



Obihiro Pioneer

Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section Newsletter

CONTENTS



The Story of
Tanabata
Page 1, 2



Japanese Driving
Etiquette
Page 2, 3



Movies
Page 3



Events
Page 4

The Story of Tanabata

七夕物語

Once upon a time, there was a god who lived in heaven with his daughter whose name was Orihime. She was a hard worker who took her job very seriously. She weaved clothing every day on the bank of the Amanogawa River (known as the Milky Way, which was metaphorically referred to as a river). However, she was very sad and lonely. Her father saw this and felt bad for his daughter. She was of age and she needed someone she could be together with. Her father sought out a dependable man and found a cow herder who lived across the Amanogawa. His name was Hikoboshi, a hard-working farmer who tended to his cows every day.



Orihime's father so much that he decided to separate them permanently. He brought Orihime back home and destroyed the bridge that was used to cross the Amanogawa.

Orihime was deeply saddened that she could not meet her husband and wept every day. Her father started to feel bad for her, so he decided to allow her to meet Hikoboshi. However, they were only allowed to meet once per year, on the 7th day of the 7th month. Also, she must return by the morning of the next day. Thus, every year on the night of July 7th, Orihime's wish to meet Hikoboshi is granted.

Tanabata: Japanese Holiday

Every year on July 7th, Japanese people celebrate Tanabata. The most common tradition is that children often write their wishes on slips of paper called *tanzaku* (短冊). These *tanzaku* are then often hung from



Continued on Page 2

The Story of Tanabata

七夕物語

Continued from Page 1

bamboo grass called *sasatake* (笹竹). Since this is the night in which Orihimie's wish is granted, it is said that wishes written on *tanzaku* are also

granted as Orihime merrily crosses the Milky Way to meet her husband. Children often wish for good grades, health, their families, and peace.



Origins of Tanabata

If you look at the kanji for Tanabata, you will see that 七夕 is used. You may know these as the kanji for “seven” and “evening”. This is because the story of Tanabata was actually introduced to Japan by the Chinese during the Heian period (8th-12th century), and the Chinese called it 七夕 (Qixi). These characters refer to the “evening of the 7th”. In Japan, there was already a Shinto festival during this period in which Shinto shrine maidens wove cloth to offer to the gods for a bountiful harvest. The cloth was called



tanabata (たなばた), so the word 七夕 took on the reading of *tanabata*, and the rest was history!

Sendai Tanabata Festival

Tanabata is celebrated on a small scale in most of Japan, such as at home, community centers, schools, and shrines. However, there are some large scale festivals throughout Japan. One of the biggest is in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. This festival actually takes place on August 6-8, which lines up with the traditional Chinese calendar for the 7th day of the 7th month. Tourists number in the millions. It's a city-wide event where everyone, including businesses, sets up handcrafted bamboo poles out front, some over 10 meters long! Not only do they hang *tanzaku* from them, but also paper kimonos, paper fishnets, paper garbage cans, and paper purses. These decorations all wish for different things, such as business prosperity and family safety.

Japanese Driving Etiquette

北海道での運転マナー

As a resident of Hokkaido, you are more likely to own a car compared to people who live in other parts of Japan, especially here in Tokachi! Hokkaido is big, and it's hard to get around without your own car. You may have noticed some gestures or things that Japanese drivers do



that are different from those in your country. There are a number of unwritten rules of the road that Japanese people follow. Here are some of those rules so that you too can become a driving master!

Mastering the Blinker

The blinker has a number of uses other than being used as hazard lights during emergencies. Drivers flash their blinkers to say

Japanese Driving Etiquette

日本の運転マナー

“thank you” when you let them get onto the road from a side street or parking lot. I noticed that this happens much more in mainland Japan than in Hokkaido, where people here tend to look out the window and bow. Practical uses of the blinkers are when you have to slow down to a low speed on the highway, as it tells drivers behind you to slow down. They’re also used when driving below the speed limit in general.



by, accident or not!

The Right of Way is King

“Right of Way” refers to which car has priority to move first in any situation, such as cars on main roads not having to yield to those on side streets. In many countries, nice drivers often allow cars on side streets to go ahead of them when they would normally have to wait.

In Japan, there is no “being nice”, there is only “following the right of way”. Drivers won’t slow down on a main road to allow a car on a side road to pass, and they always follow the order of arrival at intersections. This isn’t because they don’t want to be nice, but because following the rules prevents traffic and situations where nobody moves due to both being too nice to go first. Even if you want to be nice, just follow the right of way!

Don’t Splash People!

When it rains, water pools up on the side of the road. If you drive by this and end up splashing a pedestrian, you can actually get reported and have to pay a ticket. On top of that, you have to pay for that person’s cleaning bill! Thus, when it rains, drivers pay extra attention and drive slower as to not splash people walking

Movies @ Cinema Taiyo in Obihiro

Not all movies are listed. Times and movies are subject to change.
To confirm, call or check online at: www.taiyogroup.jp/movie/obihiro

Title	Genre	Lang	Dates
Top Gun: Maverick <i>Toppu Gan Māverikku</i>	action/ drama	EN	Until 21 st
Broker <i>Beibī Burōkā</i>	drama	KR	Until 21 st
Lightyear <i>Bazu Raitoiyā</i>	animation /sci-fi	JP	All month
Thor: Love and Thunder <i>Sō: Rabu & Sandā</i>	action/ adventure	EN, JP	From 8 th
Minions: The Rise of Gru <i>Minionzu Fībā</i>	animation /comedy	JP	From 15 th
Jurassic World Dominion <i>Jurashikku Wārudo Aratanaru Shihai</i>	sci-fi/ action	N/A	From 29 th

Obihiro Nishi 3 Minami 11
Tel: (0155) 20-1525



KEY: JP = Japanese voice EN = English voice with Japanese subtitles KR = Korean Voice

Events in Tokachi

Please be aware that these and other events may be affected by COVID-19. To find out if these events are still running, please contact the respective organizers or check out their webpages online.

When	What	Where/Contact
7/3 (Sun) 10:00-15:30	Friends of the World 2022 世界のともだち2022 Come enjoy one of Obihiro's biggest cultural events of the year with Friends of the World 2022! You can take part in activities such as taking photographs in traditional clothing from around the world, eat food from food stalls from many countries, listen to English stories, make crafts from around the world, and much more! Fee: Free of charge Registration: No registration needed Max Visitors: No limit, however, parking is limited, so please try to use public transportation or carpool	Tokachi International Relations Center, JICA Center @ Obihiro 世界のともだち実行委員会 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
7/9 (Sat) 15:00-16:30	International Talk (Egypt) インターナショナル・トーク: エジプト Learn more about the countries of the world. This month's theme is "Egypt". This time our guest is Ahmed Abdou, an international student at Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine. He will introduce his country and share facts and interesting information about Egyptian culture, lifestyle and more. Participants can interact with the guest through a presentation and Q&A session. Fee: Free of charge Registration: No registration required	Tokachi International Relations Center @ Obihiro 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
7/10 (Sun) 6:00-8:00	50th Annual Tokachigawa Raft Race 第50回十勝川イカダ下り Yearly event in which you can watch people race downstream on the Tokachi River. This event has won a Guinness World Record for longest connected line of rafts! Registration: You can register your team for participation starting 6/1	Tokachigawa Ohashi @ Otofuke 十勝川イカダ下り実行委員会 090-5950-5030
7/30 (Sat) 10:30-12:00	Kids' Playground (Kenya) キッズ・プレイグラウンド: ケニア Come with your children and learn and play while meeting local families. This month's theme is "Kenya". This time our guest, Gitau James Komu from Kenya, will interact with the children through song, dance and arts and craft. Fee: Free of charge Participants: Children 0-6 years old and their parents/guardians. Limited to 40 participants (decided by raffle) Notes: Register by contacting the TIRC or through the QR code	Tokachi International Relations Center @ Obihiro 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp 

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.obihoro.hokkaido.jp (search for "Obihiro Pioneer").

Obihiro Pioneer is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro City Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section for residents of the Tokachi District and related parties. The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the official views or opinions of the Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section or the City of Obihiro. Questions? Contact the Editing Team at:
 Tel: (0155) 65-4133 Email: international@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp For Haru, Ren and Maya