

# THE PEACH COBBLER



Vol. 2, Issue 10, January 2026

2026



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# Editor's Note

Hello all! Thank you for your continued support of the monthly Okajet Newsletter!

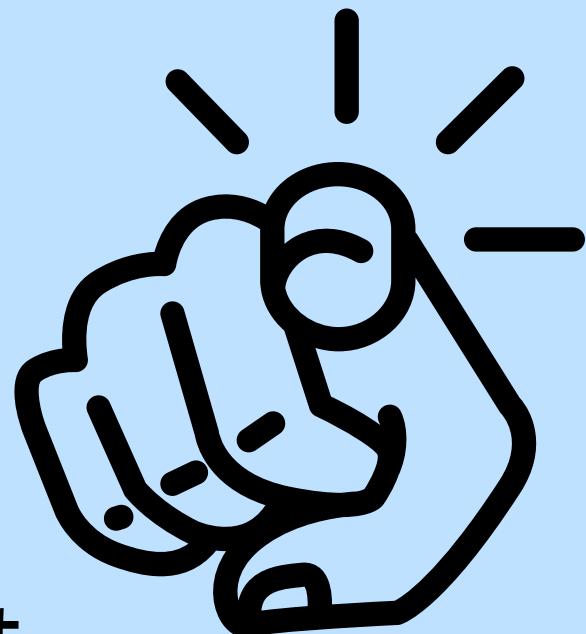
This issue is going out a week early, just to give you all some advance notice on some early January events that will be occurring.

The most important notice however, is of upcoming elections for Okajet. Please keep an eye out on your emails for more information to come!

Happy New Year!

# ELECTIONS

Do YOU want to plan events for Okayama Jets? Do YOU want to further grow our Okayama community? Well, maybe Okayama AJET board is just right for you!



In February, we will be sending out an application form for Okayama AJET board, with 4 different board positions to fill. Applications will be need to be filled out in February. Elections will take place in March. If interested, please keep an eye out. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us via email, instagram, or speak to anyone directly in AJET currently.



# Open Positions

## President:

The president shall be the acting face of Okayama AJET and act as the liaison between Okayama AJET and any affiliated persons. The president will be responsible for scheduling, overseeing, and leading the monthly meetings. The president may assist with other Board Member duties as needed.

## Secretary:

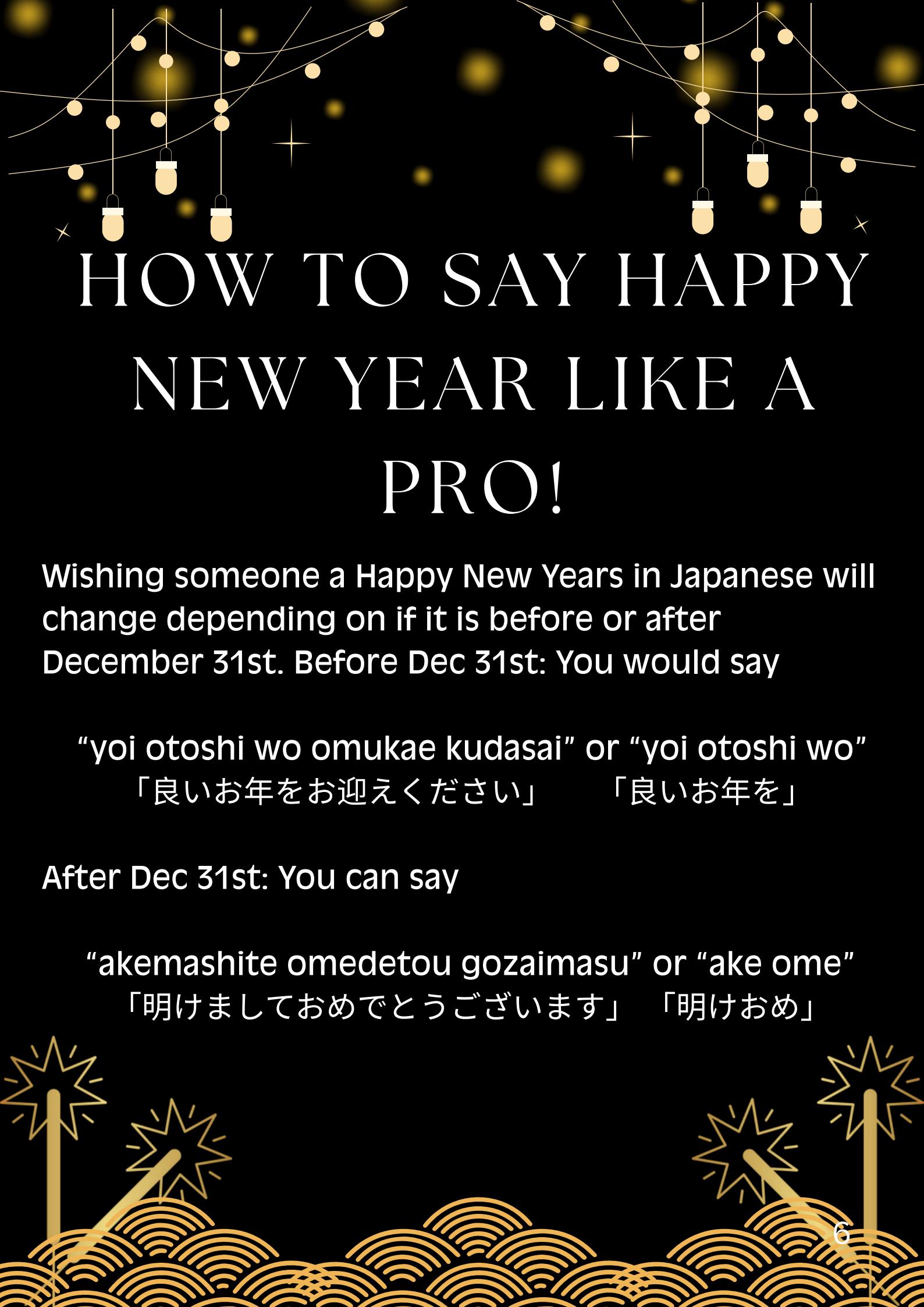
The Secretary shall be responsible for overseeing all paperwork for Okayama AJET. This includes, but is not limited to: Board Member applications, Officer applications, membership applications, event waivers, and emails.

## Treasurer:

The Treasurer shall oversee all financial responsibilities of Okayama AJET. This includes, but is not limited to: membership fees, event fees, grants, and donations.

## Media Liaison:

Media shall be responsible for overseeing all media accounts affiliated with Okayama AJET. This includes but is not limited to: Instagram, Okajet website, creation of monthly newsletter.



# HOW TO SAY HAPPY NEW YEAR LIKE A PRO!

Wishing someone a Happy New Years in Japanese will change depending on if it is before or after December 31st. Before Dec 31st: You would say

“yoi otoshi wo omukae kudasai” or “yoi otoshi wo”  
「良いお年をお迎えください」 「良いお年を」

After Dec 31st: You can say

“akemashite omedetou gozaimasu” or “ake ome”  
「明けましておめでとうございます」 「明けおめ」



If you really want to impress your Koucho or Kyoto-sensei and be 日本語上手 this year, you can show your unwavering gratitude for the year to come by attempting the exhausting long version:

“Akemashite omedetou gozaimasu. Kotoshimo yoroshiku onegai shimasu”

「明けましておめでとうございます。今年もよろしくお願ひします」

Fortunately for everyone, there is a more casual way to say it:

“Ake Ome! Koto yoro!”

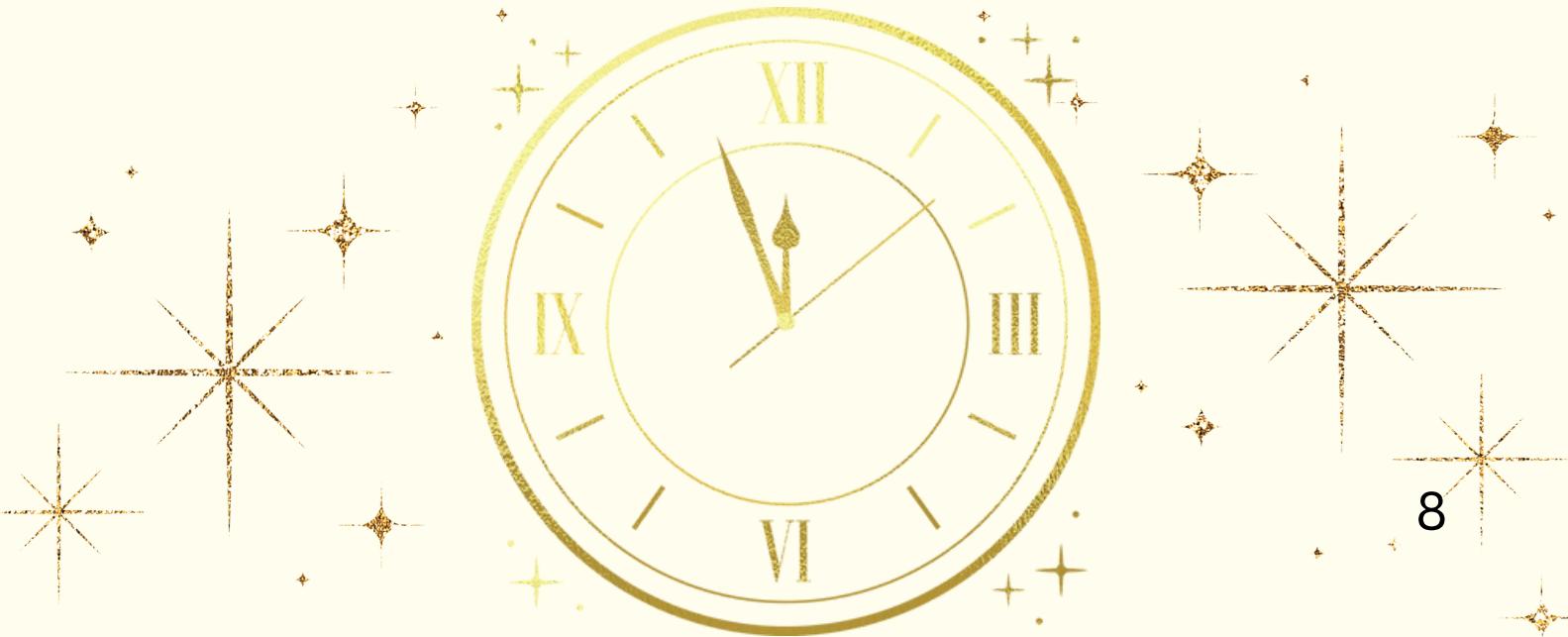
「明けおめ! ことよろ!」



# The Stroke of Midnight

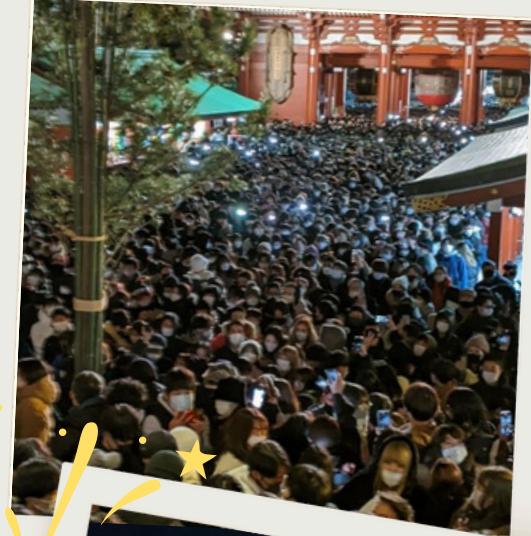
A few years ago, my friends and I celebrated our first ever New Years in Japan. We were so full of optimism and wonder that we thought it would be a good idea to visit one of Tokyo's most famous temples for hatsumoōde, and what better way than to brave the insanity of Sensoji during New Years?

Realistically, most shrines or temples will be packed on New Years, so be prepared for long waits. When visiting bigger and more famous locations you may be lucky enough to encounter a little festival filled with food stalls.



My friends and I got to Sensoji early enough that we could secure our place in line before it got insanely crowded. Once our spot in line was saved we took turns visiting the food stalls and walking around. This really helped distract us from the fact that we still had another 5 hours until midnight.

By the time 11:30pm rolled around, we were sardined in place and slowly being pushed to the top of the temple stairs. What started off as lines, quickly turned into a horde of people waiting for the doors to open. At 11:59 we started our count down and at the stroke of midnight the temple doors opened and we were forced inside by the mob of people behind us.



For anyone who has visited a shrine before you are probably familiar with the small offering boxes where you can lightly toss in your 5 yen before you pray. Well for new years, those teeny tiny boxes just won't cut it. The offering "box" was essentially a big tarp used to block off a section of the temple where you are just expected to chuck your coin over the heads of everyone in front of you. It was quite literally raining down 5 yen at midnight.

After we said our prayers we rushed down the temple to get our Omikuji and omamori for the year. By this point we were beyond freezing and decided to find a little izakaya to warm up and grab a few drinks before heading back to our hotel. New Years eve may have been a little hectic, but is there anything better than starting off the year with friends and some beer?



# Celebrating New Year's

**Hatsumoude** 「初詣」 - Is your first shrine or temple visit of the new year. Typically most people will try to visit between January 1st and 3rd, so expect those three days to be extra busy. Many shrines and temples will be open late on January 1st for those who want to count down the new year with the gods. Some of the larger shrines and temples will even have food stalls.



Hatsuhinode 「初日の出」 - Is the first sunrise of the new year. It is a common tradition for people in Japan to wake up early, or stay up all night, and watch the sunrise on January 1st as a way to symbolize hope, good fortune, and new beginnings.



Otoshidama 「お年玉」 - Decorated envelopes filled with money that are given to children from their parents, grandparents, and other adults in their life. Otoshidama symbolizes good luck and a new year of life. For most kids this is the most important part of the new year.



Omikuji 「おみくじ」 - The first fortune you get for the new years is very important because it is believed that it will reflect your year to come. Most omikuji are in Japanese but reading your luck is fairly simple. There are typically 7 different luck levels, but some temples and shrines will have a wider variation. Don't forget to tie up your omikuji at the shrine if you get bad luck.



**Daikichi** 大吉 - Excellent Luck

**Chuukichi** 中吉 - Okay Luck

**Shoukichi** 小吉 - Small Luck

**Kichi** 吉 - Regular Luck

**Suekichi** 末吉 - Future Luck

**Kyo** 凶 - Bad Luck

**Daikyo** 大凶 - Terrible Luck



Shimekazari 「注連飾り」 - Decorations often hung on your front door made from a special rope called shimenawa. Shimenawa 「注連縄」 is used to separate a sacred place from the outside world which is why you will see it hung around shrines or sacred trees. The Shimekazari are used to repel evil spirits from the home as well as blessing your family with health and safety. Shimekazari are traditionally burned on January 15th as a part of the dondo-yaki and onbe-yaki rituals.



**Toshikoshi Soba** 「年越しそば」 - Meaning year-crossing soba, it is often eaten on New Years Eve. This soba is special because it is made with extra long and thin noodles to symbolize longevity, good fortune, and resilience for the new year.



**Kadomatsu** 「門松」 - Traditional new years decorations made from bamboo, pine, and plum branches often placed by your front door. Kadomatsu are meant to symbolize prosperity, longevity and hope and act as a temporary home for visiting deities.



# CHINESE NEW YEAR

## YEAR OF THE HORSE

As we bid farewell to the intuitive and perceptive Year of the Snake, the Year of the Horse gallops its way through with enticing, magnetic energy. The Fire Horse brings vitality, momentum, and a fierce sense of adventure for 2026.





February 17th, 2026 marks the start of the Lunar New Year, also known as the Chinese New Year, lasting until February 5th, 2027. Each year, the date changes within the Gregorian calendar.

This festival is celebrated throughout the world, especially in Asian countries. Common festivities include dressing everything in red, lighting fireworks, deep-cleaning homes, visiting family, and sharing beautiful meals with loved ones.

Some traditions come from the Legend of the Monster Nian. According to legend, “Nian was a terrifying beast, and every Lunar New Year’s Eve, Nian would come ashore to wreak havoc. One year, villagers discovered that Nian feared the color red and loud noises.

To protect themselves, they hung red decorations and lit firecrackers to scare Nian away and successfully drove Nian back to the sea.”



<p><b>Rat</b></p> <p>First of the zodiac signs. Clever, sociable, quick-witted, successful. Team players</p> <p>2026 is a testing year for Rats. Obstacles in love, career, and finances may arise. With patience and tact, challenges will become lessons.</p>	<p><b>Ox</b></p> <p><i>Practical, hard-working, reliable, unpretentious. Never giving up</i></p> <p>2026 will push Oxen out of their comfort zone. Difficulty in relationships and career changes. Finding support from mentors will be beneficial. To maintain stability, be disciplined in savings.</p>	<p><b>Tiger</b></p> <p><i>Independent, energetic, bold, adventurous. Confident leaders</i></p> <p>2026 will be an unpredictable year, with mood swings in love and rivalry at work. Patience is key, as well as trusting those around you, which may turn setbacks into valuable growth.</p>
<p><b>Rabbit</b></p> <p><i>Earnest, optimistic, sensitive, open-minded. Vivid imagination</i></p> <p>2026 will favor love and harmony for Rabbits, with an emphasis in a budding romance. So long as you keep flexible, this year will be rewarding.</p>	<p><b>Dragon</b></p> <p><i>Powerful, idealistic, romantic, goal-oriented. Keenest sense of self</i></p> <p>2026 is a mixed bag for Dragons. Challenges in love, finances, and health may arise. Stay humble, and doors will open.</p>	<p><b>Snake</b></p> <p><i>Observant, wise, mysterious, adaptable. Calm and collected</i></p> <p>2026 will be a shining year for Snakes. Breakthroughs in finance, career and love may occur. Thoughtful routines will prevent stress from slowed-down progress.</p>

<h3>Horse</h3> <p><i>Confident, outgoing, agile, responsible. Free-spirited</i></p> <p>2026 will have highs and lows for Horses. With persistence, breakthroughs may occur. Stay on course and long-term success will follow.</p>	<h3>Goat</h3> <p><i>Selfless, gentle, loyal, loving. Most tender of the animals</i></p> <p>2026 is a thriving year for Goats. Strong romance, career and financial opportunities may arise. Lasting rewards come with discipline.</p>	<h3>Monkey</h3> <p><i>Intelligent, sharp, creative, sociable. Ability to achieve their dreams.</i></p> <p>2026 brings wealth and romance opportunities for Monkeys. Stay resilient, and any challenges that come your way will transform into progress.</p>
<h3>Rooster</h3> <p><i>Charismatic, ambitious, competitive, perfectionist. Strong sense of justice</i></p> <p>2026 will be a lucky year for love for Roosters. However, career and finance can only progress with effort. Maintain healthy habits and energy will flow from you.</p>	<h3>Dog</h3> <p><i>Loyal, reliable, kind-hearted, sincere. Strong moral compass</i></p> <p>2026 will be a rewarding year for Dogs. Breakthroughs in career and finance may occur, with love maintaining a small flame. Careful not to overwork, with focus on health and family balance.</p>	<h3>Pig</h3> <p><i>Generous, detail-oriented, passionate, enthusiastic. Easygoing nature</i></p> <p>2026 brings a balance of blessings and barriers for Pigs. Romance and financial growth will be favored, with health needing special care and consideration.</p>



When you think of game awards or conventions, you probably think of the golden eras of Gamescom, PAX, or the discontinued E3. I've seen many a video entailing popular YouTubers or gamers in general having a wonderful time checking out their favourite booths, burying themselves under merchandise, and getting sneak peaks of what is yet to come.



These events do still happen, but the 'magic' of it has seemingly faded as massive companies thrust their never ending anti-consumer products out one after the other.

Nothing sums up the corporate sanitisation of modern gaming quite like the Game Awards.



It's literally a ballroom event for the celebrities of gaming, that I'm not sure literally any average PlayStation owner could care any less about.

Don't get me wrong, the games and developers that won awards this year absolutely deserve their hard work to be recognised. There were some absolutely fantastic titles released in 2025, Clair Obscur: Expedition 33 swept the event with nine awards and if you take one look at the game you'll see exactly why, the whole experience is enchanting. Even if it is French...



Hollow Knight: Silksong was a work of art, and I'm sure its upcoming expansion will take the world by storm again.



Donkey Kong Bananza was rightly spotlighted with the 'Best Family Game' award,



And I still believe No Man's Sky has the best redemption arc of any game in history, scooping up the 'Best Ongoing Game' prize.

It just leaves somewhat of a bad taste in my mouth when all the announcements and plaudits are done to bring investor attention to the industry and specific companies. I know what you might think, investors make growth popular for developers that need it, but all consoles feel sort of the same these days, all trying to market the same things and focus on style over substance.

The best games around are those that provide what people actually want out of those genres, Donkey Kong Bananza doesn't look realistic but it doesn't need to.



I could ramble on as always but the key thing is, games are meant to be fun, and several hour pompous award ceremonies are very much the opposite of that. Bring back more casual game conferences!

Let's look ahead to 2026 though, so much is coming up. I really do wonder what might be around the corner... Oh...



Written by



@lewischissio

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First Shrine visit at Saito Inari

Saturday  
1/10

Where: Bitchu Takamatsu Station  
@ 11:30 am



Let's celebrate the new year Japan-style together! While the official 'hatsumode' season may be at its end, that doesn't mean we can't experience a January shrine visit and say a late prayer! 🙏 If you're free this Saturday, come join us at Saito Inari one of the three most important Inari shrines in the country! You can't miss it! 🎟



HOSTED BY OKAJET

# SECOND SATURDAY SOCIAL

JANUARY 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2026

From 6pm~  
Let's meet at Okayama Station!



If interested or for more  
details, scan here!

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# Events in Okayama

## 勝ブランド祈願祭・じゃんけん大会

### Winning Brand Prayer Festival and Rock Paper Scissors Tournament

Date: Saturday, January 3rd

More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Katsumata Shrine (Shoo Town)

Time: 10:00 - 11:30

Admission: Free



## 田倉牛神社の大祭

### Takara Ushi Shrine Festival



Date: Monday, January 5th

More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Takara Ushi Shrine

Time: N/A

Admission: Free

Tradition: Purchase a bizen-ware cow at the shrine entrance, pray and offer your cow. Take home a previously offered cow, and return it once wish has been achieved.

## キュンと！ときめくバッグたち WANKORO IN 倉敷1

### Wankoro IN Bag sale in Kurashiki

Date: Sat-Mon, January 10th - 12th

More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Kurashiki Kibibi Museum 1F

Time: 11:00 - 16:00

Admission: Free, but merchandise is subject to charges.

Handmade goods made by a mother and daughter quilting duo!



## 高清水トレイルスノーシューハイク Takashimizu Trail Snowshoe Hike



Date: Saturday, January 10th and Wednesday, January 21st

More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Meet @ Ningyo Pass Parking lot

Time: 9:30 - 12:00

Admission: 6,600 per adult (if you have your own snowshoes, its 1000 yen cheaper.)

## 湯原温泉 しし祭り

## Yubara Onsen Boar Festival

Date: Sat&Sun, January 11th & 12th

More info: [日本語](#)

Location: Yubara Onsen Town area

Time: 10:00 - 15:00

Admission: Free (food and drink costs will apply)



## 恩原湖スノーシューハイク Lake Onbara Snowshoe Hike



Date: Sunday, January 11th

More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Meet @ Lake Okutsu Visitor Center

Time: 9:00 - 12:00

Admission: 5,700 yen per adult (if you have your own snowshoes, its 1000 yen cheaper)

# 禁断のカタカナで憶えるモンゴル語講座 超初級全三回 Mongolian Lessons using Katakana: Super Beginner Level (3 times)

Date: Fridays, January 16th, 23rd, and 30th More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Shagaa, handmade goods shop and cafe

Time: 19:00 - 20:30

Admission: 3000 yen for 3 sessions, plus one order (please apply via [this link](#))



## 備南玉島ウォークフェスタ Binan Tamashima Walk Festival

Date: Sunday, January 18th More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Shin Kurashiki Station South Park

Time: 6:00 - 17:00 (Course A starts 6:00 - 7:00, Course B starts 8:00 - 9:00, Course C starts 10:00 - 11:00)

Admission: Course A or B: 5,360 yen. Course C: 3,360 yen

(APPLICATION NECESSARY, DEADLINE DECEMBER 31ST---->[A&B](#)---->[C](#))

## 2026年備前岡山京橋朝市「初市」 Bizen Okayama Kyobashi Morning Market

Date: Sunday, January 11th More Info: [日本語](#)

Location: Asahi riverside plaza, west end of kyobashi

Time: 5:00 - 10:00

Admission: Free (food and drink charges apply)

This morning market operates on the first Sunday of every month, except for January in which it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday.)



# 2026年岡山後楽園「初春祭」 Okayama Korakuen New Years Festival



Date: January 1st - 3rd

Location: Okayama Korakuen Garden

Time: 8:00 - 17:00

Admission: 500 yen (entry is free on New Years Day), some events will have participation fees.

More info: [日本語](#)

## 奥津温泉除夜の鐘・年越そば Okutsu Onsen New Years Eve Bell and Soba

Date: Wednesday, December 31st

More info: [日本語](#)

Location: Okutsu Onsen Hojuji Temple, Kagamino town

Time: 23:00 - 23:55

Admission: Free



## International Meetup Party 「せかつく」

Date: Saturdays, January 10th and February 7th

More info: [Insta](#)

Location: Matador (Bar in Okayama City)

Time: 20:00 - 22:00

Admission: \*Men ~¥4000

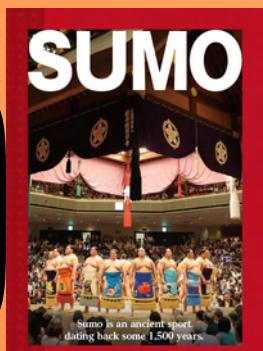
All you can drink and buffet

\*Women ~¥3500

style food included



Sumo Grand Tournament Schedule: In March, there will be a Sumo tournament in Osaka. Ticket sales begin on February 7<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested, we recommend buying tickets as soon as they become available, they will sell out quickly. See this site for more information  
----->[click here for English](#) ----->[click here for Japanese](#)



# Monthly Sudoku

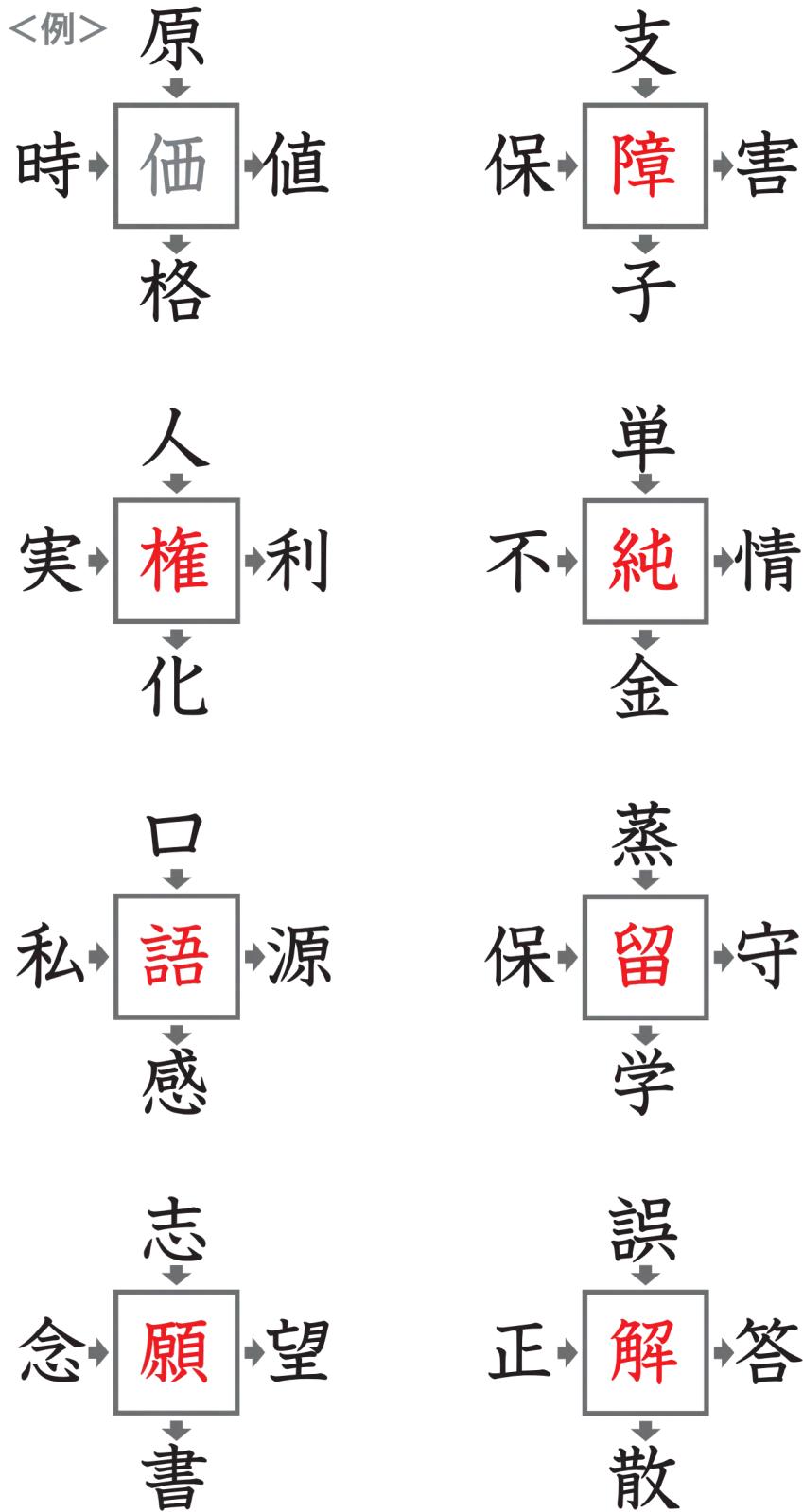
## December Answer Key

7	3	5	2	9	8	6	1	4
4	8	6	1	3	7	9	2	5
9	1	2	5	6	4	7	8	3
2	6	4	9	1	3	5	7	8
1	7	8	4	2	5	3	6	9
5	9	3	7	8	6	2	4	1
8	2	9	3	7	1	4	5	6
6	4	7	8	5	9	1	3	2
3	5	1	6	4	2	8	9	7

□に入る漢字を下の□の中から選んでね。四つの二字熟語  
が出来るよ！



二つの漢字を  
組み合わせただけで、  
たくさんの  
言葉が出来てるね！



痛 段 障 語 願 留 権 解 純 異

# Monthly Sudoku

## January 2026

8	5	6					3	
					3	8	2	
	2		4	7			5	6
		5	9		2		1	
1	4						9	
2	6	9	8					
5						1		3
	9	2				7		
	1	3	5				8	

□の中に一文字の漢字を入れると、四つの言葉が出来るよ！  
何の字か分かるかな？

<例>

夕  
祝 →  日 → 直  
記



「夕日」「祝日」「日直」「日記」  
の四つの言葉が出来たね！

こういう、二つの漢字で  
出来る言葉を「二字じゅく語」  
っていうんだよ！

水  
赤 →  路  
順

災  
冷 →  悪  
虫

拳  
選 →  芸  
術

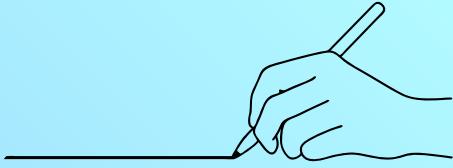
登  
高 →  舎  
歌

感  
中 →  配  
情

調  
無 →  解  
科

両  
父 →  切  
方

多  
減 →  年  
数



If you would like to write an article for the February newsletter, please email the newsletter at:

[newsletter@okayama-ajet.com](mailto:newsletter@okayama-ajet.com)

Any submissions must be made by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month. Anything is welcome, but if looking for inspiration, themes may include:



February's Themes: Setsubun, Valentines Day, Winter activities,

etc



# Want to be part of the Newsletter?

We are always looking for new talent and help at the newsletter, so if you have a writers itch you want to scratch, or have some ideas for the newsletter look, please contact us at our email!

[newsletter@okayama-ajet.com](mailto:newsletter@okayama-ajet.com)



Additionally, if you have any suggestions or feedback for our newsletter, please fill out the form below!

## Newsletter Feedback/Suggestion Form



**See you next issue!**