



Japan Now

January 2026

Japan Now is the email newsletter of the consular office of Japan in Anchorage

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New Year's Greeting from Head Consul Hamada



Happy New Year.

Since my appointment in Anchorage in December 2023, these two years have passed in the blink of an eye. During this time, through the various activities of our office, I have had the privilege of meeting many people and engaging in diverse exchanges. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the support and kindness extended to me. Thanks to your support, I have been able to fully enjoy both my work and daily life here in Alaska, a place blessed with magnificent natural beauty and rich cultural diversity.

2025 was a particularly significant year for Japan and the United States. In February, then Prime Minister Ishiba visited the United States and held a bilateral talks with President Trump, during which the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining and strengthening the increasingly robust Japan-U.S. relationship and issued a joint leaders' statement. In October, President Trump visited Japan to meet with Prime Minister Takaichi, and the leaders signed a series of agreements aimed at further reinforcing the Japan-U.S. Alliance.

Here in Alaska, energy and resource development, most notably the Alaska LNG Project, has been gaining attention with strong support from the federal government. Japanese companies have also expressed interest and further progress is anticipated.

Japan and Alaska share eight sister-city relationships, and a wide range of exchanges continue to take place between these communities. In October 2025, for example, the Mayor of Anchorage with her delegation visited Chitose, while the Mayor of Sitka and accompanying members visited Nemuro, providing valuable opportunities to reaffirm the bonds between these sister cities. I myself visited both Sitka and Ketchikan last year, engaging in discussions with the mayors and other local leaders to further strengthen our ties. With these visits, I have now had the opportunity to visit all eight of Japan's sister cities in Alaska during my assignment in Anchorage.

Finally, as we welcome the New Year, I sincerely hope that 2026 will be a wonderful year for all of you. The Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage will continue to undertake various initiatives aimed at further deepening the relationship between Japan and Alaska. I kindly ask for your continued support and cooperation.

Kiyohiko Hamada



① Ebi (Shrimp)

Shrimp symbolizes long life and is associated with the wish to “live until your back bends,” like the curved shape of a shrimp☐

② Kuromame (Black Beans)

“Mame” also means being healthy and hardworking. The black color is believed to ward off bad spirits and bring longevity.

③ **Kurikinton (Sweet Chestnut & Mashed Sweet Potato)**

Its golden color symbolizes “a golden treasure,” representing hopes for wealth and prosperity in the coming year☺

④ **Tazukuri (Candied Dried Sardines)**

This dish symbolizes a good harvest. In the past, sardines were used as fertilizer in farming, so it represents agricultural prosperity.

⑤ **Kazunoko (Herring Roe)**

Kazunoko stands for prosperity and a wish for many children or a thriving a family line, because of the many tiny eggs.

⑥ **Kohaku Kamaboko (Red and White Fish Cake)**

Red and white are celebratory colors in Japan. Kamaboko is served to bring good luck and to celebrate the beginning of the New Year☺

⑦ **Gobo (Simmered Burdock Root)**

Gobo has long, deep roots, symbolizing stability and the wish for strong family ties and continued growth.

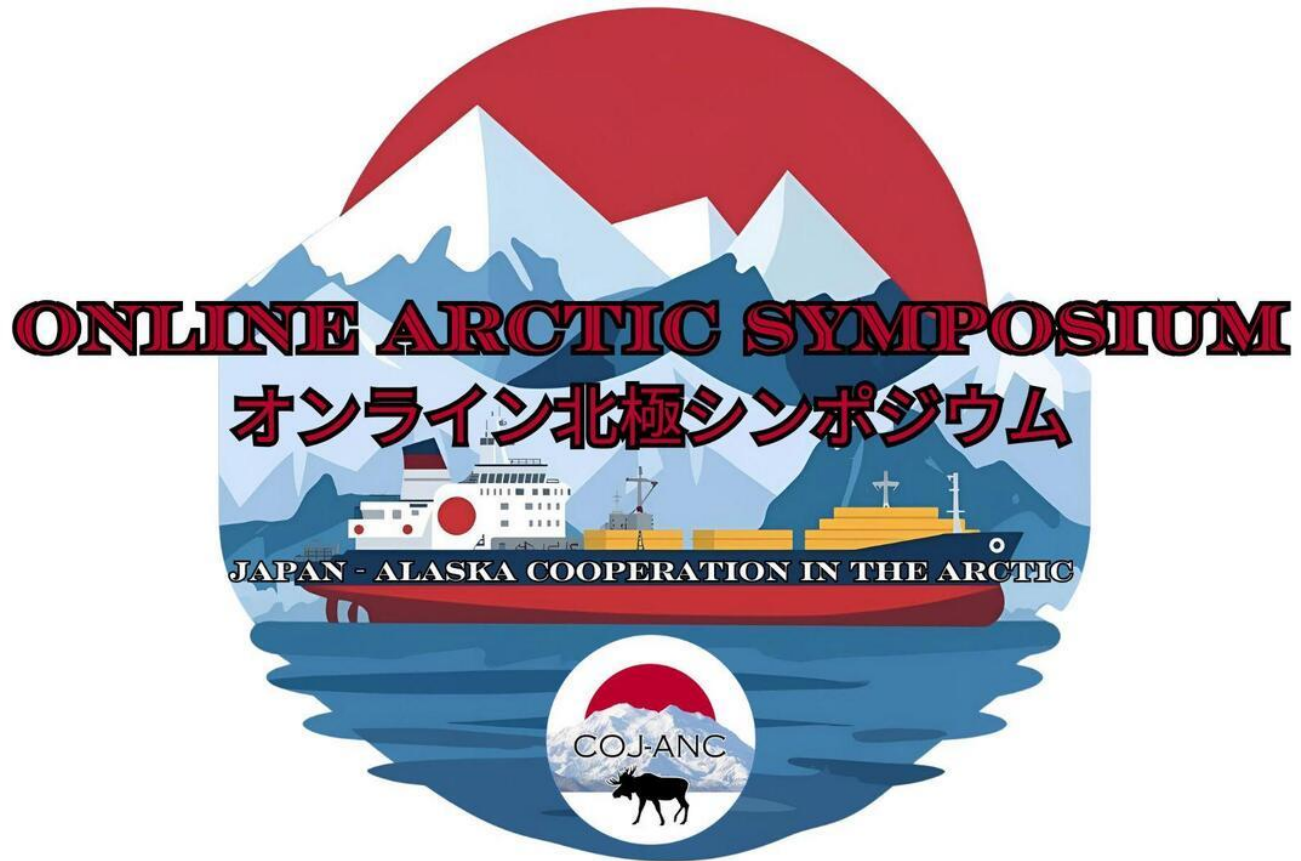
⑧ **Datemaki (Rolled Sweet Omelette)**

It resembles a scroll and represents academic success, knowledge, and the wish for learning and progress.

⑨ **Kobumaki (Kelp Rolls)**

“Kobu” is associated with the word “yorokobu,” meaning “joy.” Kobumaki is eaten to bring happiness and good fortune.

Even without tasting osechi ryori, we hope these traditions help you feel a little closer to how the New Year is celebrated in Japan☺😊



Announcing the Online Arctic Symposium

The Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage is again hosting an Online Arctic Symposium taking place **January 14th and 15th, 2026, from 3:00-6:30 PM (AKST)** each day.

This two-day virtual event will explore current and emerging areas of cooperation between Japan and the U.S. Arctic. Sessions will focus on:

- Arctic and Indo-Pacific security
- Energy and Alaska's changing development landscape
- Scientific research and Arctic observations
- Critical minerals and resource development

The event is free and open to the public, and we welcome participation from government, academia, industry, and others with an interest in Arctic issues. We invite you to register via Eventbrite to receive important updates and view the agenda for the event once published.

Stay tuned to our Facebook page in the coming weeks as we highlight the distinguished speakers who will be joining us at the symposium. Don't miss this opportunity to deepen your understanding of the Arctic and participate in this cross-sector international dialogue.

[Register Now](#)



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