

Free Japanese Classes at Obihiro City Hall 日本語講座

Starting from **May 10th**, there will be free Japanese classes **every Tuesday** in **Obihiro City Hall**.

There will be 2 evening classes, 「**Beginner Level I**」 and 「**Beginner Level II**」. During the day there will be a 「**Fun Conversation**」 class for intermediate level participants. The class is open for free conversation in a relaxed environment.



All of the Japanese classes are run by the Tokachi International Association and taught by local volunteer Japanese language teachers. Tentatively, the dates are scheduled to be from **May 10th to July 12th**, if a teacher needs to reschedule a session the final date may be changed. There will be at least **10 sessions** given.

To sign up or for inquiries visit or contact:

Obihiro City Hall
International and Domestic Relations
Section (3rd Floor)
West 5 South 7
Tel: 0155-65-4133
Email:
international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp

OR

Tokachi International Relations Center
West 20 South 6 (next to JICA)
Tel:0155-34-0122
Email: tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp

Japanese Class Information:
Tuesdays (starting May 10th)
@ Obihiro City Hall (West 5 South 7)

「**Fun Conversation**」
10:00–12:00

- Open conversation practice in a relaxing environment.

「**Beginner I**」
18:00–20:00

- For beginners! No prior understanding of Japanese needed.

「**Beginner II**」
18:00–20:00

- For upper beginner/lower intermediate learners.

豆知識 **Mame Chishiki (Trivia) #1**

Mame chishiki, literally, bean of knowledge, is the Japanese version of trivia. Starting from this issue, Obihiro Pioneer hopes to share a “bean of knowledge” with you about Japan, Tokachi, Obihiro and beyond!

豆知識 #1 Did you know that Obihiro City's flag says 「オビヒロ」 (Obihiro) on it?



Try to find the オ・ビ・ヒ・ロ!

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Obihiro CIR Blog
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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
4/13 (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
4/9 (Sat) & 4/23 (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.	
4/16 (Sat) 19:00-21:00	Potluck Night ポットラック・ナイト Bring a dish or drink to share with everyone and meet new friends while enjoying food from all over the world. The theme dish is Tajik style "plov" (pilaf).	
4/17 (Sun) 10:00~	28th Nissan Cup All Japan Patch Competition in Rikubetsu 第28回日産カップオールジャパンパッチ選手権大会in陸別 There will be a "Patch" (also called "menko") competition held in Rikubetsu Town. Patch is a card-flipping/throwing game also known as "Pog" in many western companies (with the name originating from Hawaii). Registration is required and can be done by phone or fax. Registration fee is 1700 yen, including lunch.	Rikubetsu Town Hall 陸別町タウンホール 0156-27-2141
4/29 (Fri) 10:00 - 12:00	Obihiro Wild Plants Garden Opening 帯広市野草園開園のつどい After a long white winter, the Obihiro Wild Plants Garden will be reopening with members of the garden's committee will be on hand to guide you!	Obihiro Wild Plants Garden 帯広市野草園 0155-24-2434
4/24 (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 (広尾郡広尾町会前2丁目79番地先)

Obihiro City CIR Blog is Back! 帯広国際交流員ブログ更新

Did you know that the Coordinators for International Relations of Obihiro City have a **blog** open to the public? Probably not! This blog was first created with the hope that current and former Obihiro City CIRs will use it to share about their own countries and cultures with the people of Obihiro (and beyond!).

The Obihiro City CIR blog is written in **Japanese**, but is

open to all audiences! Check out what the CIRs are up to!



access!

← Scan here for easy

Read our blog at:
<https://obihircir.wordpress.com>



Thai New Year: Songkran Festival タイの新年:ソングクラン

Japan is famously known as one of the only countries to start their “new year” in April. Although many of us experienced the traditions of お正月 *oshou-gatsu*, or Japan’s new year back in January, Japan’s fiscal and school year start traditionally in April. This month, Thai CIR Bongkoch will share with us “*Songkran*,” Thai’s traditional new year which is also celebrated in April.

Every April, I always think about hot weather and summer. In Thailand, April is the hottest month of the year. The temperature change get as high as 40°C (due to global warming...) but not all day



long. Moreover, there is the most important event of the year: the Thai traditional New Year called "*Songkran*." The word "*Songkran*" in Sanskrit literally means "astrological passage," signaling the change into a new year. Not only in Thailand but many countries in South and Southeast Asia, such as Sri Lanka, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar also celebrate the New Year in April. However, in 1940, the Thai government declared January 1st as the official New Year day, in order to comply with



other countries in the world. Since then, we (Thai) celebrate New Year both in January and April.

The Thai traditional New Year days or *Songkran* days were originally determined by astrological calculations, but nowadays is fixed on April 13-15th. Sometimes, we celebrate *Songkran* festival for a whole week. During these days, many Thai people return to their hometown to meet their families. In the morning during *Songkran*, Thai people will visit the temple to make a merit (perform good deeds). Visitors bring food,

flowers, and daily-use items to offer to the Buddhist monks, and pour water on the Buddha



images to wash all sins and bad luck away. In the afternoon, we visit our elder family members to ask for forgiveness for all of the rude actions we might have done in the past by pouring water over the palms of the elders' hands, then ask for their blessings. This is an important part of *Songkran* tradition. Water is a symbol of cleansing and cooling. We use water to cool off from the heat and humidity in summer, as well as to clean all of bad things from the past year. In Northern Thailand, people will bring small buckets of sand to the temple to return the temple’s dust they have carried away on their bare feet (in the past, people would normally go into the temple with bare feet). Moreover, northerners believe that April 14th is a day which connects the old and new year, so we are not supposed to say mean things or profanities to others. Doing so on this day will bring bad luck into the coming year. **Continued on page 4**

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
The Big Short (<i>Money Short</i>)	English	Until 8th
The Good Dinosaur (<i>Aro to Shonen</i>)	English	Until 22nd
Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice	2D English	All Month
Initial D: Legend 3 Mugen	Japanese	9th to 22nd
Cased Closed (Detective Conan): Nightmare of Darkness	Japanese	From 16th
Captain America: Civil War	TBA	From 29th
Assassins' Classroom: Graduation <i>Ansatsu-kyoushitsu: Sotsugyou</i>	Japanese	All Month



Thai New Year: Songkran Festival タイの新年:ソングクラン

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After finishing all of the traditional rituals, it's time to play with water! Songkran festival is also known as the "Water festival." Many Thai people and foreign tourists will wear colorful shirts, mostly with flower patterns, and walk on the streets having water fights using water guns or containers of water. Some people stand on the road side with a hose and soak anybody who passes by. In the rural areas, people load the containers of water onto trucks, drive around the city and have water fights with other

trucks or people on the road. Besides throwing water, there are also the traditional parades. Cars are decorated with traditional ornaments, and a "Miss Songkran Contest" is also held in many places.



I guarantee that you won't stay dry if you go outside in Thailand during Songkran!

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")

"Obihiro Pioneer" is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro International and Domestic Relations 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 International and Domestic Relations Section or the City of Obihiro. Questions? Tel (0155) 65-4133 or send e-mail to the Editing Team at international@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp.