

MURORAN TIMES



January 1, 2011 No.254

Muroran City Office 1-2 Saiwai-cho, Muroran,
Hokkaido 051-8511 JAPAN <0143-22-1111>

News and Topics



Women's Dormitory in Muroran IT

Muroran Institute of Technology (Muroran IT, President: Satoh Kazuhiko) decided to use a former overseas students' hall on the premises as a women's dormitory, after full renovation. Opening a women's dormitory had been a pending issue for a long time. This year, the total number of female students is 279 (222 in undergraduate and 57 in graduate), which is a little less than 10% of all students. Aiming at increasing women's students, Muroran IT had been discussing the prospects of a women's dormitory in order to provide cozy atmosphere for them. According to a questionnaire sent out in October, 80% of all the replies (60 people) expressed their hope for entering the dormitory. Many students are also concerning about full security, and are hoping for a private room. The building to be used has four stories and 40 rooms. The size of the new dormitory will be almost the same. If everything goes smoothly, construction will start next March, and will be available in autumn.

むろらん こうぎょう だいがく
室蘭工業大学では、敷地内の旧・留学生会館を

ぜんめん かいしゅう じょしりょう せっち
全面改修し、女子寮を設置することを決めました。

Monitor Tour of MURORAN

A tour of Muroran was monitored on December 11 in order to obtain information on what activities would make the most interesting tour. There were 36 participants from the Sapporo area, ranging from junior high school students to people in their seventies. They experienced making "BOLTA" or bolt-man doll, had a

good lunch, and enjoyed the scenery of Chikyumisaki Cape and the night view of Muroran.

This is the second time such a tour took place, following the one held in November.

The participants challenged making BOLTA at the BOLTA studio in Wanishi-cho, enjoyed eating Muroran Yakitori and curry ramen for lunch, and saw the night view of Muroran from three good spots such as the Shukuzu Observation in the evening.

One of the participants said, "I really enjoyed making the BOLTA.

I realized that Muroran has a variety of attractive aspects."

さくねんじゅうにがつ むろらん せいさく やけい
昨年12月に、室蘭のグルメやボルタ製作、夜景な
たの にかいめ おこな
どを楽しんでもらう2回目のモニターツアーが行わ
れました。

Information and Invitations

Robot Soccer Contest

[Date] January 8(Sat), 9(Sun) 10:00a.m. –
[Place] Muroran Institute of Technology
[More Information]Tel: 0143-46-5125

Making Traditional Kites



[Date] January 8(Sat) 1:00p.m. ~3:00p.m.
[Place] Citizens Activity Center
[Limit] First 20 people * Please apply
beforehand.
[Materials Fee] 300 yen
[More Information] Citizens Activity Center (Tel:
0143-25-7070)

Gardening Photograph Panel Exhibition

[Date] January 6(Thu) – 18(Tue)
[Place] Higashi Muroran JR Station Free Passage

[Date] January 19(Wed) – 28(Fri)
[Place] Citizens Activity Center

[Date] January 29(Sat) • 30(Sun)

[Place] MORUE Nakajima Shopping Center

[More Information] City Planning Division,
Park Section, Muroran City Office
(Tel: 0143-25-2603)

Fire Fighters New Year Parade of Fire Brigades

[Date] January 9(Sun) 11:00a.m. -
[Place] Ranran Bridge (Nakajima-cho)
[Contents] Ladder ride, Marching and Songs
by the young steeplejacks group,
Draining water with fire fighting vehicle
[More Information] Fire fighting headquarters
Administration Section (Tel: 0143-41-4131)

Cross-country Skiing Lessons for beginners

[Date] January 9(Sun)・16(Sun) 10:00a.m. ~

12:00noon.

[Place] Danpara Ski Ground



* skis can be rented free of charge from

the Muroran Gymnasium

[Application] at the lodge from 9:30a.m.
until 10:00a.m. on that day

[More Information] Cross-country Skiing Society
of

Muroran; Mr. Kobayashi (Tel: 090-7051-7743)

Japanese Cooking 225

Simmered eggplant and chicken

なすと鶏肉の南蛮煮

- Ingredients (serve four) -

eggplant	4
chicken thighs	250 g
Japanese leek	2
red chili pepper dried	2
ginger	15 g
broth	200 cc
soy sauce	3 tablespoons
sake	2 tablespoons
sugar	2 tablespoons



Directions

- (1) Cut eggplant in half lengthwise and slit.
Soak the eggplant in salted water and dry.

Deep-fry the eggplant at 170°C(340 F).

- (2) Cut chicken into bite size pieces.
- (3) Cut Japanese leek into 3cm lengths.
Cut red pepper in half and remove seeds.
- (4) Put broth, sake, sugar and soy sauce in a
pan and cook.

Add chicken and cook until white.

Add eggplant and Japanese leek and cover

with a drop-lid and cook 10 ~ 15

minutes .

- (5) Serve in small in bowls and top with
slivered ginger.

About Japan

Japanese Culture



<When do Japanese write with a brush?>

Although calligraphy is taught in school, there are hardly any occasions in our lives today that require the use of the brush. Today, even for official purposes, writing with a brush is not accepted. Writing with a brush may be used for the following occasions: when writing your name at formal parties or meetings, when writing your name on special envelopes for monetary gifts given on celebratory occasions such as weddings or births, or on envelopes for condolence money given at funerals.

However, even these occasions do not necessarily require the use of a brush; more and more people now simply use a felt-tip pen.

<How are bonsai cultivated?>

Bonsai is a horticultural art unique to Japan whereby grasses and trees are transplanted into small earthenware containers and are grown into desired shapes.

Although there are many different plant varieties, the pine, maple, plum, and azalea are particularly common.

Care for bonsai consists of selecting the appropriate type of soil, use of fertilizer, periodic repotting, wiring the branches or trunk to control the shape, and pruning.

A period of one or two years is not enough to

allow bonsai to grow into the tight shape. *Bonsai* takes many years and sometimes decades of nurturing.

<What is so prized about Japanese lacquer ware?>

Ceramics are known as “china” abroad, but “Japan” is the term signifying Japanese Lacquer ware.

In Japan, lacquered comb and trays were found among unearthed goods from the early *Jomon* period. According to the *Nihon shoki*, there were artisans specializing in lacquer ware at the end of the sixth century.

The lacquer used for lacquer ware differs around the world according to the quality of tree sap, and Japanese lacquer is considered to be the highest in quality.

<How are Japanese swords different from other swords from around the world?>

Compared to Western swords, Japanese swords have longer hilts, are curved on one side of the blade, and the weight of the swords is designed for double-handed manipulation. Although in samurai films, one may see a scene in which the sword is used with only one hand, in actual fighting the heavy weight of the sword would not allow this.

A unique forging technique is applied in the sword making. A layer of *kawagane* (skin steel) is welded on top of the *shingane* (inner steel), steel of a particularly pliant kind.

Since only the blade portion is tempered, it exhibits a temper pattern which, along with the blade’s patterned texture resulting from the foreign process of the steel, is a distinguishing feature of Japanese swords.

Shougatsu



For the Japanese, *shougatsu* serves to punctuate life with an annual beginning and end. *Shougatsu* is a time when government offices, private companies, schools, and everyone else takes a few days off to celebrate the arrival of a new year. The Japanese word for January, *Ichigatsu* (first moon), reflects *shougatsu*’s original significance as the beginning of the

lunar year, a time when families paid their respects to their ancestors and prayed for successful crops. Nowadays, however, the first week of January is generally referred to as *shougatsu* and is celebrated as simply the start of the new year.

Come late December, and Japanese homes are abuzz with activity as housewives clean the house and garden, set traditional pine ornaments called *kado-matsu* outside the front door to welcome ancestral spirits, and prepare holiday foods such as *o-sechi-ryouri*, *zouni*, and *mochi*. Just prior to the new year’s arrival is the big urban exodus – a period of several days during which every transportation artery is clogged with people leaving the city to return to their ancestral village or to take a vacation trip. On New Year’s Eve it is common to eat soba noodles to symbolize long life and continuity across the years. Many people also sit awake far into the night on New Year’s Eve with their family members to share the joy of having spent the outgoing year in good health, as they listen to shrine or temple bells ringing (*joya no kane**) just before the arrival of the New Year.

Many special events take place during the first week of the new year, and especially during the first three days. The two most typical are the first visit to a shrine or temple where people gather to pray for good fortune during the year ahead, and the formal New Year’s calls paid on relatives, company superiors, and anyone else to whom you have become indebted during the past year. It is also during this week that Japanese women, most of whom ordinarily wear Western clothing, take the trouble to put their hair up and wear traditional *kimono*. New Year’s calls have to some extent been replaced by *nengajou* (New Year’s cards), an indispensable part of *shougatsu* if only because receiving large numbers of *nengajou* is an indication of high social status. *Otoshidama* - small gifts of money from parents and relatives - is a treat for the children.

Relations between 12 Signs of the Zodiac and Years

The calendar, introduced into Japan from China in ancient times, had 12 signs of the zodiac. In ancient China these 12 zodiac signs

were used to denote the Directions, Hours and Years. The Japanese invented their own 12 zodiac symbols, using 12 symbolic animals, to facilitate calendar reading.

The zodiac symbols, represented by animals, revolve in the order of rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and boar – a cycle of 12 years. Of these symbolic animals, only the dragon is an imaginary creature.

Today in Japan, the Christian Era system and Japanese Era system are in concurrent use, for example, A.D.2010 and the 22nd year of *Heisei*. Nowadays, for the Japanese, the traditional zodiac symbols are a conversation item. The year 2010 is, for instance, the year of the tiger. This means the following year will be the year of the rabbit. Japanese people will celebrate the beginning of the year 2011 by drawing rabbit on New Year's greeting cards (*nengajou*).

When asked "In what year were you born?" Japanese will answer, for example, "In the year of the rat," or "In the year of the monkey," according to the 12 zodiac symbols.



Cinema Guide

Muroran Gekijo (Higashi-machi)

1. HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF –BLOOD PRINCE
(dubbed in Japanese)
2. 相棒 劇場版Ⅱ (Japanese)
3. TRON LEGACY (3D)
4. SPACE BATTLESHIP (Japanese)

About the Muroran Times

The Muroran Times is designed to bring information about local events to the international community of Muroran. Staff: Mitani Yoichi, Ishizawa Yuko, Yamashita Mayumi, Tagashira Kazui, Nomura Ikuko, Nakamura Mari, Naito Naoko, Mike Nima, English advisor: Jane Takizawa.

City Office Information for New Year's Holidays

1. Facilities & Services

open closed

Facilities & Services	(Japanese)	Phone #	Dec.28	Dec.29	Dec.30	Dec.31-Jan.2	Jan.3	Jan.4
			(Tues)	(Wed)	(Thur)	(Fri- Sun)	(Mon)	(Tues)
Muroran City Office	室蘭市役所	22-1111						
Science Building for Youth	青少年科学館	22-1058						
Historical Museum	民俗資料館	59-4922						
City Library	図書館	22-1658						
Literature Museum	港の文学館	22-1501						
City Gymnasium	体育館	44-7521						
Irie Swimming Pool	入江温水プール	22-2466						
Iburi Region Women's Center	胆振地方婦人会館	44-8184						
Smaller Enterprise Center	中小企業センター	43-3255						
Bunka (culture) Center	文化センター	22-3156						
Hakucho Bridge Memorial Hall	白鳥大橋記念館							
Shimin (citizen's) Hall	市民会館(輪西)	44-1113						

General Hospitals	(Japanese)	Phone #	Dec.28	Dec.29	Dec.30	Dec.31-Jan.2	Jan.3	Jun.4
Muroran City Hospital	市立室蘭総合病院	25-3111						
Nikko Memorial Hospital	日鋼記念病院	24-1331						A.M.
Shin-nittetsu Hospital	新日鐵病院	44-4650						

*the three general hospitals above are always open for emergencies

4.Plumbing trouble

*If you have trouble with plumbing or drains, please call Muroran City Office, Water Works (Tel: 44-6117)