong.

Continued on Page 3

Contents:

Children's Day	1, 3
Events	2
Cherry Blossom Viewing	3
Movie Schedule, Social Distancing	4



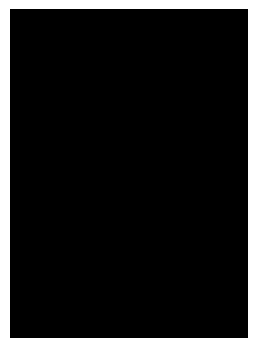
Children's Day
(pg1, 3)



Events (pg 2)



Cherry Blossom
Viewing
(pg 3)



Movies
(pg 4)

Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

Please be aware that these events may be cancelled to prevent the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus.

To find out if these events are still running, please contact the respective organizers.

When	What	Where/Contact
	<p>The Tokachi International Relations Center will be closed until May 11th.</p> <p>In order to prevent the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus, the following events have been cancelled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 58th Kids Playground (Ireland) 5/16 第58回キッズ・プレイグラウンド(アイルランド) ● 78th International Talk (Farewell Talk: China) 5/16 第78回インターナショナル・トーク(フェアウェルトーク : 中国) ● Mini Volleyball Night 5/13 ミニバレーボール・ナイト ● Japanese Conversation Table (2nd and 4th Saturday) 森の日本語講座 <p>※ Japanese Conversation Table will be on hiatus until further notice.</p>	<p>Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp</p>
4/24–5/6 (Fri-Wed)	<p>30th Rekifune River Clear Stream Koinobori 30 第30回歴舟川清流鯉のぼり30</p> <p>A fun custom unique to Children's Day! Come and watch 236 carp streamers “swim” in the air across the width of the clearest river in Japan, the Rekifune River. Small carp streamers installed on the riverbed are very popular with children.</p>	<p>Taiki Bridge, Upper Riverbed 大樹橋上流河川敷 大樹町観光協会事務局 01558-6-2114</p>
5/24 (Sun)	<p>Thanks for 3 Years! Michi no Eki Pia 21 Shihoro Birthday ありがとう3周年！道の駅ピア21しほろの誕生祭</p> <p>Celebrate Michi no Eki Pia 21 Shihoro's 3rd birthday! There will be activities and presents for visitors to enjoy. Local produce and beef will also be available for sale.</p>	<p>Michi no Eki Pia 21 Shihoro 道の駅ピア21しほろ 01564-5-3940 http://shihoroinfo.com</p>

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Continued from page 1

In addition to all this, *kashiwa-mochi* (sticky rice cakes with red-bean jam served in oak

leaves) and *chimaki* (sticky glutinous rice wrapped in bamboo or oak leaves) are often served on this day, so give them a try if you get the chance!

If all that still hasn't left you satisfied, why not draw yourself a *shobu-yu* bath? While not strictly related to children's day, this cultural tradition has always been done on May 5th and as a result the two practices have become intertwined.

shobu-yu, or iris-bath, is the practice of bathing with a bushel of iris leaves floating in the bath water. This practice is said to have originated in China before becoming widespread in Japan. It was believed that the plants had protective powers and bathing with them would help children grow up healthy and strong, and to ward off evil spirits.



**After joining in all these traditions, we hope
that you too can get healthy and strong in
time for summer!**

Cherry Blossom Viewing 花見

Here in Hokkaido, we're very lucky when it comes to Cherry Blossom Viewings. Why? Because the Cherry Blossoms bloom so late here, full bloom often aligns with Golden week, giving us plenty of time to get our fill of the famous flowers! Of course, this can vary from year to year and by where you are in Hokkaido, but the current cherry blossom forecast for Tokachi from the Japanese Meteorological Agency predicts that the trees will reach full bloom during the last week of April/first week of May.

While it might be tempting to set up a cherry blossom viewing party and picnic under the cherry blossoms with friends, we would like to remind you that large public gatherings are strongly discouraged to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

While these spaces may be of lower risk for transmission of 2019 novel coronavirus, we ask you to keep in mind that they still contain a risk, and to take all necessary precautions.

**Please practice social
distancing as you
enjoy the spring
sakura safely this
Golden Week!**



Times and movies are subject to change! (for space reasons not all movies are listed)
To confirm, call or check online at: http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml

Please be aware that due to the state of emergency in Japan, Cinema Taiyo Obihiro will be closed until May 8th (as of 4/17) .
Please contact Cinema Taiyo Obihiro for more information.

Title	Language	Dates
The Call of the Wild (野性の呼び声/Yasei no Yobigoe)	Jpn Sub	Until 28 th
Les Misérables	Jpn Sub	From 8 th Until 28 th
Not Quite Dead Yet	Japanese	From 8 th

Social Distancing ソーシャルディスタンス



Japan, along with the rest of the world, has been changing since the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus.

Thankfully, Tokachi has not been hit

hard by the virus, but our way of life here has definitely changed. In order to prevent further spread the 2019 novel coronavirus, the Hokkaido government has asked for its citizens to practice “social distancing.”

What is social distancing?

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” is defined as “keeping space

between yourself and other people outside of your home.” Social distancing limits the amount of contact one has with infected people and contaminated surfaces, helping to reduce the chance of spreading the 2019 novel coronavirus.

Here are some tips to practice social distancing:

- Stay at least 2 meters away from others
- Cover your mouth and nose when you go outside (with a mask or cloth)
- Avoid gatherings
- Avoid using public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis
- Use mail-order and/or delivery services to avoid contact with others

Practice social distancing to keep yourself and others safe!

Obihiro Pioneer can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, Obihiro University International Center, Obihiro Tourism and Convention Center inside the Obihiro JR Station, Obihiro Public Library, Tokachi Plaza, Cinema Taiyo, Joy English Academy and online at www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp (click on “Information for Foreigners”)

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