

“My Number” マイナンバー



愛称: マイナちゃん

Starting January 1st, 2016 Japan's new social security and tax number system “My Number” will go into effect. Many, Japanese and foreign residents alike, are unsure what exactly “My Number” is. In this month's Obihiro Pioneer we will explain what “My Number” is and how it

affects you as a resident of Japan.

What? “My Number” is a 12-digit number. This is part of a new social security and tax number system designed to manage an individual's information from multiple agencies.

Who? All mid to long-term residents of Japan (3 months or more) will be issued a unique number. Individual numbers are distributed by municipal governments.

Where? You should have already received your “My Number” envelope in the mail in October–November 2015. Beginning January 1st, you may be asked for your individual number at work, government offices, and financial institutions.

When? Beginning January 1st of 2016, “My Number” will be used for tax, social security and disaster control, by your local municipality.

Why? By using a single number for multiple uses (tax, social security, etc.) it is proposed to result in less paperwork and confusion, and hoped to help streamline certain procedures by only having to provide one number.

In the envelope that has been sent to your registered address, you should receive a paper 通知カード (*tsuuchi kaado*) or “notification card,” with your name, address, birthdate, gender and individual number



(My Number). Do not lose this card! You will need to know and provide your number for tax and social security processes. To avoid identity thief, only provide your number for government, work, military or health insurance agencies.

There will also be an application form for a 個人番号カード (*kojin bangou kaado*) or individual number card. This card will have a picture and IC chip embedded. The information written on the card is the same as the notification card which arrived in 2015. The individual number card can be used as a form of identification. Because your individual number (My Number) is written on the back of the card, you should be

careful when choosing to use this card as a form of identification.



“My Number,” Why now? What now?

The Japanese government hopes to more efficiently manage information that belongs to an individual. Other countries have identifying systems such as the US's Social Security number and the UK's national insurance number, which have been around for decades. “My Number” is expected to reference those systems and go beyond by using the same number for other processes such as borrowing books at the library, printing out documents at the convenience store, using online banking, providing proof of health insurance, and more. Although “My Number” and the accompanying Individual Number Card seem very convenient, it has also brought many concerns about privacy to light. Because a single set of numbers is responsible for so many uses, it has been argued as making it easier to steal one's identity. An American idiom which many have been using to describe the “My Number” system is “put all your eggs in one basket,” which means to risk everything by placing all of your resources in one place (if you drop your basket, all of your eggs would break).

Whether or not you agree with the new “My Number” system, it will be a part of your life as long as you are living in Japan. Be careful when using your individual number and stay informed about any new changes that may come to this system.

Learn more about “My Number” at <http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/seisaku/bangoseido/index.html>

Scan this QR code for easy access.



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Events (pg 2 & 4)



A Fake Backpacker's Dairy:
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Movies (pg 4)

Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
1/13 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volley Night 国際ミニバレーナイト Meet friends from all over the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport! Free of charge!	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
1/16 (Sat) 10:00-11:30	33rd Kids Playground 第33回キッズ・プレイグラウンド Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month, you can learn about South Africa.	
1/23 (Sat) 16:00-18:00	Japanese Conversation and Learning Table Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment. Japanese volunteers will be there to help you.	
1/23 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	53rd International Talk 第53回インターナショナル・トーク Learn more about the world and exchange ideas with other participants. This month's talk will be about Sri Lanka.	
11/1-3/31 (Sun-Thu)	Winter Fest in Ecopark ウインタフェスinエコパ Enjoy snowshoe walking, snow raft tours, a foot spa, and other fun winter activities.	Tokachi Ecology Park 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 www.tokachi-ecopark.jp
12/1(Tue) - 2/14 (Sun)	Santa Land Tree Illumination サンタランドツリー・イルミネーション Recognized by Santa's hometown of Oslo, Norway, Memoro's Santa Land tree will be lit from 17:00 to 21:30. In commemoration of Memoro's 100th anniversary of its opening, Friendship City Hiroo Town has donated trees that will be lit by 3000 lights.	JR Memuro JR芽室駅前 0155-62-9721
Early December to Late February	Shintoku Welcome Illumination いらっしやいしんとくイルミネーション JR Shintoku Station, the gateway to Tokachi and Eastern Hokkaido, will be lit up in various colors.	JR Shintoku Station JR新得駅前 0156-64-0522
1/10 (Sun) 10:00-15:00	Winter Vacation "Waku Waku" Classroom 冬休みわくわく教室 Aimed at kids on winter break, fun activities and crafts will be available! There is no registration or fee, but there is a limit on participants.	Obihiro City Children's Hall 帯広市児童会館 0155-24-2434
1/23-2/28 (Sat-Sun)	Tokachigawa Swan Festival "Sairinka" 十勝川白鳥まつり「彩凜華」 Come and enjoy: •a fantasy show of lights and sounds •snow rafting •walking in the forest of lights, including a stamp rally •a tunnel of beautiful lights & a "zoo" of lights •winter playground (slide, frozen bubbles etc.) •resting at the warm ice promenade with Moor Choc-o-lait (chocolate and milk drink), Moor Pork Sausages, etc. And many more events and activities will be held!	Otofuke Town Tokachigaoka Park 音更町十勝が丘公園 0155-32-6633 http://www.tokachigawa.net/
1/24 (Sun) 10:00-11:00	Fish Day 魚の日 Every 4th Sunday is "fish day." To celebrate, fish and other ingredients taken from the sea are used to make healthy dishes native to the north. A variety of products are on sale for the event.	Hiroo Town Fisheries Cooperative Food Division 広尾漁協食品部(広尾郡広尾町会 所前2丁目79番地先) 0155-82-3202

A Fake Backpacker's Diary: Getting an Elephant Riding License in Laos

This month's Obihiro Pioneer will include the first in a series of entries from our very own Thai CIR, Ms. Gan. In 2013 she studied abroad in Tokyo, Japan, but an invitation from a former exchange student at her home university led her back to Southeast Asia.

October 2013

"Hey, let's go backpacking in Laos!" Keita, asked me to join him during his winter break. Keita is a Japanese student from Nagasaki University who had joined the exchange program in Chiang Mai University, my home university. "Why Laos?" I asked. "I wanna get the elephant riding license!" That was how our journey started.

After I agreed, we started planning our trip and booking the hotels. Finally, we ended up with 4 members (3 Japanese and 1 Thai). Our trip was 2 weeks long starting in Chiang Mai (Thailand) to Luang Prabang (Laos), then Hanoi, Dong Hei, Hue (Vietnam), then back to Thailand in time for the Full Moon party on Phangan Island and back to Chiang Mai.

We took bus to the border of Thailand-Laos from the North of Thailand. Then rode a boat to "Bo kaew," a small district in Laos, and bought the 'VIP' bus tickets to "Luang Prabang." I was surprised that in Laos, before board the bus, you have to take off your shoes and put them in a plastic bag. The floor of the bus was lined with carpet.

Normally, a "VIP" bus would have big and comfortable seats to relax in until arrival... but I was wrong. The seat was just barely fit me (157 cm height). It fit me but there wasn't enough space for the long legs of men and big foreigners. The cooler was extremely cold even though I had a hoodie on. It took about 7 hours from Bo kaew to Luang Prabang. Why did it take so long? The bus uses a mountain road with so many curves. I tried to sleep but, it was like trying to sleep on a roller coaster. Moreover, the bus stopped to pick the passengers along the way even though there was no open seat. So don't be surprised if you wake up on the bus and see new passengers sitting on the floor between you and your friend's seats. We finally arrived in Luang Prabang safely in next morning.

Luang Prabang is the capital city of Luang Prabang Province in north central Laos. The population of the city is about 50,000. The old town center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city is well known for its numerous Buddhist temples and monasteries. One of the major

landmarks in the city is a large steep hill on which sits *Wat Chom Si*. We spent 3 days and 2 nights in Luang Prabang. After checking in at 'Lemon Lao Backpacker' Guest House, we started the day with having breakfast at the guest house. Our first meal in Laos was a French baguette (about 200 yen). Baguettes are not the normally associated with Southeast Asia nations, but Laos was a part of French Indochina from 1893 until 1954, and the effects of this colonization are still very visible today. And it was very good!



The tour guide of the elephant riding course we came to pick us at the guesthouse (tour courses can be reserved with many agencies downtown or hotel reception). It took more than an hour by van from downtown to the elephant camp. There are two sessions necessary to obtain an elephant riding license. The first session was riding with a saddle. The second



session riding on the elephant's bare neck without saddle. Before riding, the trainers will teach you basic commands to control the elephants, including "turn left/right," "stop," and "sit" in Lao. Before you ride it you have to learn how to climb to its neck first, "sit down good girl" then

step on her knee, grab her ear and try to put yourself onto her neck. Now on to the jungle!

The course took about 3-4 hours including a lunch break and the elephants' shower time. We brought them to the river and let them take a shower while riding on their necks. You will definitely get wet! After shower time, it was time to say goodbye to our elephants. The elephant trainers left us in the jungle and took only the elephants home. They left saying only one sentence, "just go back to the same way you came." We safely returned and moved onto to the next destination, "Phosi market," the biggest market in Luang Prabang. You can find anything here. There are food products from local producers. That evening after elephant riding training all day long, we had a home stay in a Hmong village. The Hmong are an ethnic group from the mountainous regions of Laos, China, Vietnam, and Thailand.

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Movies At Cinema Taiyo, in Obihiro

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

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



Title	Language	Dates
007 Spectre	English	Until 22nd
Star Wars: Episode VII—The Force Awakens	2D EN/3D JP	All Month
Bridge of Spies	English	From 8th
In the Heart of the Sea	English	From 16th
The Walk	English	From 23rd
Yokai Watch: The 5 Tales of King Enma	Japanese	All Month
Chibi-Maruko Chan The Movie	Japanese	All Month

Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
1/30 (Sat)	5th Wood Candle Night 第5回ウッドキャンドルナイト Ice candles and wood candles made from local pinewood will light up the town.	Michi no Eki Ashoro Ginga Hall 21 道の駅あしよる銀河ホール21 0156-25-6131
1/30 (Sat)	12th Honbetsu Yuki Akari Night 第12回ほんべつ雪あかりナイト Over 8,000 ice candles will light up the town. There will also be a candle contest, games, and more.	Michi no Eki Stellar Honbetsu etc. 道の駅ステラほんべつ他 0156-22-2529
1/30 (Sat)	Honbetsu Mamemaka Night ほんべつ豆まかナイト Enjoy Setsubun (changing of the seasons holiday) with the village famous for beans, Honbetsu. Throw beans to scare away the demons and bring the good luck in!	Tsumura Hall (Honbetsu-cho Kita 4 cho-me) 本別町北4丁目津村会館 0156-22-2529

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The next morning, after filling our stomachs with baguettes, we left the village by kayaking along 'Nam Khan River' to visit the Tad Sae Waterfall, one of the most beautiful waterfalls in Luang Prabang. We had fun a lot playing the water until noon, then kayaked back to the meeting place. It's time to get our elephant riding license! We



went to the travel agency, handed them a passport photo, wait-

ed about 20 minutes, and finally got the license! It's just an A4 paper with passport photo and approval stamp from the agency on it. To tell you the truth, I think it was just a sales gimmick of the travel agency. But at least now you tell other people "Hey, I have an elephant riding license", even though you can't really ride an elephant...

Next stop, Hanoi, Vietnam!

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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