

# What's Happening in Obihiro?

Sept 2007

Issue 174

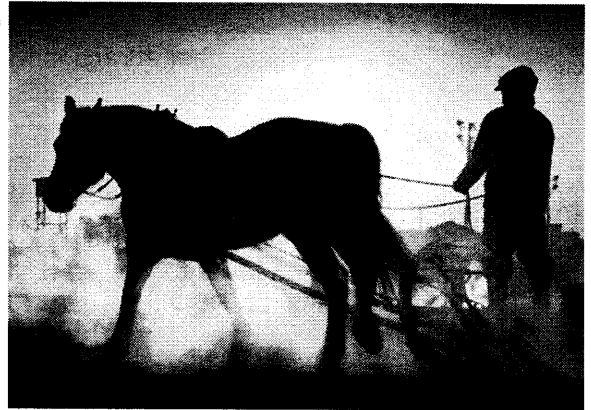
International and Domestic Relations Section Newsletter

## The Obihiro Horse Race Track

You didn't know that there was crazy horse racing going on in Obihiro? Of course you didn't because you haven't read this issue of WHiO yet! Read all about Obihiro's tradition of dirt, nostril steam, and horse power.

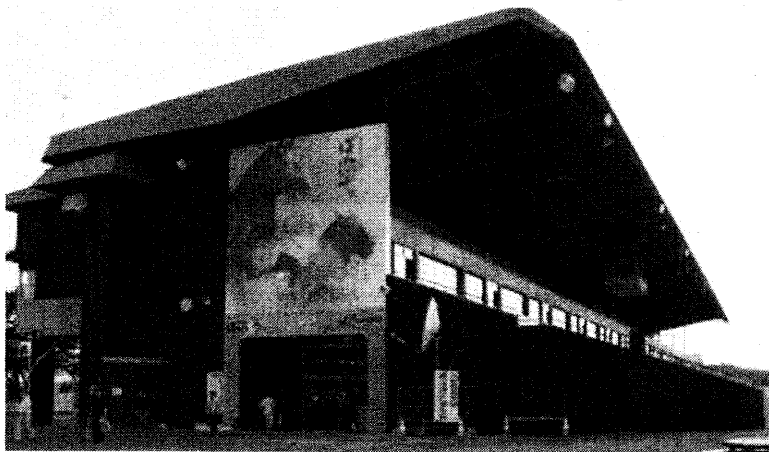
**Kintaro's huge muscles rippled as he awaited** for the day's big competition. He had been enjoying the past 2 weeks relaxing and training with his personal trainer, but this morning he was up at 3am to get ready for the main event. He didn't have much to eat for breakfast, but then again, he weighs over 1000 kilograms! Yep, that's right, Kintaro is a horse. And he's not just any horse, he's one of the strongest horses in the horse races here in Obihiro.

**The horse races are called "ban-ei keiba"** or "banba" for short. The Banba race course is not like a horsetrack you might expect. It is a 200 meter-long straight shot, and the horses have to pull weighted steel sleighs that can weigh over 500 kg. The ground is not grass. Instead it's 30 cm deep sand, and the horses have to go over two humps before the finish line. The first hump is 1 meter high, but the second hump is 1.5 meters high!



**Banba dates all the way back to the year 1900**, when Hokkaido farmers competed to see whose works horses were more powerful by having the huge horses play tug o' war. Banba horses were (and are) huge because they were bred from European Percheron and Breton breeds, and they were used to clear the vast forests of Hokkaido back in the day. Once Hokkaido was completely "pioneered", this tug o' war developed into the entertainment sport we know today. Since 1946, the races were publicly managed and authorized by law.

**Recently the Obihiro city government has been going crazy for Banba.** They have launched a huge PR campaign which has included putting up hundreds of posters around town, repainting the entire main Banba building, and creating a new "Nighter" race so people can enjoy the races any time of the day. They have also been inviting other large events to the race track, like the Hokkaido Rally Ceremonial Start, etc.



### September Horse Race Schedule

9/1 (Sat) Nighter

9/2 (Sun) Nighter (Milky Way Prize)

9/3 (Mon) Nighter

9/8 (Sat) Nighter

9/9 (Sun) Nighter

9/10 (Mon) Nighter

9/15 (Sat) Nighter

9/16 (Sun) Nighter

9/17 (Mon) Nighter (Princess Race)

9/22 (Sat) Day Race

9/23 (Sun) Day Race

9/24 (Mon) Day Race

9/29 (Sat) Day Race

9/30 (Sun) Day Race (Iwamizawa Memorial Race)

10/1 (Mon) Day Race



**Nighters** are from 14:30-20:30


**Daytime Races** are from 11:00-17:00

Don't be a couch jagaimo!

# Tokachi Events

## September 2007



When	What	Where/Contact #
9/9 (Sun) 8:30 – 15:30	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Brigade's 56<sup>th</sup> Camp Obihiro Anniversary:</b> Come see the Japan Self-Defense Forces in all their glory right here in Obihiro! There'll be helicopter and tank rides, wall rappelling, airborne troop jumps and many other attractions. Fun for children too!	第5旅団司令部広報室 Self-Defense Forces Base in Obihiro (Shuttle bus from Tokachi Plaza 8:45 to 10:15am) 0155-48-5121(ext.2412)
9/9 (Sun) 10:00-14:00 20min/session (FREE)	<b>Autumn Tea Ceremony:</b> Come experience one of Japan's oldest traditions; the Tea Ceremony. Every movement, every color, every tool used in making serving and drinking the tea has meaning behind it, and the ceremony is very relaxing overall. <b>RSVP by TEL, FAX, or email.→</b>	森の交流館・十勝 Tokachi International Relations Center TEL 0155-34-0122 FAX 0155-34-0165 tirc@city.obihoro.hokkaido.jp
9/17 (Mon) 12:00-16:00	<b>Daisaichi Market:</b> Rain or shine, the City of Obihiro is holding a big farmers' market at the race track. There will be plenty of fresh local produce to eat and buy, and this is the final "Nighter" race at the race track. There's also going to be a flea market and games for kids to play.	帯広競馬場 Obihiro Horse Race Track 0155-59-2323
9/23 (Sun) 10:00 – 15:00	<b>Sky Day at Obihiro Airport:</b> Taiko drum performances, sports kite shows, a helicopter rescue demonstration, a fire rescue demo, remote control airplanes and some JAL uniform cosplay (for kids) wow! There's also going to be tours of the inside of the control tower for kids, and anyone will be able to tour the inside of a plane as well..	とち帯広空港 Obihiro Airport 0155-64-5320
9/23 (Sun) 9:00 – 14:00	<b>Taisho May Queen Matsuri:</b> The May Queen Potato harvest is in! Potato peeling, and potato eating contests. Also, buy a potato bag and stuff as many potatoes into to it as you can for free!	大正ふれあい広場 Downtown Taisho (South of Obihiro on Hwy. 236) 0155-64-4591 <a href="http://www.ja-taisho.com/mc_festival.htm">http://www.ja-taisho.com/mc_festival.htm</a>
9/23~25 (Sat) 9:00-14:00	<b>Obihiro Shrine Anniversary Festival:</b> The 24 <sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of the creation of the shrine. There will be lots of traditional music and performances on the 23 <sup>rd</sup> starting at lunch and ending at 19:40. The 24 <sup>th</sup> will have a tea ceremony and traditional archery performances around 12 noon and more traditional dancing at 18:00. On the 25 <sup>th</sup> the beautiful Mikoshi (portable shrines) will be returning to the shrine at 16:30. Everyday of the festival there will be yatai (shops), flea markets, and other fun things, so please come and drink up all the culture!	 帯広神社 Obihiro Shrine (Hwy 38 @ East 3) (parking available in shrine parking lot nearby) 0155-23-3955
9/29 (Sat) 14:00 – 15:00	<b>Story Telling Around the World:</b> This month's children's book is going to be from Germany, read in both German and Japanese. We're going to play games and have fun while listening to a story from another land. Our target audience is children from 3 to 8 yrs. old.	森の交流館・十勝 Tokachi International Relations Center (in the library room) 0155-34-0122

# Ready for Disaster?

There are any number of disasters that could happen at any time here in Japan. It's just a natural part of life here. Learn what to do when a disaster strikes and don't be left in the dark!

Recently there was a huge earthquake in a town called Kashiwazaki. At least 7 people died and hundreds of people were left injured. On top of this Kashiwazaki nuclear power plant had a fire, and many public services were shut down.

Thousands of people evacuated their homes and headed to government evacuation shelters. At these shelters (pic at right), everyone is given water and food and a place to sleep. There is a high population of foreign residents in Kashiwazaki, and many of them also evacuated during this disaster. However, all of the information being broadcast by the government was in Japanese, and many people could not understand what was going on or what they should do.



Your first and most important duty during a disaster is to find the nearest evacuation shelter. If you don't get to an evacuation area, you will be in the dark as far as current information goes, and you will have to find food water and shelter all by yourself! You seriously should go outside and find your evacuation area right now! Otherwise you're going to be in trouble when disaster strikes.

Also, participate in the Disaster Prevention Training which is scheduled for: **September 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sun)** from 9am to 1pm at Hirono Elementary School (Nishi 19 jo Minami 3 chome) in Obihiro. They will be practicing using fire extinguishers and other useful activities for preparing for a disaster. We have also inserted a list of evacuation areas in Obihiro in this issue. If you need further help finding your area, ask your neighbors (make friends!) or come in to City Hall or the Tokachi International Relations Center, and we will be your friend. We have maps and booklets and lots of other useful information.



In the event of a disaster here in Obihiro, the situation will most likely be quite similar. Foreigners and Japanese people alike will have to flee their home to public shelters to escape danger and receive crucial services. And most of the information being broadcast will be in Japanese (until they can find someone to start translating and speaking and such)

## The Japanese Corner (vocab found in or related to this month's issue)

避難場所 (ひなんばしょ): "evacuation area" or evacuation shelter. In Obihiro (and other towns) evacuation shelters are usually located in elementary, middle, or high schools. They have everyone sleep in the gymnasium and provide food, water, and first-aid.

金太郎 (きんたろう): The name of a Japanese folk hero. He was incredibly strong.

空挺降下 (くうていこうか): Literally means "airborne drop", but in this issue it most likely is referring to troops jumping out of a plane or helicopter.

自衛隊 (じえいたい): The "self defense forces" are Japan's military forces. Japan cannot have an official military because of Japan's pacifist constitution.

ジャガイモ (じゃがいも): "potato" One of Tokachi's finest potatoes is the May Queen (see events section).