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**Hiro Community Development Center**  
**KOHO HIRO**  
 Hiro Community Newsletter



## The Heart's Returning in Summer: The Japanese Soul Seen in Shōryō-uma

With the end of the rainy season announced, the summer sky takes on a sharp, unfiltered brightness. It is not long now before **Obon** arrives—a season when attention quietly shifts toward family ties and those who came before us. Have you ever come across **shōryō-uma**, or “spirit horses”? These small offerings are made from cucumbers and eggplants, their legs fashioned from strips of dried hemp stalk known as **ogara**.

When hemp stalks are unavailable, chopsticks are sometimes used instead. They are placed on household altars or near entryways during **Obon**, marking both the welcoming and the farewell of ancestral spirits. The cucumber is known as the “horse of welcome,” meant to carry ancestors home quickly. The eggplant becomes the “cow of farewell,” symbolizing a slower departure—an unhurried return, as if to extend the time of togetherness a little longer. While this custom is especially common in eastern Japan, the idea of offering symbolic “transport” for ancestral spirits appears in various forms across regions and generations.

Across Japanese seasonal traditions, there is a recurring impulse to give visible form to what cannot be seen. Feelings and intentions often take physical shape: handwritten wishes tied to bamboo at **Tanabata**, pine branches placed at gates for the New Year, or the simple act of gazing at the autumn moon. The **shōryō-uma** belong to this same lineage of expression—an effort to give shape to emotions that words alone cannot fully contain. In recent years, coastal communities in **Yamagata** Prefecture have drawn attention for a contemporary variation: the **shōryō-car**. Here, miniature cars replace horses, offered with the same intention—only now imagined in a more modern register. The hope remains unchanged: that ancestors might return more quickly, more comfortably, perhaps even with a touch of modern convenience. Whether horse or car, the form shifts, but the sentiment does not. What endures is the desire for reunion, and for a little more time together. Tradition, in this sense, is less about preserving objects than about carrying forward the feelings behind them. **Obon** arrives quietly in the midst of a busy season, offering a brief pause in daily life. It is a moment to remember connections that are often taken for granted. This year, perhaps we might greet it with a simple “Welcome home,” and allow those inherited memories to gather, however briefly, around the table once again. **Director, Hosokawa**



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**Population of HIRO**  
 At the end of May,  
 compared to April  
**Total 41,882(+13)**  
**●M E N 20,347(+26)**  
**●WOMEN 21,535(−13)**



Unity is stronger than walls.  
 Honor is worth more than life  
 itself. Wealth means little  
 compared with duty and  
 righteousness. Praise must be  
 earned through one's own  
 deeds. Live within your means  
 and avoid unnecessary luxury.  
**Takenaka Hanbei**

This is an image for reference.

## Information from Hiro C.D.C.

Registration starts on Thursday, August 20

### ① The Ogasawara Style of Sencha Tea Ceremony

**Eligibility:** Ages 18 and over  
**Dates & Time:** October 9, December 11,  
 January 8, February 12, and March 12  
 (all Fridays), 1:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m.  
**Venue:** Room 605, 6th Floor,  
 Kure Civic Center  
**Fee:** ¥4,000  
**Capacity:** 15 participants  
 (First-come, first-served)



### ② Create an Autumn-Toned Butterfly Swag Create a Wall Decoration to Brighten Your Home

**Eligibility:** Ages 18 and over  
**Date & Time:** Wednesday, October 7,  
 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
**Venue:** Room 606, 6th Floor,  
 Hiro Civic Center  
**Fee:** ¥2,700  
**Capacity:** 10 participants  
 (first come, first served)



### ③ Homemade Pasta Workshop for Parents & Children Ravioli with Tomato Sauce

**Eligibility:** Elementary and junior high  
 school students and their guardians  
**Date & Time:** Saturday, October 3,  
 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.  
**Venue:** Room 603, 6th Floor,  
 Kure Civic Center  
**Fee:** ¥1,200 per person  
**Capacity:** 12 participants  
 (first come, first served)



## Information from Hiro Community Development Promotion Council 8th Hiro Bon Dance Festival & New Hiro Ondo Dance Celebration



**The Bon Odori Dance Festival**, a cherished summer tradition of our local community, will be held once again. Over the years, it has become a popular participatory event that people of all ages can enjoy casually and together. The festival is also intended to preserve and pass on local traditions to future generations, while introducing more people to the “**Shin Hiro Ondo**” and fostering a deeper sense of pride and affection for our community. In addition to food and game booths, we will hold our annual grand prize drawing, which is always a favorite among attendees. We warmly invite you to join us with your family and friends.

### Schedule

5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Food and Game Booths

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Bon Odori Dancing

The **Shin Hiro Ondo** will be danced during designated time periods throughout the event.

8:30 p.m. – 8:50 p.m. Grand Prize Drawing

Lucky(Drawing) Numbers are printed on the fans distributed at the reception desk beginning at 5:00 p.m. One fan will be provided per person, limited to the first 500 attendees.

8:50 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Final Community Dance

**Venue Hiroshima International University**

Please note that the event schedule and contents are subject to change without notice. Thank you for your understanding.

**Event Date: Sunday, August 2**



## Thank You for Your Feedback! Let's Make Melon Bread-Shaped Cupcakes

Please share any comments about this class.



\* It was fun. \* I enjoyed mixing the ingredients. \* I thought making melon bread-shaped cupcakes would be difficult, but the teacher explained everything very well, so it was easy to understand. \* Making melon bread-shaped cupcakes was difficult, but it was a lot of fun. \* I had a great time. I was happy to learn something new.

\* In this class, I was able to make bread that I normally cannot make at home, which was very enjoyable. I especially liked punching and kneading the dough because it is not something I get to do very often, so it felt special. \* It was fun, and I learned a lot about how to make melon bread-shaped cupcakes.



It already looked delicious while we were making it.

**What kinds of classes would you like to attend in the future?**

- ☐ Cake decorating ☐ Icing cookies ☐ Croissants
- ☐ Cake making ☐ Donuts
- ☐ Baking and sweets-making classes
- ☐ Ice cream making ☐ Scones
- ☐ **Dango** (Japanese sweet dumplings)
- ☐ Bread-making classes
- ☐ **Anpanman**-shaped bread ☐ Jelly desserts ☐ Cooking classes
- ☐ Children's sweets-making classes



[melon pan-shaped cupcakes]

## Information from Hiro-Library

**Opening Hours:** 9:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

**Closed:** Thursdays and public holidays

**Library Closures in August:** August 6 (Thu),

11 (Tue, Public Holiday), 13 (Thu),

20 (Thu), 27 (Thu)

**Contact:** Hiro Library Tel: 71-7470

**Note:** There will be no children's picture book reading sessions in August.



Our office is normally closed on 4<sup>th</sup> Monday  
**Next : Monday, August 24**

## Vibrant Origami and Heartfelt Etegami



At Hiro Community Development Center, many **Community Hobby Groups** enjoy activities that allow members to share their interests, talents, and creativity. In this issue, we are pleased to introduce works created by members of the **Hiro Origami Club** and the **Hiro Etegami (Japanese Picture Letter) Club**. The colorful **origami** horse creations inspired by the Chinese zodiac and the warm, expressive picture letters depicting seasonal flowers, vegetables, and other familiar subjects reflect the members' enjoyment of their activities as well as the care and thought they put into their work. These works are on display in the glass showcase in front of the elevator hall on the fifth floor. When you visit our center, we invite you to stop by and take a look. We hope you will enjoy these heartfelt creations and discover the appeal of our community hobby groups through the talents and dedication of their members.

## Stay Safe from Heatstroke: Tips for a Healthy Summer

This Summer Hot and humid weather increases the risk of heatstroke. In severe cases, it can become a serious health emergency, so prevention is essential. Drink water regularly, even before you feel thirsty, and replenish salts when needed. On days when the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is high, make a special effort to stay hydrated. Avoid prolonged outdoor activities during the hottest part of the day, and take breaks in shaded areas or cool indoor spaces. Wearing a hat, using a sun umbrella, and choosing lightweight, breathable clothing can help keep you cool. At home, use air conditioners and fans to maintain a comfortable indoor environment, especially for older adults and young children.

**Easy Energy-Saving Tips for Summer: Save Electricity Without Sacrificing Comfort** By adopting a few simple habits, you can stay comfortable, save energy, and help protect the environment. Use your air conditioner according to indoor conditions and personal comfort, and avoid saving electricity at the expense of your health. Using a fan or air circulator together with an air conditioner can improve cooling efficiency. Regularly cleaning air-conditioner filters also helps reduce energy consumption.



To keep your home cooler, use curtains, blinds, or shades to block direct sunlight. During cooler morning and evening hours, open windows to improve ventilation. Simple actions, such as turning off unused lights and appliances, can also make a difference. Small changes in our daily lives can help us stay comfortable while conserving energy throughout the summer.

## Notice from the Senior Citizens Support Division Smartphone Workshop for Seniors

Smartphone Basics Workshop for Seniors Beginners are welcome! Why not learn the basics of smartphone operation and discover useful ways to make the most of your smartphone? A smartphone will be provided to each participant during the workshop.

**Program:** Learn how to use Maps and the Camera

**Introduction to Generative AI**

**Eligibility:** Residents of Kure City  
aged 65 or older

**Date & Time:** Friday, August 21,  
2:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

**Venue:** Room 601, 6th Floor,  
Hiro Civic Center

**Fee:** Free of charge **Capacity:** 20 participants

**Registration:** Applications will be **accepted by telephone** on a first-come, first-served basis starting at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, July 21.

**Inquiries:** Elderly Support Division **Tel:** 25-3104



## Announcements from the Hiro Collaboration Center

The Hiro Collaboration Center continuously posts volunteer opportunities as well as information on events related to volunteering, community development, and local activities. The exhibition area inside the center features local community newsletters, organizational bulletins, and maps of neighborhoods throughout Kure City. If you would like to learn more about volunteer activities or local community information, please feel free to visit the Hiro Collaboration Center on the 4th floor of Hiro Civic Center.

**Opening Hours:** 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Closed:** Wednesdays **Tel:** 71-0321



## Editorial Note Eaves Nostalgia: Winds of History

As air-conditioned spaces have become the norm, the familiar chime of a wind bell hanging from an eave has largely faded from everyday life. Its sound still evokes nostalgia, yet its original purpose had little to do with keeping cool. The wind bell originated in ancient China as a tool for divination. After making its way to Japan, it was hung from temple eaves as protection against evil and misfortune. In an age when strong winds were believed to carry harmful influences, its ringing was thought to keep them at bay.



By the **Edo** period, the wind bell had evolved into the glass form we know today. Its delicate chime came to suggest the presence of a cooling breeze, making hot summer days feel a little more bearable. There is something wonderfully elegant about the way earlier generations created a sense of coolness through sound and the other senses.

