Adult Day

Coming of Age Day
By Masahiro Ando

The second Monday of January (January 9th this year) is a national holiday called Coming-of-Age Day. According to my dictionary, it honors young people who have reached the age of 20 as new members of adult society. Technically speaking, this definition is not right because the young people are celebrated by classes. Therefore, some are already 20 years old and the others are still 19 years old. Those who were celebrated a few weeks before were born between April 2nd, 1991 and April 1st, 1992.

What does becoming a new member of adult society mean? What are the young people allowed to do? They can drink alcohol, they can smoke, they can vote, they can marry and they get full legal standing to buy a car, a house or real estate. They may feel “No” signs disappear suddenly. On the other hand, if they are arrested for some crime, their photo and real name will be in the newspaper. The accused under 20 years old are called “Boy A” or “Girl A” and their face will not be shown.

Here is a frequently asked question. “Do people who already became 20 before Coming-of-Age Day have to wait until Coming-of-Age Day to drink? Are people at the age of 19 allowed to smoke after Coming-of-Age Day?” The answer is “No” for both of the questions. If you become 20 years old in May, you can drink 8 months before Coming-of-Age Day and if you become 20 years old in March, you have to wait another two months. Coming-of-Age Day is a kind of re-union party prepared by the city.

On January 9th, 2012, about 1.2 million young people were celebrated in Japan. (Masue Shoko shown in picture on right dressed for celebration)