



The Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

(<http://www.baseball-museum.or.jp/>)

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p.1 2019 Hall of Famers Elected

Shinichi Hirose, President

The Baseball Hall of Fame Museum was closed temporarily, and the members of the media and affiliate members were invited to the 2019 “Baseball Hall of Fame” induction ceremony from 14:00 on Tuesday, January 15, 2019, at the museum’s Hall of Fame.

Kazuyoshi Tatsunami, who spent his entire 22-year career as a star player for the Chunichi Dragons, was elected by Players Division of the Players Selection Committee.

Hiroshi Gondoh, who served as the manager of Yokohama BayStars (currently DeNA) in 1998 and led the team to its first league pennant and Japan Series victory in 38 years, was elected by the Expert Division of the PSC.

Haruo Wakimura, the 5th President of the Japan High School Baseball Federation who helped improve relations between professional and amateur baseball by promoting exchanges between the two sides, was elected by the Special Selection Committee

The press conference began with the announcement of Hall of Fame inductees by Atsushi Saito, chairman of the museum, followed by reports of the selection process of the Players Selection Committee by its representative director, Gotaro Nagase, and that of the Special Selection Committee by its chairman, Tetsuo Ikeda.

The presentation of the induction notification to each of the inductees was followed by their acceptance speeches. First, Tatsunami expressed his gratitude by saying, “I wasn’t very big growing up, but I worked hard so that others would see me as an inspiration. I was blessed with so many amazing coaches throughout my career.” Gondoh commented with a smile, “Looking at all of the past members, I’m honored to be a part of something so special. This is a once in a lifetime moment that I am extremely proud of.”

Wakimura, who at 87 years was elected by the Special Selection Committee, added with great enthusiasm, “I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would be inducted into the Hall of Fame. I am extremely honored and grateful.”

As a guest speaker, Junji Nakamura, the former manager of PL Gakuen High School baseball team and mentor of Tatsunami, who became the first graduate from PL Gakuen High School to be elected into the Hall of Fame prefaced his speech by noting that, “Ideally, this speech should have been given by Mr. Senichi Hoshino, who managed Tatsunami during his tenure with the Chunichi Dragons,” and spoke fondly of his memories of his high school days noting that, “He grew up watching players who became professionals such as (Masumi) Kuwata and (Kazuhiro) Kiyohara and always aimed to achieve a higher level.”

Shigeru Sugishita, a senior of Gondoh who wore the number 20, given to the ace pitcher for the Chunichi Dragons, praised his junior by adding, “Under orders from the manager at the time, Gondoh pitched with no regard to his appearance. It was Gondoh, not me, who helped establish the image of “20” as the number given to the ace pitcher of the Chunichi Dragons. He pitched almost everyday and ended up injuring his shoulder, but he later became a coach and established the specialization of pitchers to help increase the lifespan of pitchers by even one year.”

Kazuhiro Tanabe, who supported Wakimura as the chief of secretariat during his days as President of the Japan High School Baseball Federation, and currently serves as a director of the same federation, presented details of Wakimura’s career and countless accolades.

The press conference ended in a festive mood, with commemorative photographs taken of the new inductees and the guest speakers.

After the press conference, an informal party was held at the Tokyo Dome Hotel, attended by the new inductees, Chairman Atsushi Saito and all of the other participants.

A birthday cake was presented to Wakimura, who turned 87 years old that day. After he blew out the candles, everyone enjoyed the cake while deepening their friendship with one another.



Photo: (From left in back row) Junji Nakamura, Shigeru Sugishita, Kazuhiro Tanabe.

(From left in the front row) Kazuyoshi Tatsunami, Hiroshi Gondoh, Chairman Atsushi Saito, Haruo Wakimura.

P.2 2019 Hall of Famers elected by the Players Selection Committee

The 59th Players Selection Committee elected Kazuyoshi Tatsunami, who holds the all-time NPB doubles record with 487, into the Players Division. And Hiroshi Gondoh, who led the league in wins for two consecutive years after joining the Chunichi Dragons and led the Yokohama BayStars to a Japan Series victory as its manager into the Expert Division, making them the last two members of the Hall of Fame in the Heisei era.

In the election in the Players Division, the 18 eligible candidates were selected by the screening committee of the Players Selection Committee from former players who have ceased to be active for at least five years prior to selection and have been retired for less than 21 years. 372 out of 381 voting members with experience of reporting baseball for 15 years or more selected the names of seven candidates at most on a ballot.

With one invalid ballot, a record-breaking 371 valid ballots were cast. One of the major factors of the increase of ballots was that 15 years had passed since the Nippon Ham Fighters relocated to Sapporo, resulting in the new addition of the committee belonging to the Hokkaido Sports Press Club.

A total of 1,937 votes were cast. An average of 5.2 eligible candidates were selected per committee member, exceeding last year's average of 5.1 eligible candidates by 0.1.



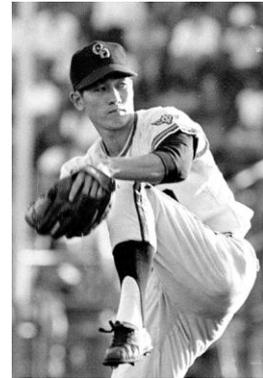
Tatsunami was named on 77.4% of the ballots with 287 votes to clear the 75% threshold for induction. He received 117 ballots in his first year of eligibility, and steadily increased the number of votes each year to 171, 217 and 242, before being inducted in his fifth year on the ballot, and also becoming the first player from PL Gakuen High School in the Hall of Fame.

In 1987, Tatsunami captained the PL Gakuen High School baseball team to consecutive spring and summer Japanese High School Baseball Championships, before getting selected by the Chunichi Dragons in the first round of the NPB draft. In 1988 he became the third rookie drafted out of high school in the Central League to play the opening game of the season, and was later named Rookie of the Year. Over the course of his 22-year career, he recorded a total of 2,480 hits, putting him eighth of all-time.

Former pitcher Shingo Takatsu was the next closest, after being named on 60.6% of the ballots with 225 votes. He was followed by Masahiro Kawai, who was named on 50.7% of the ballots with 188 votes. In his first year of eligibility, Shinya Miyamoto was named on 41.2% of the ballots with 153 votes, followed by Alex Ramirez, who was named on 40.4% of the ballots with 150 votes.

In the Expert Division, 134 of the 140 committee members consisting of living Hall of Famers, baseball reporters with 30 years or more of baseball reporting, and directors of the Players Selection Committee selected up to five candidates out of 15 eligible candidates on a ballot prepared by the screening committee.

Like the Players Division, there was one invalid ballot, with a total of 133 valid ballots cast. A total of 553 votes were cast, which was also a record-breaking number. An average of 4.2 eligible candidates were selected per committee member, exceeding last year's average of 4.1 eligible candidates by 0.1.



Gondoh was inducted into the Hall of Fame after being named on 76.7% of the ballots with 102 votes, surpassing the required 100-vote (75%) threshold by two votes.

In 2007, the year before the Players Selection Committee was split up into the Players Division and the Expert Division, Gondoh received 220 votes, but fell short of the 305 required valid

votes (72.1%) by nine ballots.

From 2008, he became eligible for the Expert Division, and was finally inducted in his 11th year on the ballot, excluding 2012, when he was appointed as a coach for the Chunichi Dragons and was removed as a candidate.

In 1961, his first season with the Chunichi Dragons, he won 35 games, and in his second season in 1962, he won 30 games. He pitched tirelessly, with “Gondoh, Gondoh, rain, Gondoh” becoming a popular phrase, but his pitching career was cut short by injuries and he ended up with 82 career wins. Using his experience from his shortened career as a result of getting overworked, he later became a coach and helped establish the specialization of pitchers. He helped the Chunichi Dragons and Kintetsu Buffaloes win league pennants as a coach, and later led the Yokohama BayStars to a Japan Series victory as a manager.

Koichi Tabuchi was the next closest, after being named on 64.7% percent of the ballots with 86 votes. He was followed by Randy Bass, who was named on 63.2% of the ballots with 84 votes.

As a result, there have now been 97 members inducted into the Hall of Fame by the Players Selection Committee. If three players are inducted through next year’s vote, which will be the first ceremony of the new era, a memorable milestone of 100 Hall of Fame inductees will be achieved.

Gotaro Nagase, Representative Director of the PSC

P.3 2019 Hall of Famer elected by the Special Selection Committee

The 58th Special Selection Committee was held this year from 14:00 on January 9 at the Tokyo Dome Hotel located in Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo.

Of the ten eligible candidates, including the three candidates who were newly added to the ballot, and excluding the late Masao Taki, who served as the manager of the Chukyo University baseball team, and was inducted into the Hall of Fame last year, the Special Selection Committee elected Haruo Wakimura, a former high school player who previously won the Japanese High School Baseball Championship, commonly known as "Summer Koshien."



Wakimura received 13 votes from the 14 members of Special Selection Committee, surpassing the 75% threshold, and he received the honor of being inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Wakimura was born on January 15, 1932. In August of 1949, in his sophomore year at Shonan High School, he played in the 31st National High School Baseball Tournament as a third basemen, contributing to the team's first ever appearance and championship. He became teammates with Shinya Sasaki, who would later join the Takahashi Unions professional baseball team following a stint on the Keio University baseball team.

After enrolling in the University of Tokyo Faculty of Law, he made his debut on the school's baseball team as a third basemen during the league series in the spring of 1951. In 1954 he served as the team's captain. Throughout his career in the Tokyo Big6 Baseball League, he played in 82 games, recorded 48 hits in 268 at-bats with a .179 batting average, zero homeruns and 10 RBI.

He later joined the Toyobo Tomida (Yokkaichi, Mie Prefecture) corporate baseball team. In the 26th Intercity Baseball Tournament held in August 1955, he led the team to the quarterfinals of the tournament as a third basemen. In 1956, he transferred to Toyobo Iwakuni. He retired from the sport after playing amateur baseball for three years.

After retiring from baseball, he dedicated himself to the company, taking on the heavy responsibility as a senior managing director.

After retiring from the company, he joined Shinko Sangyo Co., Ltd. (currently renamed as Toyobo STC,) and in 1995 he was appointed as President and Director. In 1998, he retired as the President and Director of the company.

Following his 45-year absence from baseball, he was appointed as the 5th Chairman of the Japan High School Baseball Federation in 2002.

The first issue that he tackled after being appointed as Chairman was “why alumni members who went on to play in the NPB could not return to their alma maters and coach the younger players.”

He held continued discussions with Hiromori Kawashima, who served as the Commissioner of the NPB at the time regarding this issue.

In 2003, with cooperation from the Japan Professional Baseball Players Association, he also helped host the “Beyond the Dream” symposium. He achieved a historic milestone by enabling professional baseball players to provide technical guidance to high school players for the first time ever. This also helped to open the door of history between professional and amateur baseball that has been closed up until then. In 2004, he signed the “Memorandum on the selection of rookies,” that was exchanged with the NPB. The conventional “letter of resignation” was redefined as a “professional baseball aspirant notification” in order to prevent any loopholes. This achievement, which was set up to prevent friction between professional and amateur baseball when selecting rookie players during the professional baseball draft, was an immeasurable feat. As progress continued to be made, the rule preventing professional baseball players from practicing at their alma maters was lifted. This led to the “amateur status” that enabled today’s professional players to coach amateur baseball.

“Professionals and amateurs playing together and having fun is the natural essence of the sport. I am very moved that the new rule was recognized.”

He recalled the days during his tenure as Chairman of the Japan High School Baseball Federation. “I was always the first base coach during our senior league baseball games that were held every Wednesday. I never issued any signs though,” he added, with a mischievous smile on his face.

Even after retiring as Chairman, he spent his days watching the spring and summer Japanese High School Baseball Tournaments. He made it a daily routine to convey his appreciation to the managers of both teams after each game. During the games, he could be seen sitting in the balcony seats keeping a scorebook, even on the chilly days of early spring season and during the intense summer heat. As a former high school player who won the Summer Koshien tournament, he continued to remain a boy at heart with his true love for the game of baseball.

January 15, 2019. Coincidentally, the day that the last Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony of the Heisei era fell on the same day as Wakimura’s 87th birthday.

He is the cousin of Empress Michiko, the current Empress of Japan.

“I’m not sure if her Majesty the Empress is aware of my induction into the Hall of Fame, but

perhaps she will read about it in the newspaper,” he added, with a memorable bright smile on his face that resembled a young baseball player.

Tetsuo Ikeda, Chairman of the Special Selection Committee
(The photographs of the three inductees were provided by Baseball Magazine Sha Co., Ltd.)

P.4 Inductees Remembered (62)

My memories with Sen-san

Toshiro Nobuhara, Director of Senichi Hoshino Memorial Museum



Even though the first anniversary of his death has passed, I still struggle to find closure in my heart. And that’s probably because I hear his voice coming from the video room of the museum almost every day. I never thought that I would be able to have a relationship spanning over 30 years starting from a single encounter that I had with him one day. Starting off as friends, and then family friends, and eventually becoming like brothers is something I never dreamed of happening.

In the early morning of January 31, 1997, I was handed the telephone from my wife who told me that “it was from Mr. Hoshino,” and when I answered he said to me, “Fusako just passed away. I only have sisters, so I need you to come here quick.” I was surprised by the news, and grabbed my stuff and immediately got onto the bullet train. When I recalled our conversation on the phone while I was on the train, I become very emotional, thinking about how Sen-san thought of me as a brother and relied on me.” Ever since then, I have become very friendly with the entire Hoshino family, who lovingly refer to me as “*Okayama no ojisan*” (uncle from Okayama,) and I’m just full of gratitude towards them.

After retiring from baseball as a player, he continued to dedicate himself on contributing to society even with his extremely busy schedule working as a baseball commentator and serving as a manager for three different franchises. One of those contributions was that he continued to make visits to Asahigawaso, a comprehensive health and welfare facility, for over 30 years. During his visits, he would talk to the children about his memories of the year, and from the standpoint as a manager, he enjoyed talking about his strategies with passion. He also always made sure to give gifts to everyone there, encouraging them to “keep doing their best and to

take care of themselves until the next time I visit.” Furthermore, he helped spread the sport of “tee-ball,” a team sport based on the rules of baseball that can be enjoyed by players in wheelchairs, and today, they even hold the “Senichi Hoshino West Japan Tee-Ball Tournament for Disabled Children” once a year.

The reason why he was beloved by everyone was because he always kept his promise, no matter how difficult it was. He also always accepted criticism without arguing back, and he never said anything bad about his friends or colleagues. During his managing days he was referred to as a brave leader and was a very intimidating presence, but in reality, he took great care of all of his players, coaches and staff. In 2015, he invited me and other staff members from the museum to Hawaii, and the time we spent playing golf and enjoying barbecues together remains an important memory that I will never forget.

On July 10, 2016, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He didn't tell anyone outside of his family and other concerned parties what disease he had, and I later heard that he forbid them from telling even me.

In January 2017, his long-cherished desire of getting inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame was finally fulfilled. During the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony held at Nagoya Dome in July, he came up to me and said, “Hey To-chan, let's take a photo together for the last time,” to which I replied, “I'm not going to die anytime soon, Sen-chan,” before we got our photograph taken. To this day, when I think back to that moment, I still regret not realizing that that may have been his signal to me that our parting was near.

I think that he fought hard against his disease with the goal of inviting everyone that he was grateful for to his Hall of Fame celebration party that was scheduled to take place at the end of that year. At the party, he showed a brave face even though he in poor physical condition, and shook the hands of each of the guests while thanking them. Looking back at it now, that must have been his farewell greeting to everyone.

Ten days before he passed away, I received a call from his daughter, who relayed her father's worries about the future of the museum. I replied, “I'll have good news by next year, so please tell Sen-san not to worry,” and that ended up being our last exchange.

Senichi Hoshino passed away at 5:25 AM on January 4, 2018. When I received a call from his daughter telling me that he passed away, I was so shocked I couldn't talk. I could not properly

register anything she said after that, and all I could do was to cry. At his funeral service that was held a few days later, I thanked him “for treating me like a big brother for so many years, and asked him to play golf with me when my time came,” and bid my final farewell.

A year has passed since then, but I still cannot believe that he is not here with us today. I always feel like one day he’ll come walking in through the door of the museum with a smile on his face, saying, “Hey To-chan, I’m back!”

P.5 Rara avis (90)

Game-worn jersey, cap and glove of Ayuri Shimano, pitcher for the Oyodo Boys



The Oyodo Boys (Osaka) took first place at the 12th All-Japan Junior High School Baseball Championship Giants Cup, which was held in August 2018, in their first ever appearance. Ayuri

Shimano contributed to the team’s championship as a female ace pitcher.

Shimano began playing baseball from her second year of elementary school, and has developed into the ace pitcher of the Oyodo Boys with a fastball reaching 123km/h and a baffling variety of variations in speed.

Shimano was chosen as the starting pitcher in her team’s second round game against Edogawa Chuo Little Senior (Tokyo.) She held her opponents to two runs in seven innings by pitching to contact, leading her team to a 5-2 win. She next started the team’s semifinal game against Hirosaki Seiai Little Senior (Aomori,) giving up just three runs in seven innings for a 6-3 win. She threw two complete games, leading her team to the finals. In the finals against Higashi Nerima Little Senior (Tokyo,) she was called onto the mound in the seventh inning of the game to close out a 2-0 lead. She brilliantly held her opponents scoreless, and after the game she was victoriously tossed by her teammates for her contributions to the team’s first championship in its first ever appearance.

In the history of the Giants Cup, which has now been held 12 times, Shimano achieved the remarkable feats of “becoming the first female pitcher” and “the first female player to reach the finals and win a championship.”

From April, Shimano is planning to enroll at Kobe Koryo Gakuen High School (Hyogo,) known for its powerhouse women’s baseball team, and her future success is greatly anticipated.

Shimano’s game-worn jersey, cap and glove will be put on display along her photographs of her at “Baseball Press Photo Exhibition 2018,” which began on December 15, 2018 (Sat) and will run until Sunday, March 3, 2019 (Sun.).

After the exhibition is completed, the items are scheduled to be displayed in the Giants Cup section. We look forward to seeing you.

Yuta Inoue, Curator

Library Note

“Hanashi no Tobira: Tohoku Baseball”



Among the books about baseball that are owned by the museum, there are documents that introduce the history, teams and famous players of regional baseball.

Today we will be introducing *“Hanashi no Tobira: Tohoku Baseball”* (Written by shojiro Hanzawa. Published by *Tohoku Kyoiku Tosho* on May 30, 1949. 219 pages, height 18cm, width 12.5cm.)

The foreword to the book was written by Tadashi Wakabayashi, a former player of the Osaka Tigers (current Hanshin Tigers) who was deeply connected with baseball in the Tohoku region, along with the

Chairman of the Tohoku Baseball Federation and members of the High School Athletic Federation. Wakabayashi’s foreword tells the readers that the book was written by Seijiro Hanzawa, who wrote interesting articles about events taking place in the baseball world, including news from overseas, for “Ball Friend,” a magazine edited by Wakabayashi, in order to properly teach the sport of baseball to the youth. In the baseball world at the time, it’s difficult to truly understand its history and traditions due to baseball being interrupted by World War II, and they highly recommended this book to young baseball fans.

Reading through the table of contents, you can tell that this book covers stories about baseball in

Tohoku, including “the formation of Tohoku baseball,” “the Japanese High School Baseball Championship and teams from Tohoku,” “Tohoku Prefecture baseball traveling records” and “the location of the Tohoku Baseball Federation,” as well as stories relating to a wide range of genres of baseball, including “the history of baseball,” “Wakabayashi’s pitching” and “the development of baseball techniques.” For example, one of the chapters in the book describes a story about the Ichiko beating a team of foreigners from Yokohama in a baseball game in Meiji 29 (1886,) and upon hearing that the fourth-round game was to be held on July 4, the Niko’s cheering squad arrived in Tokyo in full force to cheer on the Ichiko. Another story depicts the time when Hanzawa met Babe Ruth during his visit to Japan for the Major League Baseball Japan All-Star Series that was held in Sendai in Showa 9 (1934,) and watched him hit two homeruns.

This is a truly interesting book that will teach you about the history of baseball in Tohoku, as well information about various events, games, teams and tournaments.

Akiko Ogawa, Librarian

P.6 Topics from the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (November 2018 to January 2019)

11/28: The NPB Speed Up Award Ceremony was held



The award ceremony for the “Lawson Ticket Speed Up Award,” an NPB Commissioner Award, was held at the Baseball Hall of Fame section located inside the museum.

The recipients, Shinsaburo Tawata (Saitama Seibu Lions,) Yota Kyoda (Chunichi Dragons) and Yudai Fujioka (Chiba Lotte Marines) took to the podium and received their award. (Tomoya Mikami of the

Yokohama DeNA BayStars was unable to attend the ceremony.) The Yomiuri Giants and Orix Buffaloes were presented with the team awards.

Later, Kyoda visited the “3rd Study by Elementary Students Contest,” an exhibition that was held that day, and was especially impressed by the grand prize winning exhibit titled “Essentials of Base Stealing” (by Eita Miyaji.)

12/9: Lessons from an official scorer

Class on “How to keep score NPB-style”



NPB Official scorer Seiji Yamakawa was invited to the event hall inside the museum as an instructor to host a class on “How to keep score NPB-style.” After introducing the characteristics of NPB-style scorekeeping, he explained his recording technique while showing footage from actual games. The event was originally scheduled to host 30 participants, but due to its popularity, the

classes were hastily split into two separate sessions and 60 participants were invited. Among the participants, we received comments from stating that the event was “fun and informative,” and that “they wanted to take part in the event again.”

1/11: Museum visit by 115 rookies and umpires!

Looking ahead to the “2019 NPB Rookie Workshop,” a total of 115 rookies and umpires visited the museum. The players were guided by a curator and spent around 40 minutes looking at the documents associated with each franchise, exhibitions relating to the history of professional baseball, and were also given a tour of the Baseball



Hall of Fame section. The museum was temporarily closed in the morning on the day of the tour.

The Winner of the 3rd Independent Study Awards Unveiled

Continuing from last year, the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum hosted the “3rd Independent Study Awards” geared towards elementary students. The submission period for the works was from August 1 until October 7, and a total of 92 submissions were received, which was almost exactly the same number of entries as the previous year.



The screening process was held on November 1 by a panel of four judges including Masatake Yamanaka (2016 Baseball Hall of Fame inductee, Chairman of the Baseball Federation of Japan and former professor at Hosei University,) Joyce Sachiko Tsunoda (1977 Baseball Hall of Fame inductee, first daughter of Yukio

Nishimura, former Chancellor for the University of Hawaii community colleges,) Junko Tahara (professor at Kokushikan University Children's Department of Sports Education) and Museum President Shinichi Hirose

As a result of the careful examinations, “Essentials of Base Stealing” by Eita Miyaji, a sixth grader from Tokyo, was selected as the winner of the Grand Prize Award. Miyaji’s work was a result of carefully observing of the base stealing techniques of professional baseball players. He not only incorporated what he learned, but also thought of his own original base stealing methods and summarized his ideas beautifully.

Third-graders Yoshihiro Ito and Ryota Okuda, both from Tokyo, and fifth-grader Taiko Shoji, also from Tokyo, were selected for the Outstanding Performance Award. The Idea Award was given to third-grader Natsumi Yoshida from Chiba Prefecture, and third-graders Marene Gouda and Yuu Shimahara, both from Tokyo, were selected for the Special Jury Award.

The seven works that were selected were displayed along with other works that passed the first round screening process as part of the “3rd Independent Study Contest Exhibition” from November 24 to December 9. The awards ceremony was held on November 25, and after receiving feedback from the judges, each of the works was presented with a certificate of achievement. Miyaji, the winner of the grand prize award, was also presented with a baseball signed by Atsunori Inaba, manager of the Samurai Blue, while the other six members received autographed cards.

The party that was held after the awards ceremony was attended by the award winners and their families, as well as by the judges. The friendly gathering provided an opportunity for the families and judges to enjoy themselves and exchange pleasant chats.

We believe that this contest is an important effort to “spread” the appeal of baseball to the children who will lead the way for the next-generation, which is one of the missions of the museum, and we will continue to host the event in the future.

Please click the following link to see the works that were awarded with the Grand-Prize and Outstanding Performance Awards at the “3rd Independent Study Contest.”

http://www.baseball-museum.or.jp/jiyu-kenkyu/contest/award_2018.html#!

P.7 The popular “Baseball Press Photo Exhibition 2018” is currently being held!

This marks the fourth year of this exhibition, which is co-hosted by the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum and the Tokyo Press Photographers Association.

On December 15, 2018, the first day of the exhibition, Kotaro Kiyomiya of the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters visited the museum and autographed a photo panel of him hitting his first professional homerun in his career.



Akira Neo of the Chunichi Dragons and Kosei Yoshida of the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters, who visited the museum ahead of the “NPB Rookie Workshop” that was held on January 11, 2019, also signed their autographs onto the photo panel of last summer’s 100th National High School Baseball Championship.



In addition, we received a visit from Hitoki Iwase (formerly of the Chunichi Dragons) after he gave a lecture at the workshop, and Museum President Hirose presented him with a thank you note for the uniform from



his 1,000th career pitching appearance that he donated to the museum last year, and had him write his favorite motto, “persistence pays off” along with a signed autograph onto a photo panel depicting the moment he achieved the record.

This exhibition will be held until March 3. We are currently implementing a vote for fans to determine the annual “Best Shot of the Year.” We look forward to seeing you at the museum.

News from the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

Resignation

Curator Miwako Atarashi, who began started working as a part-time employee from January 2013, has resigned effective December 31.

p. 8 Essays (73)

Although you can't go against the trend of the times...

Director of the Players Selection Committee

Kazuya Otani (Hochi Shimbun)

Waking up on the morning of New Year's Day, eating *ozoni* soup while looking through *nengajo* (traditional Japanese New Year greeting cards.) This is an established custom at the beginning of the year, but the number of *nengajo* that are being received is decreasing year by year. The figure has dropped to about one-third of what it was during its peak. According to data from Japan Post, they issued a record 4.4 billion *nengajo* in 2003. In 2018, that figure dropped to 2.4 billion, meaning it has reduced by close to half in just 15 years.

Many different causes can be considered. First, you may not know the address of the destination due to privacy over personal information. It's unimaginable today, but not long ago the home addresses of the players were listed in the professional baseball player directory. When I was a fledgling reporter, I remember writing tons of *nengajo* while staring at the player directory. For that matter, the schedule planner that was issued by our company even listed the home telephone numbers of the players. This may have been one of the reasons why many prank or silent calls were made to the players' home at the time.

Another cause for the decline in *nengajo* is the development of SNS. My own two daughters only write one *nengajo*, which is addressed to their grandfather on my wife's side, but only after we hound them do they reluctantly put their pen to paper. Their reason for not sending any *nengajo* to their colleagues or friends is simply, "we don't know their addresses." Furthermore, they explain that, "you can send New Year greetings through Facebook or LINE as soon as the date changes, and it's easier to express your feelings that way." However, their messages are usually something short like "Happy New Year" or "I look forward to your continued good will in the coming year." All I can think is, how times have changed.

Furthermore, even though their father works at a newspaper company, they don't read newspapers. News can all be found inside their smartphones. You'd think that even if they don't read the newspaper, they might take a peak at the TV schedule, but just one touch of the TV remote can display a list of all programs on terrestrial TV, BS and CS. Even in the sports newspaper industry, there is data showing that the number of copies printed has reduced by half between early 2000 and today. This story is really more about how I should worry about myself rather than worrying about Japan Post.

So anyway, stories about my own family are not worth worrying about, but this year, I stopped receiving *nengajo* from people who I've had long relationships with, including former professional baseball managers and general managers, former scouts and even acquaintances

from our former publishers who helped us out when we published books about baseball players. One of the *nengajo* that I received last year had a message that read, “I will soon be making preparations for the end of my life, so I will be refraining from sending New Year greetings from next year.” I knew that I wouldn't be receiving any *nengajo* from this person so I wasn't surprised, but according to rumors, this former manager had entered a facility for the elderly. And this year, I again received several *nengajo* that similarly had a message that read, “I'm sorry but I will not be sending any New Year greetings from next year...”

This is a very old story, but there was a time when I received a *nengajo* on New Year's Day from a young slugger who played in the Pacific League, even though I didn't send him anything from my side. What surprised me was that the address written on the front side and the New Year greeting on the reverse side were all written by hand. According to team officials, he carefully wrote approximately 1,000 *nengajo* by hand. If you estimate that it takes a few minutes to write one card, it means that he spent two whole days to write all of the *nengajo*. I have no idea how such a sincere man could go astray, as he has now stepped away from baseball and is working in another occupation. Exchanges through a single post card sent just once a year. Among the younger generation, there have been discussions made arguing against the necessity of *nengajo*, and the number of cards issued will surely continue to decline. If you think about it, it really is a burden to prepare *nengajo* during the busy end of the year season. However, when I stop receiving them from people who used to send them every year, it makes me think about “whether that person is doing well now.” In addition to thinking about my New Year's resolution, I felt a slight sense of loneliness from the morning of the New Year.

Guide to the Baseball Museum

The entrance is located to the right of Gate 21 of Tokyo Dome.

Hours: 10:00— 18:00 (March through September)

10:00— 17:00 (October through February)

(Visitors are requested to enter at least 30 minutes prior to the closing time.)

Admission: ¥600 (*¥500) Adults

¥400 High school and university students

¥200 (*¥150) Elementary & Junior High School students

(* Per person in a group of 20 or more)

¥400 Senior citizens aged 65 or over

Closed: Mondays except those 1) during the spring and summer vacations,
2) that fall on National Holidays,
3) when a pro baseball game is held
at Tokyo Dome