



# HELLO OKAYA

OKAYA INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ASSOCIATION  
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This newsletter is distributed four times a year by the Okaya International Exchange Association, with the aim of providing local foreign residents with information necessary for daily life, as well as insight into aspects of Japanese culture.

## Enjoy the Summer Festival!

Of all the events and festivals happening in Okaya City all year round, the summer festivals are the ones not to be missed. Summer as it is widely known, is the season of festivals here in Japan. In this issue, we will introduce you to some festivals and fireworks you can enjoy with your family and friends this summer.

The end of the rainy season ushers in 'Samba de Night' on July 26<sup>th</sup>, Saturday. Fabulous colors and various rhythms attract a massive crowd to the streets leading from JR Okaya Station to ILF Plaza, creating an atmosphere of excitement brought about by spectacular samba performances. Adding to the festive mood is the very unique 'Kitsune Matsuri' (Fox Festival) taking place at the same time. This one of a kind event features the 'Kitsune-no-Yomeiri' parade, in which a procession of bride and groom parades around Okaya City culminating to a wedding ceremony. It is about an old romantic tale about a young man with a white fox who fought against the great catfish of Suwa Lake to save his village and the love of his life, ultimately sacrificing his life in the battle. Soon after, the love of his life followed suit. On the day of the festival, flea market and stalls reminiscent of the olden times are scheduled to line up the street and there will be a number of fox-themed games for children. With the 'Samba de Night' happening from Okaya Station to ILF Plaza and 'Kitsune Matsuri' on Chuo-dori across the ILF Plaza on the same day, don't you want to indulge yourself in the festive mood peculiar to Central Okaya?

On August 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, Japan's well-known 'Okaya Taiko Matsuri' (Okaya Drum Festival) will be held. Under the theme of "From the roof of Japan to the World", the special outdoor stage where the drums

beat in a huge resounding sound will be set at the parking space next to the ILF Plaza, right in the heart of the city.

The beginning of the festival is announced throughout the city with the beating of 'Fure-Taiko', then 'Taiko-Mikoshi', 'Minakoi-Wassaka' and 'Nagashi-Odori' parade through the city streets starting from the evening. As it gets dark, they make their way towards the special outdoor stage.

'Kiyari' and 'Taiko-ren' perform on the stage one after the other and the climax of the 'Taiko Matsuri' begins when 300 drummers perform together on stage. This is indeed the main event of the summer festival. The stage of festival moves from Okaya City to Suwa City after 'Taiko Matsuri'. 'Lake Suwa Fireworks Festival' will be held on August 15<sup>th</sup> when you start to feel the autumn breeze. This rather well-known and large-scale fireworks display features about 40,000 fireworks and attracts more than 450,000 viewers, definitely ending the summer with a big bang. And not only does it get the city all warmed up, it will overwhelm you with its resonating sound. From the magnificent heart-stomping sound, onlookers can't help but gasp in awe. Reflection of the fireworks on the lake is also quite a spectacle as if you are enjoying another fireworks display. You can also enjoy 'Niagara' leading to the quiet and beautiful closing of the event.

The stage then moves back to Okaya, off the Kamaguchi Watergate in Shimohama. On August 16<sup>th</sup>, 'Okaya Toronagashi & Fireworks Festival' will see a number of floating lanterns on the river, commemorating the souls of the departed ones. Approximately 1100 lanterns are donated from local households, companies and shops. Lanterns recognizing the contributors or posthumous names mark the end of the summer.

Please enjoy the exciting summer festivals!



## ☆ JAPANESE SUMMER FEATURES

### ~One Point Japanese Culture~

かえ ちゅうげん せいぼ  
**お返し (お中元・お歳暮)**  
**OKAESHI (OCHUGEN・OSEIBO)**  
 Return Gift

Giving a gift in return is called 'okaeshi'. In Japan the courtesy custom of exchanging gifts remains strongly entrenched to preserve the harmony of human relationships. There are general standards of when and how to give gifts and give back something in return. Gifts are sent for auspicious events, at times of mourning, at the midyear and at year-end; and those to whom gifts have been sent, in accordance with customary practice, do 'okaeshi'. It is believed that giving gifts and doing 'okaeshi,' contributes to human relationships.

'Ochugen' refers to gifts that individuals and businesses send from early July to July 15<sup>th</sup> to people to whom they are indebted. 'Oseibo' is a gift sent in the middle of December. Early in December, shops begin to get crowded with people buying gifts, and the hustle and bustle of the year-end gives a real sense of the approaching new year.



きんぎょ  
**金魚 KINGYO Goldfish**



The Japanese enjoy these fish and usually keep them in a glass goldfish bowl. At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, pure breed goldfishes were imported from China leading to an increase of goldfish species in the Edo Period (1603-1867), resulting to a widespread past time of keeping "kingyo" as pet. Until the 1960s, 'kingyo' sellers flourished in Tokyo, carrying around 'kingyo'-filled buckets suspended from a shoulder carrying pole. Variety of tropical fishes are available at home improvement stores nowadays, yet 'kingyo' is popular for a game called 'Kingyo sukui' (Scooping goldfishes) played at street stalls at summer festivals and fairs, and even today is a poetic feature of summer.



はいく たんか  
**俳句と短歌 HAIKU & TANKA**

'Haiku' is poetry structured in the set form of 17 syllables, arranged in groups of 5, 7, and 5. Because 'Haiku' can express the beauty of nature and the depths of the human heart in a brief form. It has spread throughout the world and is now even a part of American education. A season-related word, indicating the season, is included in 'haiku' in the original style. The season-related word brings out ideas associated with the background of the word, and, within the space of just 17 syllables, it adds breadth and depth to the verse. 'Tanka' is short, lyrical poetry structured in 31 syllables, arranged in groups of 5, 7, 5, 7 and 7, syllables, in a two-part form with the first part in 5, 7, 5, and the second part in 7 and 7. Representative examples are 'Manyoshu' (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves) and 'Kokinwakashu' (Collection of Japanese Poems from Ancient and Modern Times). Its main feature is that, in expressing the gamut of feelings in a simple form, it must contain - and this is an indispensable feature - a suggestiveness felt beyond the words. Perhaps a requirement for an outstanding 'tanka' is that it causes associations with a suggestiveness not expressed in words and a deep elegance.



# Guide for Okaya Public Facilities

## ① Okaya City Hall

8-1 Saiwai-chou Okaya-shi TEL 0266-23-4811

Okaya City Hall provides a wide range of administrative services including Alien Registration (*Gaikokujin Touroku*) and National Health Insurance (*Kokumin Kenkou Hoken*). Okaya City Hall has its branches in Minato, Kawagishi, Osachi and in front of the Okaya Station where services such as paying tax and obtaining official documents are available.

## ② Minato Branch

3-8-6 Minato Okaya-shi TEL 0266-23-2300

## ③ Kawagishi Branch

3-1-29 Kawagishinaka Okaya-shi TEL 0266-23-2200

## ④ Osachi Branch

2-15-26 Oschishibamiya Okaya-shi TEL 0266-27-8080

## ⑤ Okaya Station Plaza Branch

1-1-1 Chuou-chou Okaya-shi TEL 0266-21-7110

## ⑥ Canora Hall

8-1 Saiwai-cho Okaya-shi TEL 0266-24-1300

Canora Hall has always been an important hub for arts, culture and music. It has a grand hall with 1,466 seats and a small hall with a flexible size that can meet various kinds of needs.

## ⑦ ILF Plaza 3F 「Culture Center」

1-11-1 Chuou Okaya-shi TEL 0266-24-1300

## ⑧ ILF Plaza 4F 「Kodomonokuni」

1-11-1 Chuou Okaya-shi TEL 0266-24-8403

Culture Center provides a place where people can meet others for cultural exchange and communication purposes.

Various courses and events are held for people of all ages. Japanese classes organized by the Okaya International Exchange Association will soon open this coming September at the Training room (*kenshu shitsu*) at the 3F.

Kodomonokuni, located on the 4th floor is a play lot for 0 to 3 year-old children and their parents. Please feel free to visit.



★ Classrooms (for public use)/Training Room 1 to 7, Multipurpose Hall, Cooking room, Japanese-style room 1 to 4, Dance/music room 1 and 2, Music studio, Recording studio, Workshop, Meeting room 1 and 2, IT room, Exhibition space, Study room (study room can be used freely)

※ For further information, please inquire at the Culture Center. Refer to the contact details above.

★ Admission Fee/From 100 yen to 1000yen. (The fee varies depending on the room)

★ Hours/9:00AM~9:30PM

★ Closed/The second week of Tuesday and January 1st.

★ Application/Culture Center Front desk or Internet

※ Rooms (except for the exhibition space) can be booked 3 months in advance.

※ Exhibition space can be booked 6 months in advance.

※ Adjacent multi-level parking car tower is available. Free of charge for the first 5 hours.

## ⑨ Okaya Library

4-1-39 Honmachi Okaya-shi TEL 0266-22-2031

Reading and borrowing various kinds of books are available. Book-reading and story-telling events take place occasionally.

## ⑩ ILF Museum

1-11-1 Chuo-cho Okaya-shi TEL 0266-24-3319

Okaya born artist, Takeo Takei's paintings are exhibited in this museum. ILF, "Irufu" (*furui (meaning old), read backwards phonetically, is a kind of slang indicating a new meaning.*) His own unique way of viewing the world and retrospect paintings from Taisho to Showa period is worth a look. In addition, there is a myriad of picture book collections made by local and foreign artists including the works of American author Maurice Sendak.

A picture book library called "Harappa," is located at the ground floor with a collection of 2000 books. Story-telling sessions are held every Wednesday.

ILF is a three-storey large-scale museum that offers thematic exhibitions and special events. The Japan Picture Book Contest is held once in every two years.

★Admission Fee/¥800(Junior and High School Student:¥400.Primary School Student:¥200.

High school students residing in Okaya or students of high schools in Okaya are free of charge.

Discount coupons are available.

★Hours /9:00AM~18:00PM

★Closed on Thursdays, national holidays, year-end and New Year holidays or when changing the displayed exhibit.

## ⑪ Okaya Silk Museum, Art and Archeological Museum 4-1-39 Honmachi Okaya-shi TEL 0266-22-5854

In the Okaya Silk museum, there is a large collection of machineries, silk products, research materials and photos from the time when Okaya was known throughout the world as SILK OKAYA. It introduces the Japanese Silk Industry in a comprehensive manner. The Art and Archeological museum displays paintings, sculptures, craft works, and calligraphies as well as archeological artifacts like clay pots and stones from the Jomon to the Heian period discovered in the city.

★Admission Fee /Adult (High School students or older) ¥350 / Group discount (10 people or more) ¥250.  
Children(Primary and Junior High school students) ¥150 / Group Discount (10 people or more)¥100

★Hours /9:00Am~17:00PM

★Closed on Mondays, and the day after national holidays, Dec.29<sup>th</sup> to Jan.3<sup>rd</sup>.

## ⑫ Okaya Drum Training Hall 1-8-25 Naruta-machi Okaya-shi TEL 0266-22-6663

Okaya, being known for its famous *Taiko Matsuri*, has a training hall specializing in Taiko drum practice.

## ⑬ The Old Hayashi Residence 2-20 Ogurra-machi Okaya-shi TEL 0266-22-2330

This old residence from Meiji period built by an entrepreneur, Mr.Hayashi who spearheaded the development of Silk Industry in Okaya, is now preserved and designated as an important cultural asset.

## ⑭ The Old Watanabe Residence 3-8-40 Osachi shibamiya Okaya-shi TEL 0266-27-3004

This old residence of a Samurai from the mid-18th century is considered as the most valuable one of its kind and designated as a Prefectural Treasure. Furthermore, three ministers were born in this house.

## ⑮ Okaya Silk Craft Center 1-13-17 Chuou-chou Okaya-shi TEL 0266-24-2245

The Craft center provides a great opportunity for people to experience hands-on weaving of silk. A number of silk products are for sale.

## ⑯ Techno Plaza Okaya 1-1-1Honmachi Okaya-shi TEL 0266-21-7000

The Techno Plaza is an industrial hub center that provides assistance to the local industry. It has exhibition rooms, business meeting rooms and lab rooms.

## ⑰ Nagano Prefecture General Industrial Technology Center 1-3-1 Osachi Katama-chou Okaya-shi TEL 0266-23-4000

It is a prefectural-based research center, which helps to promote manufacturing industry. Workshops and lecture sessions are occasionally held in the Okaya branch as it houses the Precision& Electronic Technology division.

## ⑱ Yamabiko Park 4769-14 Uchiyama Okaya-shi TEL 0266-22-6313



Yamabiko Park is located on a mountain with an altitude of approximately 1000 meters. From a vantage point, it commands a magnificent view of Lake Suwa below, Yatugatake Mountains (Eight-Peak) and a spectacular range of mountains if viewed on a clear day.

It is a perfect place to exercise, to watch the beautiful landscape, or to just enjoy the great nature and wildlife. Let's enjoy nature with our friends, family members and special loved ones.

★Admission Fee/ Special one-day pass (all you can use) for Roller Skate, Summer Bobsled and Cycling (Adult) ¥1300.  
(Primary and Junior High School student) ¥900.  
(Tickets for individual rides can also be purchased.)  
※Children who are residents or students of schools in Okaya city and Suwa county are free of charge.  
★Hours /9:30AM~17:00PM  
★Closed on Tuesdays, mid-November to mid-April (due to winter season)

## ①9 Yamabiko Skating Complex 4769-14 Uchiyama Okaya-shi TEL 0266-24-5210

Okaya City International Skating Center has an open-air 400M rink and a training center. A few distance away is Ice Arena, an indoor ice skating rink.

## ②0 Okaya Kohan Park

Located by lake Suwa, this notable park, known as the commemorative park for the emperor's wedding attracts people from all walks of life. Okaya-born composer of the famous "Biwakoshuko no uta," Taro Oguchi's bronze statue stands here. At night, the beautifully illuminated fountain, children's playground, and row of cherry blossom trees never fail to amuse visitors. This is truly a park you can enjoy all season.

## ②1 Okaya Civic Gymnasium 3-2-1Nangu Okaya-shi TEL0266-22-8800

This civic gymnasium is popular venue for all sorts of sports event. It houses a big and small gym, swimming pool, weight-training room, and tennis court. Training camps for volleyball or tennis are held during summer.

★Hours/9:00AM~19:30PM  
★Closed on Thursdays (or the day after a national holiday that falls on a Thursday)  
Year-end and New Years holidays. (Dec 29<sup>th</sup> to Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>)

※Please inquire directly for the admission fee. Primary and Junior High school students are free of charge. A passport for Primary school students or a handbook for Junior High School Student is required for the entrance.



## ②2 Enrei Ojo Park Line

Enrei Ojo park line connects the following tourist spots: Yamabiko Park in Okaya city, Tylorian Forest including Enrei plateau, and weeping sweet chestnut trees in Tatsuno Town. The panoramic view of the Lake Suwa and Yastugatake (Eight-peaks) promises a perfect driving course. Enrei Ojo Park Line's 10 mile-Marathon is held every May.

## ②3 The Yokawa River

The Tokokawa River flows from Northern Mt, Hachibuse in Okaya city to Lake Suwa. Selected as one of the top 100 cleanest water source in the whole Japan. The water flowing from the upstream is an important water source for Okaya residents.

## ②4 Tsurumine Park

With its 30000 azaleas with 30 different species of red, purple, white, this park is the best azalea viewing-spot in Japan's Chubu district. The month of May is the best time to view the azaleas.

## ②5 Izuhaya Park

Located on the upstream of the river Yokokawa, this park is famous for the beautiful colored leaves. Watching the Katakuri (or "Japanese dog's tooth violet") bloom in the month of June is truly an enjoyable experience.

## ②6 Enreionodachi Park

Richly endowed with nature, this park is known as a bird forest which attracts birds lovers from all over Japan. From May to June, "Kotori" (literally small bird) buses operate on Sunday mornings.



## 27 Romanetto

4-1-24 Osachi gongen-cho TEL 0266-27-6080

Romanetto, the health and Welfare facility is a hot spring located by the lake Suwa within Okaya city. Its big and round Roman bathtub is very popular and known to be good for relaxation.

- ★Hours /10:00AM~22:30PM (admission until 22:00PM)
- Morning Bath 5:30AM~9:00PM (admission time until 8:30AM)
- ★Admission Fee/¥500, morning bath is ¥250.
- ★Closed on Thursdays



## 28 Suwako Heights

4-11-50 Osachi Gongen-cho Okaya-shi TEL 0266-24-2290

This Civic Social Welfare Center provides a place where people of all ages can meet for culture and communication exchange. It has an indoor hot-spring and an outdoor foot bath. The Japanese Class, Fureai organized by volunteers are held here every weekends from 10:30 to 12:00.

- ★Hours /10:00AM~21:30PM
- ★Closed on Wednesdays.



## Okaya International Exchange Association (OIEA)

### ★Consultation Services for Foreign Languages is available.

Okaya City Hall F4 TEL 0266-24-3226 FAX 0266-24-3227

Consultation Services in Chinese and Portuguese are available from this year.

#### Consultation Area:

- Problems on daily life in Japan.  
(Garbage disposal and etc)
- Government services and related procedures
- Education, social welfare.
- Information about Okaya public facilities and sight seeing spots.
- Japanese Language Classes.

- Portuguese** ★Consultee/Marcia Enari
- ★Time&Date/Wednesdays 9:30AM~3:30PM
- Chinese** ★Consultee / Nobuko Nishimura
- ★Time&Date/Tuedays 8:30AM~5:30PM  
(advance reservation only)  
Thursdays 9:30AM~3:30PM

### ★LALA Okaya

Okaya ekimae 1-1-1 Chuo-cho Okaya-shi

OIEA's International Square, which is located on the 1st floor offers various information. It also offers a place where people can come to talk and relax.



- ★Hours /10:00AM~18:00PM
- ★ Open from Mondays to Fridays (Except the 3rd week of Tuesdays, or national holidays)
- ※Free parking lot of LALA Okaya is available.

# Okaya Regional Map

