

Obihiro Pioneer

Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section Newsletter

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What is Golden Week?

ゴールデンウィークとは

Happy warm (a bit hot, isn't it?) and bright spring to you all, Pioneers! While the Hokkaido spring is a bit short, it does come with suddenly fluctuating weather patterns, rain, sunshine, and of course, the emerging wildlife! Every year between April and May is Japan's longest vacation period of the year, Golden Week. You may have plans to visit some part of Japan, but what exactly is so golden about Golden Week, and why are there so many days off? Let's investigate!

What is Golden Week and Why is it Golden?

Golden Week is a term that refers to the holiday season during late April and early May. In 1948, the government designated national holidays in Japan to finalize the yearly calendar. Out of the 15 days they chose, 4 of them happened to line up during the same week as each other. These holidays were *Shōwa no Hi*, *Kenpo Kinenbi*, *Midori no Hi*, and *Kodomo no Hi*.



Designated by the government, most non-essential businesses and many essential ones close down for the holiday week. These days are not entirely consecutive, however, as there are some days that are not holidays sprinkled throughout the week that coincide with these 4 holidays. Since the days are technically workdays, workers have to report to work during the middle of Golden Week. This makes it so some families can only take short trips during Golden Week. Some workers decide to use holiday vacation during those work days, allowing them to travel for an extended period of time. Other work places might give those days off to their workers to give them a long vacation!

Now, what about this week makes it "golden"? The government did not give this period an official name in 1948 when they designated these holidays. However, in 1951, cinemas and radio stations recognized that this holiday season was the time period in the year during which they had the highest number of viewers and listeners. This period of time is referred to as "golden time". Because this holiday season was golden time for so many businesses, the word "golden week" started to get used and it stuck!

Showa Day 昭和の日

The first of the Golden Week holidays is *Showa no Hi*. This day refers to Emperor Showa's
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birthday. Before his death in 1989, this day was referred to the Emperor's Birthday and celebrated as such. After he died in 1989, the day became known as Greenery Day, or *Midori no Hi*. However, many in the Japanese government wanted to maintain reference to the emperor due to his influence on both pre and post war Japan. Thus, *Midori no Hi* as moved to a later day during the same week, and April 29 became known as *Showa no Hi*. The government claims that this is a day to "reflect on the 63 years of Emperor Hirohito's turbulent reign", and has become the first day of the Golden Week period.

昭和の日



Constitution Memorial Day 憲法記念日

This day was created in remembrance of the signing of Japan's constitution in 1947. The constitution was drafted by America and Japan after World War 2 and this is a day of remembrance for the events leading up to that point. It takes place every year on May 3.

Greenery Day みどりの日

As mentioned previously, this day was originally the Emperor's Birthday, whose name changed to Greenery Day, or *Midori no Hi*, after the death of Hirohito, Emperor Showa in 1989. The reason for this naming is due to the emperor's known love of plants. Since he was a controversial figure in Japanese history, it was a way to refer to him without using his name. Despite that, the government ended up creating Showa Day down the road. Greenery Day is a day in which people are encouraged to respect and think about nature, and count their blessings. This day is celebrated on May 4, right after the Constitution Memorial Day.



Children's Day こどもの日

This day was actually called Boy's day up until the reforms in 1948. This was seen as a counterpart to Girl's Day, which is another name for Hina Festival. However, it was renamed to Children's Day, or *Kodomo no Hi*, as a day to celebrate all children as well as parents and the bonds of family. This holiday is celebrated every year on May 5, and is the last day of the Golden Week holiday season. On this day, there are many events and festivals throughout Japan in which children can play games and win candy.



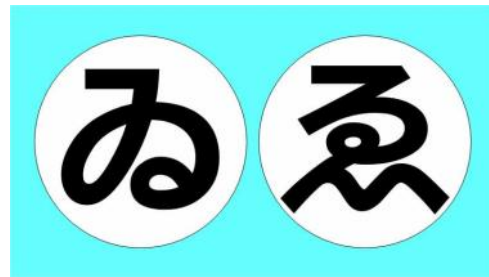
There are two main symbols that refer to this day. The first is the *koinobori* (こいのぼり), which is a flagpole with a number of kites resembling carp hanging from it. This refers to the Chinese story of the fish that swam up a waterfall to become a dragon. It is seen as a symbol of strength and vitality, just like the next symbol. You may have seen samurai helmets in glass cases on sale recently. This is called a *kabuto* (兜), which is often put on display in the home during Children's Day.



Japanese Corner: “W” Hiragana

ワ行ひらがな

As you may know, Japanese has two hiragana that start with the “w” sound わ “wa” and を “wo”, but no others! Also, the “w” in わ is pronounced, but not the one in を! What’s up with this? Well, as it turns out, history has changed the way that Japanese is pronounced in modern day!



Did you know that there used to be two other hiragana that start with “w”, ゐ “wi” and ゑ “we”? From the time since the Nara period (710 AD), Japanese had a distinction between い / ゐ and え / ゑ in terms of pronunciation. Since then, over the next few hundred years into the Heian and Kamakura periods, the sound system of Japanese began to shift. These sounds started to become less distinguishable from each other. In fact, Japanese sounds that started with an “h”, such as は “ha”, へ “he” and ひ “hi” started to sound more like わ and ゐ (which is a hint as to why the modern particles は and へ sound like わ and え!) and the usage of these hiragana started to get confusing among the population.

During the Kamakura period, the disparity between pronunciation and the written language became so confusing that rules were developed to make writing easier, and thus ゐ and ゑ and their katakana counterparts ヰ and ヱ were no longer used, and を became pronounced the same as お. In modern times, を remains as a particle in Japanese language, while the other two “w” kana are used for stylistic purposes and for fun. Also, as alluded to earlier, due to the Japanese sound changes, the particles へ, は and を are all pronounced differently. The more you know!

Movies @ Cinema Taiyo, Obihiro

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
Morbius <i>Mōbiusu</i>	action/ adventure	EN	Until 5 th
Fantastic Beasts: The Secrets of Dumbledore <i>Fantastikku Bīsuto to Danburudoa no Himitsu</i>	fantasy/ adventure	EN	Until 19 th
The Batman <i>THE BATMAN—Za Battoman—</i>	action	EN	Until 12 th
CODA <i>Coda Kōda Ai no Uta</i>	comedy/ romance	EN	Until 12 th
Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness <i>Dokutā Sutorenji: Maruchibāsu obu Maddonesu</i>	action	EN	From 4 th
Top Gun: Maverick <i>Toppu Gan Māverikku</i>	action/ drama	EN	From 27 th

KEY: JP = Japanese voice EN = English voice with Japanese subtitles

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Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness

Events in Tokachi

Please be aware that these and other events may be affected by COVID-19. To find out if these events are still running, please contact the respective organizers or check out their webpages online.

When	What	Where/Contact
5/14 5/28 (Sat) 16:00-17:30	Japanese Conversation and Learning Table 森の日本語レッスン Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment. Fee: Free of charge	
5/21 (Sat) 10:30-12:00	Kids' Playground (China) キッズ・プレイグラウンド: 中国 Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month's theme is "China". This time our guest, Li Hang from China, will interact with the children through song, dance and arts and craft. Fee: Free of charge Participants: Children 0-6 years old and their parents/guardians. Limited to 40 participants (decided by raffle) Notes: Register by contacting the TIRC or through the QR code on the right.	Tokachi International Relations Center @ Obihiro 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
5/22 (Sun) 10:30-12:00	42nd Annual Hiro'o Tsutsuji Festival 第42回広尾つつじまつり Surround yourself with the beauty of over 12,000 azalea flowers blooming at this time in Hiro'o Town. There will be a number of food stalls, games, and local characters to take pictures with!	Daimaruyama Forest Park @ Hiro'o 広尾町水産商工観光課 0155-82-0177
5/28 (Sat) 10:00-11:30	Coat Hanger Making オリジナルハンガーづくり Using a heat gun, turn your favorite and creative designs into wooden coat hangers during this event to make wonderful gifts for your family members for Father's Day! Participants: Max 5 elementary school age students Fee: 200 yen/person (material fee is included) Bring: wooden hangar, clothes that okay to get messy, a bag to carry your things home in Registration: Open until May 18 (Wednesday)	Makubetsu Centennial Hall (Crafts Room) @ Makubetsu 幕別百年記念ホール 0155-56-8600
5/28 18:30-20:00 (Sat)	International Talk (Thailand) インターナショナル・トーク: タイ Learn more about the countries of the world. This month's theme is "Thailand". This time our guest is Traichok Siriya, an international student at Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine. She will introduce her country and share facts and interesting information about Thai culture, lifestyle and more. Participants can interact with the guest through a presentation and Q&A session.	Tokachi International Relations Center @ Obihiro 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp

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 (search for "Obihiro Pioneer").

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. Questions? Contact the Editing Team at:
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