

What's Happening in Obihiro?

Dec 2007
Issue 177

International and Domestic Relations Section Newsletter

New Year's Card Diagram

And YOU have to start preparing now, if you wanna look cool. Every year, we run this great guide on how to make *nengajo* (New Year's cards. The equivalent of Christmas cards in many countries). This is to teach all the new people who have come to Obihiro recently, and to remind all of us who have been here for a while, but always forget how to do these things!

You should write *nengajo* to your coworkers, to your friends, and to the people who have helped you out during the year. You can order them at a printing store or you can buy blank ones at a *conbini* or stationary store and make your own. There is a special *nengajo* box at the post office, drop off your cards by December 25th for January 1st delivery (there is a special box for *nengajo* at the post office)

Spinning tops! A traditional game on New Year's

Some pretty kanji to ring in the new year. You can write:

謹賀新年 (*kingashinnen*)

賀正 (*gashou*) 迎春 (*geishun*)

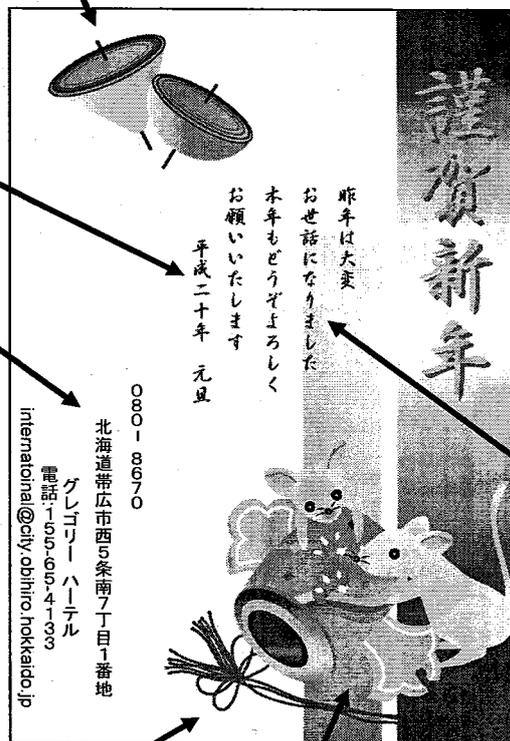
あけましておめでとうございます

These all basically mean "Happy New Year." You can also write it in English; plenty of Japanese people do. You can also get stamps that say these things at stationary stores or 100 yen shops.

The date goes here. Write
平成二十年 元旦
instead of
2008年1月1日.

Your Address and name go here. (to the left of the date) It's up to you if you want to include your phone and email.

Writing is boring so be sure to include an image of some kind. Usually some sort of New Years imagery, or the animal of the zodiac for the new year. 2007 is the year of the rat! You could even use a photo if you make your *nengajo* on your printer. There are also many rubber stamps you can use if you'd like.



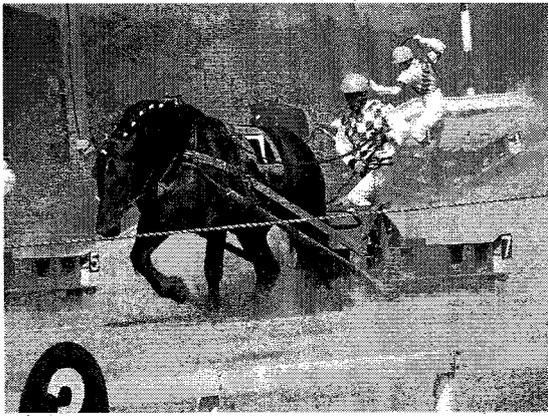
A little message thanking the recipient for help during the last year.

昨年は大変お世話になり、ありがとうございました。(Thank you for all you have done for me this year) 皆様のご健康をお祈り申し上げます。(I am praying for everyone's good health) 本年もどうぞよろしくお願いたします。(Hope for your continued favor during this next year too) These are also available in rubber stamp form (to save tired hands).

You can also write news about yourself and family or a personal message here.

Rats on a drum! Can't get much better than that.

On the back-side of the card, write the name and address of the person you are sending it to, (make sure to include their postal code; 080-0025 etc) and drop it at the post office by 12/25 to make sure it arrives on time!



Tokachi Events

2007
December

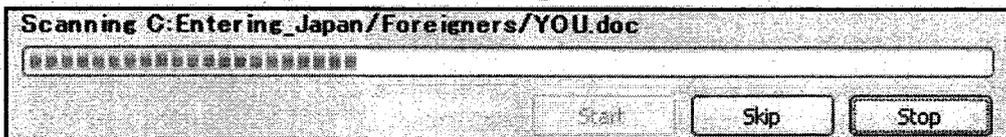
Pile o' crabs in Hiroo



When	What	Where/Contact #
Every Sat., Sun. and Mon. from now to March 24 First race 11:00 Last race 17:00	Draft Horse Racing: This is probably what Obihiro is most famous for. In these Ban'ei horse races, huge work horses pull sleds loaded with weights. If the weather is right, the sand track gets covered with a soft white blanket of snow. Obihiro does not have a heated/covered racetrack, so it specializes in these winter snow horse races.	帯広競馬場 Obihiro Horse Racetrack 0155-34-0825
12/1 (Fri) 18:30~20:30	Ikeda Nouveau Wine Festival: Once a year the Ikeda Wine castle holds this event to allow people to eat good food and drink good wine. At right is the famous picture of a woman drinking from a wine glass that is bigger than her head at this very party! (can you see it?) Tickets are 4000 yen and you must RSVP before the festival.	 池田ワイン城 Ikeda Wine Castle 01557-2-2467
12/6~9 (Thu - Sun) 9:00 - 17:00	Tokachi Culture Festival: There's going to be calligraphy, poems, photography, flower arrangements, and other Japanese arts on display. On the 8 th from 1am to 4pm there will be stage and music performances in the 2 nd floor Rainbow Hall. Also on the 8 th , there will be a showing of an Anti-American movie called "Marines Go Home" from 6:30pm to 9pm. In other words, fun for everyone!	とかちプラザ Tokachi Plaza Hosted by: Tokachi Culture Forum 0155-22-7555
12/9 (Sun) 9:00 - 14:00	Hiroo Kaisen Yamasen Manpuku Matsuri: Hiroo is having a festival that is literally titled the "Fill your Stomach with fresh Ocean and Mountain Foods Festival". You can't go wrong with a name like that! There's going to be a crab eating contest and other fun things to do, so come fill your belly!	広尾シーサイドパーク Hiroh Seaside Park 01558-2-0177
12/15 (Sat) 18:00 ~ 20:00	Obihiro Wine Party 2007: Last year about 500 people showed up to enjoy tasting wines from around the world and meeting people from around the world as well. There's going to be lots of attractions such as taiko drumming, a sword dance, and even a janken tournament! Tickets cost 500 yen for high school kids and younger, 1500 yen for college students, and 2500 yen for anyone else. Come make some friends and get rosy-cheeked in the cold December weather!	農協連ビル In the agricultural cooperative building across the street to the north of the Seven-Eleven convenience store next to the Fujimaru department store in downtown Obihiro! Nishi 3 Minami 7 Call 0155-34-0122 for tickets
12/16 (Sun) 9:00 - 13:00	Tokachi Tasty-stuff Festival: If you want some of the freshest and highest quality seafoods Tokachi has to offer, come down to this promotional sale in Otofuke. They are bringing in fresh foods from Hiroo, Taiki and many other surrounding towns.	スーパーオーケー 音更 SUPER OK supermarket in Otofuke 0155-27-8609
All December (times vary)	Event's at Obihiro Citizen's Culture Hall: There will be events on these days: 12/2 - "Window Symphony", 12/15-FREE Family Concert done by the Self Defense Forces Band and on the, 12/16 FREE Obihiro University Concert, 12/23-FREE ballet recital	帯広市民文化ホール Obihiro Citizen's Culture Hall (next to the Nagasakiya downtown) 0155-23-8111

Scanning Foreign Presence

Japan has begun a new program of fingerprinting foreigners as they enter the country. You will be affected. Enjoy.



...Please Wait

Planning to travel outside of Japan this holiday season? If so, you will be able to leave Japan as normal, but on your way back you will have the treat of trying out the brand-spankin' new Japanese immigration system! All foreigners will be required to scan both index finger fingerprints and have a facial photograph taken before talking with the immigration officer who will chit chat with you about your travel plans and whatnot.

ALL foreigners will be processed like this except for the following 5 exceptions:

- ① Special Permanent Residents (if you're not sure, you're probably not special)
- ② Persons under the age of 16
- ③ Diplomats and Officials (once again, if you're not sure, you're probably not a diplomat)
- ④ Persons invited by the heads of administrative organs (or their internal organs)
- ⑤ Persons designated by the Ministry of Justice as falling under ③ or ④.

As of 11/22, 5 foreigners have been stopped by this system. One of them was on a government blacklist (had been deported before) and the other 4 are still being investigated. The system checks your biometric information against various lists the government has; lists of criminals and other people they don't want in Japan. Assuming that no one reading this is a criminal, then the most this system will affect you is just to increase wait times at immigration at the airport. If you resist the officials will either take your prints by force, or they'll just deny you entrance to the country.



The new system is expected to add just under 10 seconds to the immigration process at airports, and since long-term residents will be re-joining us in the foreigner line, expect some extra line time when you come back to Japan.



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

年賀状 (ねんがじょう): New Year's cards sent out by the millions every year in Japan.

入国審査 (にゅうこくしんさ): Immigration (at the airport) inspection

指紋 (しもん): fingerprint

上手い (うまい): No, it doesn't say *jozu*, it says *umai*. Be sure to note that *umai* has 2 meanings 1) "skillful" (the same as *jozu*) and 2) "delicious". So when someone shouts "Umai!" at you, they are either complimenting your skill at doing something, or they are saying you are delicious.

満腹 (まんぷく): "full stomach" In the event name on the page at left, it refers to the fact that you will be able to fill your stomach with lots of good foods...