

<CULTURE COLUMN・^{ぶんか}文化コラム>

January 2021



Do you send Christmas cards to your friends or family? This month, we will talk about a similar tradition that is the most important event of the **New Year**. As a New Year's greeting to far off family and friends, Japanese people send a **New Year's postcard (*nengajo*)**. Historically, Japan names each year in accordance with its position in the 12-year Chinese zodiac (*eto*) and designs these cards with the zodiac animal or other omens of good luck like Mt. Fuji. The **zodiac animal** for **2021** is the **Ox (*ushi*)**. Fukuroi City Hall sends you our **best wishes for the New Year!**

Interesting facts about *Nengajo*

- ▶ For *nengajo* to arrive on the first day of the year (**1 January**), people are advised to send them by **25 December**.
- ▶ There are many different types of *nengajo*, even ones with a number printed on them that are used in a '*nengajo* lottery' to win prizes.
- ▶ Those mourning the death of a family member or a close relative do not typically send *nengajo*. Families or close relatives in mourning will send out a postcard referred to as '*mochu ketsurei*' to let others know that they will refrain from sending *nengajo* for the new year.