



SHIBUKAWA CURRENT

Shibukawa International Association

377th Edition, March 2024



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Dear Readers,

Spring is already here! In Japan March is called "**Yayoi**", which means to grow more and more.

March 3 is the **Hina Matsuri** - Hina Doll Festival. This is a day to pray for young girls' growth and happiness. Families who have daughters display a set of hina dolls dressed in ancient costumes and arrangements of peach and rape blossoms. Hina Matsuri is also called "**Momo no Sekku**" meaning Peach Blossom Festival, for the peach trees are usually in full bloom at this time.

The 3rd is also Ears Day. The shape of the Arabic numeral 3 resembles that of an ear, and the numeral 3 can be read in Japanese as mi, so March 3 sounds like mi-mi and the day is called "**Mimi no Hi**".

The Japanese school year ends in March and begins in April. This time of the year is very important for Japanese test takers. The competition to pass high school and university entrance examinations is really severe. The school year ends with the graduation ceremony. At graduation ceremonies, graduating students from kindergarten through university receive certificates. After the ceremony, the students give a **Shaonkai** party in honor of their teachers, to show appreciation for their guidance.

March 20 is **Shunbun no Hi**, or Vernal Equinox Day. It's a national holiday in Japan that marks the beginning of astronomical spring. This day is actually part of a seven-day period known as the equinoctial week of spring or **Haru No Higan**, a Buddhist holiday celebrated usually three days before and after Shunbun No Hi. During this week, Buddhist families go together to visit the graves of their ancestors. Shunbun No Hi is also a day for farmers to pray for "good luck" with their crops as it is the start of a new planting season. Following Vernal Equinox Day, days gradually get longer and nights shorter, the chill of winter finally disappears, and temperatures do get higher from around this time.

Cherry blossoms slowly start blossoming from the southern regions of Japan, to the northern areas. It is expected that cherry blossoms in Gunma will be in full bloom at the end of March.

Kawazu-zakura no Oka Shiroy (かわづ ^{ざくら}桜の丘 ^{おかしろい}白井)

"Kawazu-zakura no Oka Shiroy" is a new cherry blossom viewing spot that is loved by many people. There are about 70 Kawazu-zakura cherry trees planted on a slope extending north from the back of the Komochi Michi no Eki (Roadside Station) to the Komochi Shiroy Onsen hot spring. Kawazu-zakura bloom earlier than other types of cherry blossoms, usually from later February to early March, and their petals also tend to have a more vibrant pink color.

There is a well-maintained bark path leading up the hill with a fine view of the cherry trees from the top, so visitors can enjoy the flowers while taking a leisurely stroll.

(Parking is available at the Komochi Roadside Station.)

Saku Electric Power Plant Cherry Blossom (さくら みごろ「佐久発電所」)

Saku Electric Power Plant attracts many visitors in early spring to admire the beautiful cherry blossoms of about 100 Yoshino cherry trees that have been planted alongside the water pipeline extending from the head pond to the surge tank. The most likely time to reach peak bloom is around the last week of March. During the peak bloom time, food stalls will be set up in the area and blossom viewers can enjoy visiting the power plant and other activities while viewing the cherry blossoms. Parking lot is also provided, but the place can get crowded, and parking may be difficult.

Shibukawa Ekimae "Nin Dakari" (しぶかわえきまえ にんだかり)

In order to enliven our city, a "nin dakari" fair will be held on Sunday, March 23, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm, at Shibukawa Ekimae Hiroba. There will be booths set up, serving food and drink from local restaurants, selling goods, and offering different types of interactive experiences.

Invite your friends and come to have fun! (In the case of bad weather, the event will be canceled.)

Tel: 0279-22-2596

Tokutomi Roka Memorial Tea Ceremony (とくとみ ろ か ついとう ちやかい)

Tokutomi Roka is a Meiji period novelist who introduced Ikaho hot spring town in his famous novel "Hototogisu" (The Little Cuckoo). A Japanese tea ceremony will be held in his memory at the Tokutomi Roka Memorial Museum of Literature on Monday, March 18, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Cost: 500 yen (for the Japanese confections)

Tel: 0279-72-2237

Akagi Rekishi Shiryokan Exhibition (あかぎれきし しりょうかん きかくてん)

The "Tsukuda Puppet Theater Sakuraza - 300th anniversary and future ahead" Exhibition aims to introduce visitors to the 300-year history of the Tsukuda Puppet Sakuraza.

Where: Akagi Rekishi Shiryokan (Museum of History)

When: Thursday, March 14 to Sunday, June 30, 2024, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

(except Mondays, Tuesdays, and public holidays)

Admission fee: Adults 200 yen, elementary, high school and university students 100 yen, junior high school and younger children free of charge

TEL: 0279-52-2102 (Akagi Rekishi Shiryokan)

The 28th Shibukawa Martial Art Festival (だい 27 回 しぶかわ ぶ どう フェスティバル)

You can enjoy performances of martial arts and you can also experience them.

If you are interested in practicing at the festival, please contact Mr. Ishibashi or the Sport Division until Friday, March 15.

Where: Miyata Shokai Budokan, Shibukawa

When: Sunday, March 24, from 9:00 am to 10:30 am

Tel: 090-3149-7404 (Mr. Ishibashi) / **Tel: 0279-22-2241** (Sport Division)



Shibukawa City Public Library Events (しぶかわしりつとしょかんもよおもの 渋川市立図書館催し物)

All events will be held at the City Library and are free. Just show up!

★ **Kids Movies:** "Hina Matsuri" and others on Saturday, March 9, from 11:00 am to 11:40 am.

★ **Picture book storytelling by Story Reading Group Moe no Ko:** "Always Friends"

(Itsudatte Tomodachi) and others on Saturday, March 16, from 2:00 pm to 2:30 pm.

(For kindergarteners and elementary school students (grades 1, 2) and their parents.)

★ **Movies:** "Light Of Hope In The Wilderness", a Japanese documentary film that traces the 35-year journey of Dr. Tetsu Nakamura's activities, on Sunday, March 17, from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm.

Tel: 0279-22-0644 (Shibukawa City Library)



Online procedure for residence application (ざいりゅうしんせい てつづき (在留申請のオンライン手続き))

The status of residence is a status granted to foreign nationals according to the purpose of their entry to and stay in Japan. If you wish to extend your permitted period of stay, to change your purpose / status of residence, or to acquire a status of residence, you can apply online via the Internet by utilizing your personal authentication, at FRESC (Foreign Residents Support Center).

Prior application must be made by registering user information online or by mail. Your face photo is necessary for the application. Immigration staff will assist your online residence application.

Applications can be submitted 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, from your home or office.

No visit to the regional immigration services bureaus is required. It is free of charge and no waiting time. You can also receive your residence card by mail.

Advance reservation via the Internet is required: <https://www.forms.gle/GkTLQHnB5JY5MSdx6>

Tel: 03-5363-3025 (Support Desk for Online Residence Application)

Notice on Changing of Water Charges (すいどうりょうきん ねあ (水道料金の値上げについて))

The city's water supply and sewerage system is a self-sustaining business that runs with the water rates charged to its customers. The water charges are used for various purposes such as the cost of producing safe and high-quality water, the costs for renewing and maintaining aging water supply facilities, and the cost of preventing water leaks and earthquake disaster prevention measures.

Recently the water supply business is experiencing major financial difficulties and in order to ensure the stable delivery of safe and reliable tap water in the future, the water rates will be revised (increased) from April 1, 2024. Those who have been using the service since before the revision will be charged the new rate starting from June 2024 meter reading.

The notice of water tariff increases is published in the city's publications and website or sent out with water bills. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

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.htm>



On-duty Clinics in March (3月の休日当番医)

Internal Medicine			Surgery	Dentistry
3/3 (Sun)	Shibukawa-chuo-byoin (渋川中央病院) Tel: 25-1711	Harasawa-iin (原沢医院) Tel: 72-2503	Ino-seikei-geka-rihabiri-naika (井野整形外科リハビリ内科) Tel: 30-5253	Sakura-shika (さくら歯科) Tel: 30-6333
3/10 (Sun)	Otani-naika-clinic (大谷内科クリニック) Tel: 20-1881	Itamino-clinic-Hasegawa-iin (痛みクリニック長谷川医院) Tel: 30-5055	Shibukawa-iryo-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	Sajima-shika-clinic (佐島歯科クリニック) Tel: 22-0069
3/17 (Sun)	Yuasa-naika-clinic (湯浅内科クリニック) Tel: 20-1311	Komayose-kodomo-shinryojo (駒寄こども診療所) Tel: 55-5252	Otaki-clinic (大滝クリニック) Tel: 30-5800	Sato-shika-iin (佐藤歯科医院) Tel: 54-8330
3/20 (Wed)	Kawashima-naika-clinic (川島内科クリニック) Tel: 23-2001	Sato-iin (佐藤医院) Tel: 54-2756	Arima-clinic (有馬クリニック) Tel: 24-8818	Nagai-shika-iin (永井歯科医院) Tel: 56-8854
3/24 (Sun)	Honzawa-iin (本沢医院) Tel: 23-6411	Okamoto-naika-clinic (岡本内科クリニック) Tel: 20-5353	Shibukawa-iryo-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	Hoshikawa-shika-iin (ほしかわ歯科医院) Tel: 24-8835
3/31 (Sun)	Kamiyama-naika-iin (神山内科医院) Tel: 22-2181	Nara-naika-iin (奈良内科医院) Tel: 25-1155	Takano-gekaichoka-iin (高野外科胃腸科医院) Tel: 24-2454	Onogami-shika-shinryojo (小野上歯科診療所) Tel: 59-2493

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)

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/kokusaikouryukyukai/p001414.html>