



Obihiro Pioneer

Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section Newsletter

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The Founding of Tokachi

Pioneers, welcome to another summer edition of Obihiro Pioneer! July and August are festival season in Japan. Be sure to check out the events section so see what's coming up around Tokachi, one of which will be Obihiro's Heigen Matsuri! Speaking of which, do you know the story of the founding of the Tokachi area? (Disclaimer: This article simply aims to report history in a neutral tone and does not reflect any views regarding colonization, its methods, and its impact.)

Pre-Japanese Tokachi

The Ainu are the indigenous people of Ezo (Hokkaido) and the Kuril Islands, and they have inhabited these regions with evidence dating as far back as the Jomon period (14,000-300 BC). In Tokachi specifically, Ainu communities settled along river valleys and the coast. They practiced a hunter-gatherer lifestyle supplemented by agriculture, hunting deer, bear and other game, fishing, and gathering wild plants and berries. They were connected with the land, nature, and the spiritual world and passed down their cultural traditions and religion through song and dance. Contact with outsiders was quite limited, but they engaged in trade with the Japanese with occasional conflicts over land resources.



Early Exploring

During the Edo period, the bakufu government exerted its power in Hokkaido and after a few military battles, they declared ownership over Hokkaido in 1807. As the interior of Hokkaido was largely unexplored, the bakufu as-

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signed explorer Takeshiro Matsuura with the task of launching a number of expeditions to Ezo to survey the land and gather information to help the bakufu gain understanding of the region and people.



Source: Matsuura Takeshiro, 1885. Public Domain.

One of his expeditions led him to the area we now call Tokachi. The name was actually given by Matsuura (as was the name for Hokkaido). It comes from the Ainu word "tokapci", meaning "breast". It is hypothesized that this name comes from the shape of the hills in the area. His survey found that Tokachi had rich soil and vast flat land ripe for agriculture, which the Japanese mainland lacked.

The Banseisha and Benzo Yoda

During the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the government officially integrated Ezo (now Hokkaido) into Japan. They established the Hokkaido Development Commission in 1869, which aimed to develop the land in order to secure their northern border and gather resources by offering land and financial aid to citizen groups to move to Hokkaido and cultivate the land.

One such group was the Banseisha, established by Benzo Yoda, whose studies and pioneering spirit drove him to develop a new land for his people. In 1881, he surveyed much of southern Hokkaido to find suitable land, and in 1882, he traveled with his two friends, Masaru Watanabe and Jūtarō Suzuki to Sapporo to receive permission and some funds to develop the Tokachi region



Source: Digital Archive Obihiro Museum. Public Domain

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which he found prosperous for agriculture. In 1883, he recruited 27 people (13 families) to join him in his endeavor.

The First Few Years

The group arrived in Hakodate and split off into a land group and sea group and they were to reconvene at Opereperekep, the Ainu word for the area that would become Obihiro, where Suzuki was waiting. The sea group set up a port at Otsu (modern day Toyokoro) and the groups met up and started to build houses and till the land. At the time there were only about 10 Ainu households living in the area. The Banseisha sought to coexist peacefully with the indigenous people in the area.

Their first year (1883) did...not go very well. They dealt with wildfires due to drought, locust swarms, and damage from rabbits, mice, and birds, resulting in little harvest. They did receive some aid from new members who joined them, including Yoda's brother and Watanabe's wife, Kane. Kane was an educated woman and she became a teacher, teaching settler and Ainu children to read and write.

Despite the boost in numbers and morale, 1884 wasn't much better. Due to the weather that year, the cultivation progressed slowly, causing demoralization. They had stockpiles of rice in Otsu, but the road wasn't yet fully developed so it wasn't easy to transport it to Obihiro. To address this, they began livestock farming to limited success. However, Yoda's pioneer spirit was strong and he did his best to motivate his people.

This famous photo was taken to recruit more people to join the cause. The photograph depicts Yoda in a humble and rugged state, looking impoverished and worn out. This photo was taken for a few reasons. He wanted to garner sympathy and support from the public and gov-



Source: Digital Archive Obihiro Museum, Public Domain

ernment by showing the hardships endured by those working to develop Hokkaido. Also, by depicting himself in this manner, he demonstrated his commitment to the Banseisha, showing that even the leader was willing to endure the hardships he asked of his workers. While the photo did not directly lead to more settlers, it did highlight the need for more support for those working in Hokkaido and did inspire some to join the cause in the later years.

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Success At Last

The first decade was full of farming issues, illness, loss of personnel, and the departure of Suzuki and Watanabe who went on to develop other parts of Tokachi. However, 1892 marked the year where conditions finally improved



Source: Digital Archive Obihiro Museum, Public Domain

and enough food and beans were being produced. Their initial goal was to develop about 25,000 acres of land in 15 years, but it took them 10 years to develop only 75 acres. Despite this, they reorganized their company and drew in more farmers to the area. They sold some land for residence and more immigrants flocked in. Yoda started a beef and a butter churning company which they called the Marusei company.

Legacy of the Banseisha

Yoda dedicated 45 years of his life to pioneering this new land, up until his death in 1925. His last words were for the continued prosperity of the region. Unfortunately, despite his efforts, the Banseisha company was never able to reach their 15 year goal and even extended their goal for up to 50 years. However, their debt accumulated and snowballed and the company bankrupted. In 1932, the company's lands were sold to tenant farmers and the funds went towards repaying their debt. Despite this failure, one thing is for sure. If it wasn't for the efforts of Benzo Yoda and the Banseisha, Tokachi, and Hokkaido for that matter, would not be agricultural kingdom it is today.

The Future of Obihiro

Obihiro started as the small town established by the Banseisha in 1882. After the agricultural boom of 1892 and the start of the sale of land for residency, Obihiro took a role as the regional hub for government and trade and expanded by annexing neighboring settlements. The train station was built in 1923 and officially received city status in 1933, becoming the Obihiro City we have today.

That's the story of the original "Obihiro pioneer"! Learning about the land you live opens up new perspectives. You can visit the Obihiro Centennial Museum where you can find artifacts, explanations, and pictures from the era.

Japanese Corner: [Na] Adjectives 日本語コーナー:「な」形容詞

As we have previously learned, Japanese adjectives can come before a noun (おおきい くるま, the big car) to describe the noun, or they can come after the noun to talk about the noun and is connected with が (くるま が おおきい, the car is big). We learned this through adjectives that end with い, such as おおきい and ちいさい. This time, we will learn about a new kind of adjective.

な adjectives are interesting because they are actually a type of noun that can become an adjective. They are formed by adding な to the noun to modify it directly, or you can use が to add it to the end of a noun, just like い adjectives! Here are some な adjectives with examples.

- きれい, きれいな: beautiful
- かんたん, かんたんな: simple
- しんせつ, しんせつな: kind, nice
- ゆうめい, ゆうめいな: famous
- すき, すきな: favorite, like
- きらい, きらいな: hated, disliked
- げんき, げんきな: lively, energetic
- じょうず, じょうずな: good at
- とくべつ, とくべつな: special
- きけん, きけんな: dangerous



Example:

1. きれいな はな = beautiful flower
2. これは きれいな はな = This is a beautiful flower.
3. この はなが きれい = This flower is beautiful.

You are probably wondering, what's the difference between the above two sentences? Don't they say the same thing? If you notice, in 2, the adjective is directly describing the noun, but in 3, the adjective is describing the subject. This matters, especially given context, just like い adjectives.

4. あなたは めが きれい です。 = Your eyes are beautiful
5. *あなたは きれいな め です = You are a beautiful eye (?)

As you can see, adding な adjectives after describes the subject め, where as putting the な adjective before only describes the noun. Here are some practice problems. The answers are at the bottom of page 4!

- A. それは かんたんな しつもん です。 = _____
- B. わたしは すしが きらい です。 = _____
- C. げんきな ひとが すき です。 = _____
- D. This book is famous. = _____
- E. The kind teacher's name is Ms. Morita. = _____
- F. Big animals are very dangerous. = _____

Movies @ Cinema Taiyo in Obihiro

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

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
Detective Conan: The Million-dollar Pentagram <i>Meitantei Konan: Hyakuman Doru no Michishirube</i>	Mystery/ Anime	JP	All Month
Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga <i>Maddo Makkusu: Fyuriosa</i>	Action/ Adventure	EN·JP	Until 7/11
Bob Marley: One Love <i>Bobu Mārī: Wan Rabu</i>	Musical/ Drama	EN	From 7/5 Until 7/18
Despicable Me 4 <i>Kaitō Gurū no Minion Daihenshin</i>	Family/ Comedy	JP	From 7/19
Deadpool & Wolverine <i>Deddopūru Ando Uruvarin</i>	Action/ Comedy	N/A	From 7/24



Bob Marley: One Love



Deadpool & Wolverine

KEY: EN = English voice with Japanese subtitles JP = Japanese voice with no English subtitles

Events in Tokachi

Please be aware that these and other events are subject to changes. To find out the latest information about these events, please contact the respective organizers or check out their webpages online.

When	What	Where/Contact
7/6 (Sat) 10:00- 15:00	<p>Friends of the World 2024 世界のともだち2024</p> <p>Come enjoy one of Obihiro's biggest cultural events of the year with Friends of the World 2024! 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!</p> <p>Fee: Free Max Visitors: No limit, however parking is limited, so please try to use public transportation or carpool</p>	<p>Tokachi International Relations Center, JICA Center @ Obihiro</p> <p>世界のともだち実行委員会 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp</p>
7/6 (Sat) 17:30- 21:15	<p>White Snake Princess Festival—Hakuja Hime Matsuri 白蛇姫まつり</p> <p>A festival based on the Ainu legend called the "Tale of the White Snake Princess". You can see a dance involving 13 meter and 8 meter-long snake decorations performed on a lit up stage. You can also see an Ainu ceremony called kamui nomi, see traditional Ainu dances, and listen to a music performance using the Ainu mukkur instrument, and enjoy an evening meeting with and learning about the Ainu people.</p> <p>Fee: Free (activities may require payment)</p>	<p>Shikaribetsu Kohan @ Shikaoi</p> <p>鹿追町商工観光課 0156-66-4034</p>
7/14 (Sun) 13:00- 20:45	<p>Makubetsu Natsu Festa 2024 まくべつ夏フェスタ2024</p> <p>This summer festival in Makubetsu will have dance and taiko performances and attractions for kids. There will be a firetruck where children can experience using a water hose. At 20:00, a fireworks display including about 3,000 fireworks will begin!</p> <p>Fee: Free (activities may require payment)</p>	<p>Makubetsu Undo Park @ Memuro</p> <p>幕別町観光物産協会 0155-54-6606</p>
7/14 (Sun) 20:00-	<p>Hanaoto 2024 Fireworks 華音2024</p> <p>Fireworks will light up the night sky in this fireworks festival that has gone on for almost 30 years in Memuro.</p> <p>Fee: Free</p>	<p>Memuro Park @ Memuro</p> <p>芽室花火大会実行委員会 080-6088-6703</p>

Japanese Corner Answers: A. That is an easy question. B. I dislike sushi C. I like energetic people. D. このほんは有名です。 E. しんせつな せんせいの なまえは もりた です。 F. おおきい どうぶつは とても きけん です。

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.

Obihiro Pioneer can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, JICA Obihiro International Center, and Cinema Taiyo. The digital version can be found on Obihiro City's homepage at www.city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp (search for "Obihiro Pioneer") or by scanning the QR code on the right.

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