



SHIBUKAWA CURRENT

Shibukawa International Association

386th Edition, December 2024



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Hello Everyone!

In Japan, December is called **Shiwasu**, which means teachers or priests run around. This word reflects the busiest month of the year. It's a Japanese custom to send **Oseibo** (end-of-year gifts) around this time of the year. Also it's customary to write and mail **Nengajo** (Japanese New Year's postcards) in December so that they are delivered on **Oshogatsu** (New Year's Day). During December, **Bonenkai** parties (forget the year gatherings) are held among co-workers, club members, college organizations, and friends.

Christmas is not a national holiday in Japan, but people enjoy, no matter what is their religion. Streets and malls are beautifully illuminated with twinkling lights and festive decorations weeks before Christmas. Children are especially excited to receive gifts from Santa Claus on Christmas Eve, while couples and friends get together for dinner, and exchange gifts.

Osoji (extensive cleaning), is done before New Year's holiday, and Japanese New Year's decorations are usually placed around and inside the house. In Japan, New Year's Eve is called **Omisoka**.

Osechi ryori (Japanese New Year's Food) is eaten during the first three days of the New Year.

At midnight on New Year's Eve, all temples ring their bells 108 times, a tradition called Joya-no-kane. The year-end salutations are: "**Kotoshi wa iroiro to osewa ni narimashita. Rainen mo yoroshiku onegai shimasu**" (I thank you for all the favor towards me this year and look forward to next year).

"**Yoi otoshi wo omukae kudasai!**" (Have a happy New Year!)

Illumination in Shibukawa (しぶかわ 渋川 まちなかイルミネーション)

Ekimae Plaza and Ekimae-dori street in front of Shibukawa Station are decorated with colorful LED lights and creative displays made by students from Shibukawa City high schools, for the winter holiday season, and will be lighting up every evening between 5:00 pm and 10:00 pm, starting November 30 through January 31, 2025.

New Year Party (しんねん 新年パーティー)

Come and join us for our annual New Year Party and enjoy delicious food, games, international songs, dances, and maybe wearing your native dress. It's a chance to meet old friends and make new friends! For those who will want to perform on stage, please contact us in advance.

Place: Shibukawa Chuo Kominkan, 4th floor Hall

Date: Saturday, January 25, 2025, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm (reception starts at 10:45 am)

Limit: 50 people, on a first-come, first-served basis

Fees: Adult 800 yen (foreigners 500 yen); elementary and junior high school students 300 yen

Sign-up: By phone from Monday, December 9 to Monday, December 23 (**Tel: 0279-22-2463**)



Shibukawa City New Year's Concert (しぶかわし 渋川市ニューイヤーコンサート)

The 2025 "Shibukawa New Year's Concert" by the Gunma Symphony Orchestra, with conductor Takeshi Ooi and pianist Kaoru Jitsukawa, will be held at the Shibukawa Shimin Kaikan Large Hall.

Date and Time: Monday, January 13, 2025, from 2:00 pm (doors open at 1:15 pm)

Tickets: Adult 2,200 yen (sales at the door: 2,500 yen), high school students and below 1,000 yen (sales at the door: 1,300 yen). Preschoolers cannot attend the concert.

Advance tickets are now available and may be purchased directly or by phone at the Shimin Kaikan Box Office during operating hours (**Tel: 0279-24-2261**). Tickets may also be purchased online at:

<http://www.cnplayguide.com/shibukawa/>. (Lawson ticket: <https://l-tike.com/order/?gLcode=30023>.)

Shibukawa Illumination (しぶかわイルミネーション)

Shibukawa Illumination event will be held at Atagoyama Furusato Park, from Saturday, December 7 to Wednesday, December 25. The venue will be illuminated by beautiful holiday lights, including the city's largest lighting equipment in the shape of a western-style castle, daily between 5:00 pm and 10:00 pm.

In addition, a Craft, Food & Drink Christmas Market will be held around the outdoor stage in the park and the Parking Lot 1, every Saturday during the event period. The craft booths will open from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm and the food & drink booths from 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

On December 7, free live performances will take place at the outdoor stage from 1:00 pm to 4:45 pm.

The Lighting Ceremony will take place at the main illumination venue, from 5:00 pm to 5:30 pm, featuring greetings from the organizers and guests, and the lights switch-on with all participants counting down together and enjoying the moment when the illuminations are lit up. A fireworks show over the Makabe Pondage will follow the ceremony at 5:30 pm, for about 5 minutes.

(In case of bad weather, the event will be postponed to Sunday, December 8 at the same time.)

Free parking is available at Atagoyama Furusato Park Parking 2.

Tori no Ichi Fair (とり いち 酉の市)

Tori-no-Ichi (Bird Fairs or Rooster Festivals), take place on the days of the Rooster, at shrines throughout Japan, in November or in December. In Shibukawa, this fair is held from old times annually on December 16 at Yasaka Shrine, situated near Shinkoji Temple. Usually a forgotten silent shrine, on this day it is getting really crowded with people who come to pray for health, abundant harvest and prosperous business. At the Fair, open-air stalls line up selling kumade, good-luck rakes which are believed to "rake in good fortune" and bring happiness to those who purchase and display them throughout the years. Yasaka Shrine Omikoshi (city-designated tangible cultural property) and the "Yasaka Shrine" framed writing by SHIBUSAWA Eiichi will be on display during the Tori-no-Ichi Fair. A big raffle drawing will also be held at the Fair.

Strawberry Picking in Shibukawa (しぶかわ が 渋川のいちご狩り)

There are many sunny days in Shibukawa during the winter, and from mid-December you can enjoy delicious strawberries, fresh from the field at one of the local strawberry picking farms in Ikaho-machi. Akagi-machi, or in Komochi area.

Take your family and friends and come to a strawberry farm!



Ikaho Ice Rink Now Open (い か ほ いたぽんかいほう (伊香保リンクー 般開 放))

The Gunma Sports Complex Ikaho Rink is open for the season! The 400-meter outdoor ice rink will stay open until mid-February, 2025, the first indoor ice rink until Monday, March 31 and the second indoor ice rink until the end of February, 2025 (except on Mondays, if it isn't a holiday, December 31, and January 1).

Entrance Fee: Adult 1,250 yen (after 5:00 pm, 930 yen), high school students and below 720 yen (after 5:00 pm, 510 yen). It's free for preschoolers, but they must be accompanied by an adult. All ages skate rental is 320 yen (sizes from 15cm to 30cm). It is recommended to wear protective gear, such as helmets, elbow and knee pads (available for free rental). Please be sure to wear gloves.



Operating hours: 9:00 am to 4:45 pm (in March, from 11:00 am to 2:45 pm). Exclusive rink rental is available from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm. The ice rink may not be available during tournaments or exclusive use, or may be closed at times due to weather conditions. For more information, please visit the following:

URL: <http://www.gunma-sports.or.jp/>, or call the Ikaho Ice Rink at: **Tel: 0279-72-3144.**

Shibukawa Pancake Koshien (しぶかわパンケーキ甲子園 こうしえん)

The "Pancake Koshien" event takes place at Shibukawa City Hall Main Building Parking Lot on Sunday, December 8, 2024, from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm (the Award Ceremony starts at 3:30 pm).

Teams of high school students in the Shibukawa schools will create original pancakes using pre-made pancake batter and sell them at their own team booths. Customers will vote for which pancake they thought was the tastiest, and participating teams will compete for ranking based on the voters.

Also, the "Shibukawa Bazaar" will be held at the same time. Local businesses vendors will sell food, drink and merchandise, and high school students will be performing on stage.

Onogami Onsen Marathon (お の がみおんせん おのがみおんせん マラソン)



The Onogami Onsen Marathon will be held around Onogami Koen on Wednesday, January 1, 2025.

There are two different courses: 1.5km for elementary school students (those in grade 3 and below must be accompanied by a parent) and 3km for junior high school students and above. The 1.5km course starts at 10:00 am and the 3km course starts at 10:30 am. Reception is from 9:00 am to 9:30 am.

The participation prize is a free admission ticket for the Hata no Yu hot spring.

Registration: By phone until December 22 (**Tel: 0279-59-7027**). Same-day registrations are also possible.

Free Legal Consultation for Foreigners (がいこくじんむりようほうりつそうだん がいこくじんむりようほうりつそうだん)

Where: Takasaki City Chuo Kominkan, Shukai Hall, 1st floor (〒370-0065, 27 Suehiro-cho, Takasaki shi)

When: Sunday, December 8, 2024 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm (Doors close at 2:30 pm)

(Walk-ins are accepted, but those with reservations will be given priority.)

Consultants: Attorneys, Gyoseishoshi Lawyer (Administrative Documentation Lawyers) & Shakai Hoken Romushi (Social Insurance and Labor Consultant). Free confidential interpreting service is available in English, Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Nepalese, Tagalog.

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

Tel: 027-289-8275 / 090-1215-6113 (Only on consultation day)

On-duty Clinics in December (1 2 月 の 休 日 当 番 医)

	Internal Medicine		Surgery	Dentistry
12/1 (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	Tomaru-clinic (とまるクリニック) Tel: 26-7711	Sakura-shika (さくら歯科) Tel: 30-6333
12/8 (Sun)	Iguchi-iin (井口医院) Tel: 25-1100	Yuasa-naika-clinic (湯浅内科クリニック) Tel: 20-1311	Adachi-seikei-geka (あだち整形外科) Tel: 30-1170	Takizawa-shika-iin (たきざわ歯科医院) Tel: 55-6480
12/15 (Sun)	Saito-naika-geka-clinic (斎藤内外科クリニック) Tel: 22-1678	Sato-iin (佐藤医院) Tel: 54-2756	Shibukawa-iryo-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	Kobuna-shika-iin (こぶな歯科医院) Tel: 22-4939
12/22 (Sun)	Nakano-iin (中野医院) Tel: 22-1219	Harasawa-iin (原沢医院) Tel: 72-2503	Otaki-clinic (大滝クリニック) Tel: 30-5800	Esu-shika (エース歯科) Tel: 55-1181
12/29 (Sun)	Kamiyama-naika-iin (神山内科医院) Tel: 22-2181	Akagi-kaisei-clinic (赤城開成クリニック) Tel: 20-6500	Kato-seikeigeka-iin (加藤整形外科医院) Tel: 20-1007	Akagi-shika-iin (あかぎ歯科医院) Tel: 20-6522
12/30 (Mon)	Kosei-iin (厚成医院) Tel: 22-1060	Oi-naika-clinic (大井内科クリニック) Tel: 30-5575	Arima-clinic (有馬クリニック) Tel: 24-8818	Meiji-shika-shinryojo (明治歯科診療所) Tel: 25-8101
12/31 (Tue)	Shibukawa-chuo-byoin (渋川中央病院) Tel: 25-1711	Takeuchi-shonika (竹内小児科) Tel: 30-5151	Takano-geka-ichoka-iin (高野外科胃腸科医院) Tel: 24-2454	Aoba-shika-iin (あおば歯科医院) Tel: 25-8820

Night Emergency Clinic (夜 間 急 患 診 療 所)

The clinic provides emergency medical services for conditions and issues related to internal medicine, surgery, and pediatrics, depending on the doctor in charge, between 7:00 pm and 10:00 pm, every day.

Please contact the clinic before going if you are not sure if you can be treated.

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

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: 0279-22-2463)**

Information (お 問 い 合 わ せ)

Shibukawa City Office Shimin Kyodo Suishin Ka, 80 Ishihara, Shibukawa City

Tel: 0279-22-2463 Fax: 0279-24-6541 Email: sia-shibukawa@city.shibukawa.gunma.jp

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

