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Web Site

Hiro-Community-Development Center

KOHO HIRO

Hiro-Community Newsletter January

Welcoming the Year of the Fire Horse & the Zodiac

As winter deepens and the chill of *Shiwasu*—December—settles in, even the city lights seem to glow with the warmth of anticipation for the year. We trust that everyone in the *Hiro* community has spent a fruitful and fulfilling year. At New Year's, many visit shrines for *hatsumōde*, offering prayers and wishes on ema, the small wooden plaques familiar throughout Japan. This cherished custom traces back to ancient nobility, who once dedicated living horses to the gods in prayer. As such offerings became impractical for commoners, they began painting horses on wooden tablets instead—thus giving birth to the *ema* we know today. The zodiac sign for 2026 is *Uma*, or Horse. Japan's twelve-animal zodiac—*Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Boar*—originated in ancient China and forms part of a more complex calendrical system combining the Ten Heavenly Stems (*jikkan*) and the Twelve Earthly Branches (*junishi*). The *jikkan* (the "Ten Heavenly Stems") arose from an ancient cosmology that imagined ten suns rising and setting in turn over ten days: *Kō, Otsu, Hei, Tei, Bo, Ki, Kō, Shin, Jin, and Ki*. Together with the twelve zodiac animals, they form a sixty-year cycle—the completion of which is known as *kanreki*, or "the return of the calendar." The first combination, *Kōshi* (Wood Rat), is considered especially auspicious. In fact, the legendary *Koshien Stadium*, home of Japanese high school baseball, was completed in 1924—a *Kōshi* year. By the way, the terms *zi* (子=rat) and *wu* (午=horse) in the Japanese word for "meridian," *shigosen*, also come from the ancient Chinese zodiac system: *zi* marks the north and *wu* marks the south.

Interestingly, the character for "horse" used in the zodiac is not 馬 (*uma*), but 午 (*go*). This same character appears in *gozen* (a.m.) and *gogo* (p.m.), reminders that the zodiac once structured time itself—*ushi no koku* for the early hours of the morning, *uma no koku* for noon, when the sun stands highest.

The *jikkan*, meanwhile, arose from an ancient cosmology that imagined ten suns taking turns to rise and set over ten days.

The New Year marks the Year of the Fire Horse (*Hinoe-Uma*). The "*Hinoe*" (Fire) element is said to symbolize passion and drive, while "*Uma*" (Horse) represents vitality, energy, and growth. We sincerely hope that this Year of the Horse will be a strong and flexible year for everyone in Hiro community, allowing you to move forward with confidence and vigor.

Director Hosokawa



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Population of HIRO
 At the end of October,
 compared to September
 Total 42,048 (-9)
 ● M E N 20,374 (-1)
 ● WOMEN 21,674 (-8)



It is only in times of hardship that one truly understands the meaning of friendship.
 In battle, it is often the commander of a smaller army—say, one of three thousand—that wins over a larger force of ten thousand. This is because the soldiers of the smaller army, knowing their numbers are few, have resolved themselves to the inevitable fate of either victory or defeat. In contrast, a leader of a large army, buoyed by their size, must never become complacent.

Maeda Toshiie

Information from Hiro C.D.C.

Registration starts on Tue, Jan. 20th

① Delicious & Fun Medicinal Cuisine

~Dietary Tips for Welcoming Spring with Vitality~

For ages 18 and up
 Date: Wed, Feb 25th, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
 Location: Hiro Civic Center, 6th Floor
 Fee: ¥1,900
 Capacity: 16 participants (First-come, first-served)



② Spring Mimosa Flower Wreath

For ages 18 and up
 Date: Wed, Mar 4th, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
 Location: Hiro Civic Center, 6th Floor
 Fee: ¥2,400
 Capacity: 12 participants (First-come, first-served)



Community Walking Excursion

Event Date: January 20, 2026 (Tuesday)
 Point: JR Nigata Station
 Time: 9:00 AM
 Course: Nigata Crossing – 10 km
 JR Nigata Station → Yaiwabana Shrine → Yoshimatsu Pass
 → Zentsū-ji Temple → Bentenbashi Park → Hiro Civic Center
 *For inquiries, please contact Mr. Hori (Tel: 080-1919-6088).



Station	Time
Shin-Hiro St.	8:48
Hiro St.	8:54
Nigata St.	8:57

RAIN OUT!

The event or course may be changed or canceled due to weather or other circumstances.

Let's Use Smartphones Wisely — Smartphone Workshop

Beginner-Friendly! Learn the Basics of Smartphones in a Fun and Easy Way Useful LINE Tips & How to Use the Hazard Map
 Date & Time: Wednesday, January 28, 2026, 14:00–16:15
 Venue: Hiro Civic Center, 6th Floor (Room 601)
 Capacity: 15 participants Fee: Free of charge
 Inquiries: Senior Support Division, Tel. 25-3104
 Registration: Accepted by phone on a first-come, first-served basis starting at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, December 22.



Notice from Hiro Community Development Promotion

The 77th Hiro District Education Festival Recipients of the Education Merit Award

Mr. Kazuo Yamane	Hiro District Neighborhood Association Federation
Mr. Tsutomu Kosako	Hiro District Neighborhood Association Federation
Ms. Keiko Takeda	Hiro District Women's Association Federation
Ms. Kyoko Fujiwara	Hiro District Women's Association Federation
Ms. Kimiko Itagawa	Districts 14–16 Welfare and Child Committee Council
Ms. Miki Nakagawa	Hiro Sports Association
Nagahama Children's Association	Hiro Federation of Children's Associations
Ms. Noriko Matsumoto	Hiro Cultural Organization Federation
Ms. Shizuki Yanagida	Hiro District School Relations
Ms. Miyuki Tamai	Hiro Community Development Center

Hiro Family Mochi(sticky rice cake) Festival

The annual Hiro Mochi Danran Festival will be held again this year! The Hiro Civic Center parking area will be filled with the sound of mochi pounding, along with warm winter foods and fun stalls for all ages. The popular all-you-can-fill mikan challenge will also return. A lobby concert featuring pianist Rina Yamamoto and soprano Saori Matsumura will take place at 1:00 p.m. in the first-floor lobby. Come with family and friends to enjoy a memorable winter day!

Date: Sunday, December 14, 2025, 10:00–15:00 Mochi Pounding: 10:00–13:00 Lobby Concert: 13:00–13:30 Venue: Hiro Civic Center Parking Area & 1st-Floor Gallery Contact: Hiro Community Development Promotion Council, Tel. 73-7191

Information from HIRO Collaboration Center

At the Hiro Collaboration Center, we regularly post volunteer recruitment notices and information on volunteer, community-building, and local events. The display area also offers local newsletters, organization bulletins, and maps of communities in Kure City. If you'd like to learn more about volunteer activities or community information, feel free to visit the center on the 4th floor of the Hiro Civic Center. Opening Hours: 9:00–17:00 Closed: Wednesdays Inquiries: Tel. 71-0321



Thank You for Your Feedback on the Short-Term Course!

We received many positive comments from participants, Hands-on Artisan Breadmaking: Baked Curry Buns from Scratch

* It was wonderful that the children were able to take part, even just a little. * The entire experience felt effortless and welcoming. Both the bread and the curry filling had a delightful, chewy texture—truly delicious. I'd love to try making them at home. * The instructions were clear and easy to follow, and I had a great time. Since this was my first attempt at baking bread, I was a bit anxious, but it turned out beautifully in the end. * Everything was well explained and enjoyable to make—I'd love to do it again.



The Art of Elegant Penmanship: A Brush-Pen Workshop

* Although my handwriting used to be rather poor, joining the workshop helped me write more gracefully. * I did wish we had a little more time, but the key points were well presented. It was engaging and practical—especially when we practiced writing things like thank-you notes. * I've long wanted to improve my penmanship, so I'm grateful for the chance to participate. I even found myself enjoying letters I once struggled with. * I'd been curious about this class for some time, and I'm so glad I finally attended. In fact, I'd love for it to be offered not just twice, but every month. * It was a pleasure to take part—thank you for such a delightful experience.



Information from HIRO Sports Association

Results of the 72nd Kure City Sports Festival (Hiro District)

1st place: Overall Championship,

T&F(Men), Kendo, Golf

2nd place: Overall T&F, Tennis, Bowling

Volleyball(Women), Handball,
Ground Golf,

3rd place: T&F(Women), Basketball,

Rubber Baseball, Soft Tennis, Handball,
Judo, Kyudo, Badminton, Soft Volleyball



Announcement of Scheduled Closure

Monday, January 26

Hiro Community Development Center



Results 23rd Hiro Mini Basketball Match

The 23rd Hiro Mini Basketball Tournament was held on Sun. Oct. 12th ~9:00 AM, Oak Arena

【Girls' Block】

1st **Hiro** Mini Basketball School

2nd **Gohara** Mini Basketball Club

【Boys' Block】

1st **Shiratake** Mini Basketball School

2nd **Yokoro** Mini Basketball School



12 teams
203 players

Results 46th Hiro Ground Golf Match

Date and time: Held on Mon, November 4th

Location: Hiro Park Sports Field

1st: Shigeo Habu 28-3

3rd: Hironobu Yamamoto 32-2

5th: Toyohiro Omori 34-2

7th: Koji Makio 35-2

9th: Mitsunori Onji 36-1

2nd: Kazue Shiraki 32-2

4th: Toshiko Nakagawa 32-1

6th: Katsutoshi Fujimoto 34-1

8th: Masahiro Kanemoto 35-1

10th: Mitsuru Matsunaka 38-1

Recipients Hiro Sports Association Sports Merit Award 2025

2025 Hiro Sports Association Achievement Award Winners (Individual)

Yokoro Elementary School, Kure City (Yokoroshō)

2025 Itosu-ryu International Karate Championship

Boys under 7: 2nd Place – **Ritsu Iikawa**

Girls 8-9: 2nd Place – **Kou Iikawa**

Misakaji Elementary School, Kure City (Misakajishō)

2025 Itosu-ryu International Karate Championship

Boys 8-9: Fighting Spirit Award – **Yuki Ushigami**

Yokoro Elementary School, Kure City (Yokoroshō)

29th Chugoku Elementary School Soft Tennis Championship

Singles: 1st Place & Team: 1st Place – **Haruto Ebisu**

Kure Technical High School (Kureko)

34th Chugoku High School Newcomer Track and Field Championship

Shot Put: 3rd Place – **Haruto Matsuoka**

Kure Miyahara High School (Miyako)

50th Chugoku High School Archery Championship

Team: 2nd Place – **Nana Kitakaze**

Sotoku High School (Sotoku)

2025 National High School Sports Festival - Boxing

Lightweight: 5th Place – **Itta Kamigouchi**

Hiroshima International University (Hiroshimakokusaidai)

64th All Japan Teachers Badminton Championship

Men's Senior Team: 3rd Place – **Shuichi Inudo**

2025 Hiro Sports Association Achievement Award Winners (Team)

Shiratake Junior High School, Kure City (Shiratakechu)

55th Chugoku Junior High School Basketball Championship -

Boys Team: 3rd Place – **Yuki Mochida, Soma Matsuo,**

Kota Shitamori, Tasuku Izumi, Yudai Awasaki, Shota Hori,

Aoi Tanihara, Haruki Sugahara, Taisei Yamamoto,

Hinata Yamamoto, Masato Shintaku, Shota Sugahara,

Kodai Mizumoto, Issei Yabumoto, Takahito Mitsui

Information from Hiro Library

Hours & Closures

Hours of Operation: 9:30 AM – 8:00 PM

Regular Closures: Thursdays and public holidays

January Closures: 8th, 12th, 15th, 22nd, 29th

Year-End & New Year Closure: Sunday, Dec. 28 – Sunday, Jan. 4

Reopening: Monday, Jan. 5, 2026

Note: There will be no Picture Book Meeting in January.



Announcement from the Kure City Family Support Center

Kure City Family Supporter Training Course

A training course will be held for those who are willing to support families raising children, including providing temporary childcare. Two-day course.

Dates: January 26, 2026 (Mon) — 9:30-15:30

January 27, 2026 (Tue) - 9:30-11:30 **Venue:** Kure Shi Sukoyaka

Childrearing Support Center “Hiro-hiro-ba” Training Room (Hiro Civic Center, 3rd Floor) **Capacity:** No limit **Fee:** Free

Eligibility: Residents of Kure City who wish to support children and families in their community **Application Period:** December 15, 2025 (Mon) – January 16, 2026 (Fri) Please provide your name, address, age, and contact information.

Applications & Inquiries: Kure City Family Support Center (inside “Kure-kure-ba”) Tel: (0823) 25-4122 Fax: (0823) 21-2167

Editorial Note The Double Edge of Traditional Beliefs

It is often said that “the Year of the Fire Horse brings more fires,” but few things unsettle the human mind quite like a superstition involving flame. Yet a glance at modern statistics makes one point unmistakably clear: the Year of the Fire Horse shows no spike in fire incidents. Far more decisive are the dry seasonal winds, shifting temperatures, and the evolving architecture of our cities—conditions of climate and society that shape the path of a blaze far more than any ancient calendar ever could. Nature, after all, has little interest in the labels we so eagerly affix to it. Still, a compelling story tends to outshine an unadorned fact. And so the superstition persists, its narrative weight overshadowing the quieter evidence. The true irony is that in the very year people feared an outbreak of flames, it was not buildings that suffered but the birthrate. In 1966, many couples chose to delay or avoid childbirth altogether, and Japan's number of newborns fell sharply compared with the surrounding years. The flames never came, but the nation's numbers swayed dramatically all the same.

We humans are quick to embrace a compelling story, even when it blinds us to the facts before us. In the end, it may not be the year that proves combustible, but the human heart itself.

