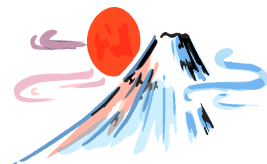




SHIBUKAWA CURRENT

Shibukawa International Association
375th Edition, January 2024



To access the SHIBUKAWA CURRENT online, scan the 2D barcode on the right with your smartphone or visit our website at:

<https://www.city.shibukawa.lg.jp/kurashi/community/kokusaikouryukyukai/p000024.html>



Happy New Year everyone!

In Japan, January is called **Mutsuki**, which means the month of affection. This is a month for families, friends, and colleagues to get together and enjoy each others' company.

The New Year season in Japan starts from **Ganjitsu**, the New Year's Day, and lasts until **Matsunouchi**, when **Shōgatsu-kazari**, the New Year's decorations are taken down, and people return to their daily lives. The morning of Ganjitsu is called **Gantan**. At Gantan families get together and eat **Ozoni** and **Osechi-ryori** in celebration of the New Year. Children receive **Otoshidama**, a money gift from their parents and relatives otoshidama, or New Year's gift money.

On the New Year's Day, **Nengajo**, New Year's greeting postcards, are delivered all at once.

Hatsumōde is the first visit of the year to a shrine or temple to pray for good fortune in the coming year. January 4 is the first work day of the year, for government offices and most companies. After the holiday, many companies and businesses hold **Shinnenkai**, New Year's parties to welcome the new year together. On January 7, Japanese people eat **Nanakusagayu**, a rice porridge dish with seven spring herbs.

The merry mood of **Matsunouchi** is over and the weather turns bitter cold.

Seijin no Hi is celebrated every second Monday in January, falling on January 8 in 2024. This is a day to congratulate people who have turned or will be 20 years old between April 2 of the previous year and April 1 of the current year, and to hold special Coming of Age ceremonies.

According to the lunar calendar, January 20 marks the start of **Daikan**, the coldest time of the year.

For Our Readers (読者の方へ)

The Shibukawa International Association would like to thank you all for your cooperation and participation in the city events in 2023. We hope for your continued support and wish you all good health and happiness in the coming year.

2024

Hatsuichi (初市)



The Hatsuichi, the first market of Shibukawa City, will be held on Friday, January 12, from 11:00 am to 9:00 pm, between the Shinmachi Gosaro crossing and Shibukawa Post Office Street. The street will be closed for the Festival and many stalls are opened along selling Dharma dolls and other symbols that are believed to bring happiness, such as Maneki-neko, cocoon ball decoration, and Japanese Little New Year's decorations. On the festival day people dispose of their old Dharma dolls, and purchase new ones for the new year. When sold, the doll has unpainted eyes. You make your wish while painting the doll's left eye, then fill in the right one when the wish comes true.

Hayao Shrine Omato Shinji (早尾神社おの神事)

Omato Shinji, the Shinto archery ritual held annually at Hayao Shrine has been passed down through generations as an agricultural rite in order to find out how rich or how poor the harvest of the coming year will be, depending on the number of arrows which hit the target. This is a rare fortune-telling ritual in Gunma prefecture. Originally it was performed by two of the eldest sons of farmers' families in Handa area, at the age of 12 and 13 (currently they are selected from among applicants). Wearing kamishimo, formal samurai attire and hakama, formal pleated trousers, they follow the two representatives of parishioners to the shrine altar offering Miki-rice wine to the Shrine gods and performing Norito-sojo, the recital of Shinto prayers. Tying hachimaki around their heads and wearing waraji, straw sandals on their feet they start shooting arrows at a target prepared in the precincts of the shrine.

This year's Omato Shinji ritual will be held on Saturday, January 6.

Miyada Fudosen Festival (宮田不動尊大祭)

This festival is held every year on the day of the special event of Gokaicho (unveiling a Buddhist image). In nearly life-size of the height 166cm, the Miyada Fudosen is a Buddha standing stone statue named Acala. It was carved in 1251 by Inryu and Inetsu, two sculptors of Buddha statues, at the wish of Satomi family, a branch of the Nitta clan. The statue is enshrined in a natural cave of the Miyada Fudo Temple and is unveiled every year on January 28, during the Miyada Fudosen Festival.

Komochi Robai no Sato (子持老梅の里)

Komochi Robai no Sato garden stretches on an entire mountain side, owned by Shorinji (the Temple of the Seven Wonders). Known as Robai "Wax Plum" in Japan, the Winter sweet, or Japanese Allspice tree bloom during the coldest time of the year, with beautiful flowers that have vibrant yellow, waxy petals and delicate fragrance. Seeing this tree flowering in January makes you feel that winter won't last.

The best time to see these beautiful flowers is Mid-January to mid-February.

Shibukawa City Public Library Events (渋川市立図書館催し物)

All events will be held in the City Library. Entrance is free. Just show up!

Shibukawa Library Fukubukuro: Lucky Bag containing one congratulation book inside, that the Library lends out on the first opening day of the new year, on Thursday, January 4, from 9:00 am

Please refer to the hints on the bag and choose the book you prefer. It is limited to one bag per person and ends as soon as the stock runs out.

Movie for kids: "Tenpuku Chifuku" (Blessings Of Heaven And Earth), and others on Saturday, January 13, from 11:00 pm to 11:40 pm.

Picture book storytelling by Story Reading Group "Moe no Ko": "Omochi!", and others on Saturday, January 6 from 2:00 pm to 2:30 pm, and "Tebukuro wo Kai ni" (Buying Mittens), and others on Saturday, January 20, from 2:00 pm to 2:30 pm.

Movie: "Karasu ni Hito wa Niawanai" (A Raven for All Seasons), a TV anime adaptation of the fantasy novel series Yatagarasu, written by Chisato Abe, the youngest ever winner of the Seicho Matsumoto Award, on Sunday, January 27, from 1:30 pm. The anime is set to air on NHK in April 2024.

Chinese Cooking Class (中国家庭料理教室)

Join our hands-on Chinese cooking classes and learn from Ms. Kai Kei, the owner of the "KEI" Chinese restaurant in Shibukawa, how to cook 3 kinds of Chinese dishes: Baozi (Nikuman), steamed pork buns, Moo Shu (Tamagoitame), stir-fried pork, egg, and dried kikurage or wood ear mushrooms, and Annin-dofu pudding. The class will be held at Shibukawa Chuo Kominkan, 3rd floor, Cooking Room on Sunday, February 25, from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm. Please bring an apron, a bandana, and a hand towel.

Limit: 16 people (on a first-come-first served basis)

Fee: 500 yen

Sign up: Tuesday, January 9 to Friday, January 26 (Tel: 0279-22-2396)



Sale of Olive Oil from Foligno (フォリーニョ産オリーブオイル販売)

Millenario extra virgin oil from Foligno, Shibukawa's sister city in Italy, is available for purchase in different shops like Shibusan, the Local Specialty Product Center, Shibukawa City Hall Honchosa, Komochi Michi-no-Eki, Akagi Shizen-en, Onogami Onsen Center, and also by mail order.

Price: 2000 yen (one 750ml bottle, tax included); 4260 yen (mail order, a set of 2x750ml bottles, tax and the box cost is included, but the delivery cost is not included)

Tel: 0279-22-2873 (Tourism Division)

Shibukawa Ski Club Training Session (渋川スキークラブ教室)

Shibukawa Ski Club offers ski lessons to skiers of any level and age at Katashina Kogen slope as follows:

- ① Sunday, January 14 from 8:40 am (basic training)
- ② Sunday, January 28 from 8:40 am (general and pole training)

Whether you're a first-timer, beginner, intermediate or advance skier you can learn to ski or improve your skiing technique and build confidence on the slopes with a professional ski instructor.

(All lessons are free of charge, but you have to pay for your lift tickets. Ski poles rental is 500 yen.)

Application: Only online applications will be accepted. Scan the code on the right and this will direct you to the online application page. You may submit your application by January 9 for the lesson on January 14 and by January 23 for the lesson on January 28.

Tel: 0279-22-2241 (Shibukawa Sports Association)



Free Legal Consultation for Foreigners (外国人無料法律相談)

Where: One-Stop Consultation Center for Foreign Residents of Gunma

(1Floor, Showa Chosha Wing, Gunma Prefectural Government Building, 1-1-1 Ote-machi, Maebashi)

When: Sunday, January 21, 2024, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm (Doors close at 2:30 pm)

Consultants: Attorneys, Gyoseishoshi (Certified Administrative Procedures Legal Specialist), and Shakai Hoken Romushi (Certified Social Insurance and Labor Consultant)

Interpreters: English, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, & Vietnamese.

Reservation & Inquiry: One-Stop Consultation for Foreign Residents of Gunma

(Same-day reservation is available, but those with reservations will take precedence.)

Tel: 027-289-8275



On-duty Clinics in January (1月の休日当番医)

	Internal Medicine		Surgery	Dentistry
1/1 (Mon)	Iguchi-iin (井口医院) Tel: 25-1100	Shinto-saito-iin (榛東さいとう医院) Tel: 54-1055	Otaki clinic (大滝クリニック) Tel: 30-5800	Smile-shika (スマイル歯科) Tel: 30-5033
1/2 (Tue)	Honzawa-iin (本沢医院) Tel: 23-6411	Okamoto-naika-clinic (岡本内科クリニック) Tel: 20-5353	Adachi-seikei-geka (あだち整形外科) Tel: 30-1170	Takeuchi-shika-iin (たけうち歯科医院) Tel: 25-7700
1/3 (Wed)	Yuasa-naika-clinic (湯浅内科クリニック) Tel: 20-1311	Aoitori-family-clinic (青い鳥ファミリークリニック) Tel: 26-2681	Hokumo-byoin (北毛病院) Tel: 24-1234	Yamashita-shika-iin (山下歯科医院) Tel: 22-0648
1/7 (Sun)	Kamiyama-naika-iin (神山内科医院) Tel: 22-2181	Itamino-clinic-hasegawa-iin (痛みクリニック長谷川医院) Tel: 30-5055	Takano-geka-ichoka-iin (高野外科胃腸科医院) Tel: 24-2454	Hirakata-naika-shika-iin (平形内科歯科医院) Tel: 22-2233
1/8 (Mon)	Shibukawa-chuo-byoin (渋川中央病院) Tel: 25-1711	Harasawa-iin (原沢医院) Tel: 72-2503	Shibukawa-iryo-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	SHUN-dental-clinic (SHUN デンタルクリニック) Tel: 25-7961
1/14 (Sun)	Otani-naika-clinic (大谷内科クリニック) Tel: 20-1881	Sato-iin (佐藤医院) Tel: 54-2756	Kato-seikeigeka-iin (加藤整形外科医院) Tel: 20-1007	Miyashita-shika-iin (宮下歯科医院) Tel: 24-1939
1/21 (Sun)	Nara-naika-iin (奈良内科医院) Tel: 25-1155	Komayose-kodomo-shinryojo (駒寄こども診療所) Tel: 55-5252	Ino-seikei-geka-rihabiri-naika (井野整形外科リハビリ内科) Tel: 30-5255	Fukuda-shika-iin (福田歯科医院) Tel: 23-6677
1/28 (Sun)	Kawashima-naika-clinic (川島内科クリニック) Tel: 23-2001	Shinto-Wakaba-clinic (榛東わかばクリニック) Tel: 20-5531	Tomaru-clinic (とまるクリニック) Tel: 26-7711	Seki-shika-iin (関歯科医院) Tel: 25-0530

☆ Don't forget to take your Health Insurance Card and be sure that the doctor for ENT and Dentistry sections will be available only by noon.

Free Counselling Service (外国人生活相談窓口の案内)

The Shibukawa International Association is providing a free counselling service for foreign residents at Shibukawa City Hall every Thursday from 1:00pm to 3:00pm.

TEL: 0279-22-2396



Information (お問い合わせ)

Shibukawa City Office DX & Administrative Management Division, 80 Ishihara, Shibukawa City

Tel: 0279-22-2396 Fax: 0279-24-6541 Email: sia-shibukawa@city.shibukawa.gunma.jp

URL: <http://www.city.shibukawa.lg.jp/kurashi/community/kokusaikouryukyukai/p001414.html>