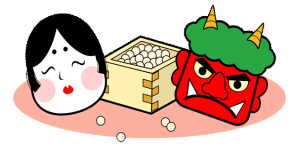




SHIBUKAWA CURRENT

Shibukawa International Association
376th Edition, February 2024



Starting from this month, you can access the SHIBUKAWA CURRENT on LINE!
Open the QR code reader of your smartphone's LINE app to scan the QR code,
and register as a member.



Dear Readers,

The old Japanese name for February is **Kisaragi** which literally means wear still more clothes, to keep warm. Even if it's still cold, you can enjoy winter sports, relax in hot springs, and admire wonderful snowy scenery in Shibukawa or around the city.

February 3 is **Setsubun**, the turning point from winter to spring on the lunar calendar. The days are getting longer and the cold weather is getting milder, although it still can happen to snow.

To celebrate the coming of spring and to drive away evil spirits. **Mamemaki**, a bean-throwing ceremony is held at Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples all over Japan. At home, many families also do Mamemaki. They open the window and throw the beans toward the outside while shouting "**Oni wa soto**" (evil spirits outside), then throw them inside the house shouting "**Fuku wa uchi**" (good luck within!)

These beans are called fuku mame (fortune beans). It is believed that people will be healthy and happy if they eat the number of fuku mame equal to their age.

February 4 is the day that Japanese traditionally celebrate **Risshun**, the first day of spring. Plum blossoms mark the end of winter and the start of spring season in Japan.

February 12 is **Kenkoku Kinen no Hi** (National Foundation Day).

February 23 is **Tenno Tanjobi**, the holiday celebrating Emperor Naruhito's birthday.

After mid month, **Haruichiban** rages through the country. This is the first southern storm of the year.

Setsubun Ceremony at Mizusawa Kannon

みずさわ かんわん せつぶん かい
(水澤観音節分会)



Mizusawa Kannon is the 16th of the 33 temples dedicated to Kanzeon, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy that are visited during the Bando Kannon Pilgrimage. Founded over 1300 years ago, the temple was designated as the place of imperial prayer by Empress Suiko. The principal object of worship is a Thousand-Armed Goddess of Mercy statue enshrined in the Main Hall of the temple complex.

Near Mizusawa Temple, many udon restaurants serve the popular "Mizusawa Udon". There are also stalls selling Yakimanzu, the local delicacy of Gunma and other local specialties.

Every year, a Mamemaki ritual is held at Mizusawa Temple, where beans are thrown by toshi-otoko and toshi-onna, men and women born under the year's zodiac sign (this year is the Year of the Wood Dragon, or Kinoe Tatsu in Japanese), and the temple is crowded with visitors.

This year, the Mamemaki ritual is held on Sunday, February 3, from 10:00 am, four times at intervals of one hour. Come visit this wonderful event that both adults and children can enjoy.

Call for Artwork: The 21st Shibukawa Citizens Art Exhibition

(第21回市民美術展の展示作品を募集します)

Artists of all experience levels, who are 16 years old (high school students) or older, and live, work or study in Shibukawa City, are invited to submit an original work for the "21st Citizen Art Exhibition". Participants can showcase their talent and creativity through various art forms: ① Japanese-style paintings (ink paintings), western-style paintings (watercolors), and Hanga woodblock prints; ② Sculpture
All submitted works will be exhibited without being judged.

When: Friday, June 7 to Sunday, June 23, 2024, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, every day except Tuesdays

Where: Shibukawa Museum of Art and Hiromori Kuwahara Sculpture Museum, Special Exhibition Room

Submission fee: General 1500 yen for one artwork, free of charge for high school students

Delivery date: Sunday, June 2, 2024, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Delivery place: Shibukawa Museum of Art and Hiromori Kuwahara Sculpture Museum, Special Exhibition Room, Shibukawa City Hall Dainichosha, 1st Floor

For details, please contact Shibukawa Museum of Art and Hiromori Kuwahara Sculpture Museum

Tel: 0279-25-3215 / Fax: 0279-23-1907, or refer to the following link:

https://www.city.shibukawa.lg.jp/kosodate/bunka_art/art/p010830.html



Children's Art Exchange Exhibition (姉妹都市児童作品展)

The Annual Sister and Friendship Cities Children's Art Exhibition in Shibukawa will be held from Friday, February 23 to Friday, March 5, every day from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm (last day, until 3:00 pm). There will be on display artworks of children from Hawaii County and Shibukawa City. You can get a glimpse of the life in each of these cities through the works of children. Admission is free!

Where: Shibukawa City Hall Dainichosha, 2nd Floor, Ajisai Salon

Shibukawa Monument Tour Exhibition (「渋川の碑めぐり展」を開催しています)

This exhibition introduces the stone monuments inscribed with haiku poems written by Matsuo Basho that are placed in different locations in Shibukawa city, and the stone monuments inscribed with waka poems from the Manyoshu that can be found in Ikaho town, through panels, photographs, and other images.

When: Thursday, February 1 - Monday, February 26, 2024, every day from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

Admission fee: Adults 350 yen, elementary, junior high school, and high school students 200 yen

TEL: 0279-72-2237 (Tokutomi Roka Memorial Literature Museum)

Ikaho Ice Skate Rink (伊香保スケートリンク)

Come to the Gunma Prefecture Sports Complex Ikaho Ice Rink to spend a beautiful winter day skating. The 400-meter ice rink will be open until February 28, and the indoor first rink until March 31

Fees: Adults: 1,250 yen, 930 yen after 5:00 pm. High school students and younger: 720 yen, 510 yen after 5:00 pm. It is free for preschool children. Skate rental: 310 yen. Gloves and hats are recommended.

Opening hours: everyday except on Mondays, ① 9:00 am - 3:30 pm, ② 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm,

Tel: 0279-72-3144



Shibukawa & Ikaho Photo Contest (しぶかわいかほフォトコンテスト)

Photographers of any experience level are invited to capture the beauty and charm of Shibukawa, and to enter the Shibukawa & Ikaho Photo Contest with their best images. All submitted photos must be taken within Shibukawa city limits during the contest period, between December 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024.

The categories for the contest are: ① Portrait; ② Daily life; ③ Scenery

There is no limit to the number of entries, but only one photo from each contestant is eligible to win. If the entrant is a minor, under the age of 18, the consent of their parent or legal guardian is required.

To participate, submit your photo(s) via Instagram: Follow the Shibukawa Ikaho Onsen Tourism Association on Instagram (@shibukawakankou). Post your entries on your own Instagram account with the 「#いかフォト」 hashtag, and write the location where the photos were taken. Photos may also be submitted online through the Photo Contest Submission Form or mailed on a CD-R, etc. Be sure to include the following information: your name, contact information, and the location where photos were taken. (Address: 80 Ishihara, Shibukawa City, Gunma Prefecture 377-8501, Shibukawa City Hall, Seisaku Senryaku-ka (Strategic Public Relations Div.)

The Shibukawa Ikaho Onsen Kanko Kyokai (Tourism Association) will award:

- **Grand prize winner** - an Ikaho Onsen travel certificate worth 30,000 yen
- **Three finalists** (one per category) - an Ikaho Onsen travel certificate worth 10,000 yen each
- **Three Honorable mentions** (3 works from each category) - consisting of Ishidan original goods

Prize-winning photos will be announced on the competition's official website and on the Shibukawa Ikaho Onsen Tourism Association's Instagram account in early May 2024.

Please visit the Photo Contest website to submit your photos and to find more information on the rules and requirements to enter.

Free Legal Consultation for Foreigners (がいこくじんむりょうほうりつそうだん (外国人無料法律相談))

Where: Isesaki City Hall, 5F, Hihashi-kan (〒372-0031 2-410 Imaizumi-cho, Isesaki City)

When: Sunday, February 4, 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, Nepalese and Tagalog

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

Tel: 027-289-8275 (Monday - Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm) / **090-1215-6113** (on February 4 only)
(Walk-ins are welcome, but priority will be given to reservations.)

Filling of 2023 Income Tax Return (かくていしんこくのお知らせ (確定申告のお知らせ))

Income Tax (Shotoku Zei) is the tax paid by individuals in proportion to their annual income every year. Income Tax Report (Kakutei Shinkoku) is a procedure in which taxpayers report their total income earned the previous year, from January 1 to December 31, and pay or adjust their tax amount accordingly.

Period: Thursday, February 1, 2023 - Thursday, March 15, 2024. For more information on income tax and income tax report, please visit the National Tax Agency website: <https://www.nta.go.jp/>

You can file your tax return on the Internet from your computer or smartphone at home. If you have any question, please contact the tax office of Shibukawa City Hall. You may receive assistance and consultation for your 2023 Final Income Tax Return from Thursday, February 1.

TEL: 0279-22-2251 (Shibukawa City Hall Tax Office)

On-duty Clinics in February

(2 月 の 休 日 当 番 医)

Internal Medicine			Surgery	Dentistry
2/4 (Sun)	Kosei-iin (厚成医院) Tel: 22-1060	Akagi-kaisei-clinic (赤城開成クリニック) Tel: 20-6500	Hokumo-byoin (北毛病院) Tel: 24-1234	Ishida-shika-iin (石田歯科医院) Tel: 25-0411
2/11 (Sun)	Saito-naika-geka-clinic (斎藤内科外科クリニック) Tel: 22-1678	Takeuchi-shonika (竹内小児科) Tel: 30-5151	Adachi-seikei-geka (あだち整形外科) Tel: 30-1170	Hokitsu-shika-shinryojo (北橋歯科診療所) Tel: 52-3762
2/12 (Mon)	Nakano-iin (中野医院) Tel: 22-1219	Oi-naika-clinic (大井内科クリニック) Tel: 30-5575	Shibukawa-iryō-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	Hirakata-shika-iin (平形歯科医院) Tel: 22-0953
2/18 (Sun)	Ishikita-iin (石北医院) Tel: 22-1378	Miyukida-naika-iin (みゆきだ内科医院) Tel: 60-6070	Sekiguchi-byoin (関口病院) Tel: 22-2378	Funaoka-shika-iin (船岡歯科医院) Tel: 23-8211
2/23 (Fri)	Tsukagoshi-clinic (塚越クリニック) Tel: 60-7700	Sekiguchi-iin (関口医院) Tel: 55-5122	Arima-clinic (有馬クリニック) Tel: 24-8818	Shimizu-shika-iin (清水歯科医院) Tel: 54-3413
2/25 (Sun)	Sato-iin (佐藤医院) Tel: 52-3003	Furumaki-naika-iin (ふるまき内科医院) Tel: 25-8881	Shibukawa-iryō-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	Miyashita-dental-clinic (宮下デンタルクリニック) Tel: 53-4701

Night Emergency Clinic (夜間 急 患 診 療 所)

The clinic provides medical services daily 7:00 am - 10:00 pm, in cases of sudden illnesses or injuries, for conditions and issues related to internal medicine, surgery and pediatrics, depending on the doctor in charge. Patients will introduced to another medical institution if specialized treatment is necessary.

Address: 1760-1 Nagatsuka-cho, Shibukawa (Tel: 0279-23-8899)

To access the **SHIBUKAWA CURRENT** online, scan the code on the right with your smartphone or visit our website at:

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



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 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. (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/kokusaikouryukyoukai/p001414.html>