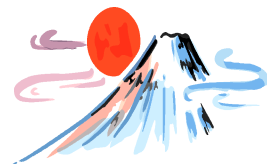




SHIBUKAWA CURRENT

Shibukawa International Association

387th Edition, January 2025



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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. On New Year's Day, children receive **Otoshidama** (a money gift) from their parents and relatives. Nengajo (New Year's greeting postcards) are specially handled by Japan Post, and stored until they are all delivered on New Year's Day,

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 13 in 2025. 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 どくしゃ かた (読者の方へ)

2025

The Shibukawa International Association would like to thank you all for your cooperation and participation in the city events in 2024. We hope for your continued support and wish you good health, happiness, and prosperity this New Year.

We look forward to seeing you at the New Year Party on Saturday, January 25!

Hatsuichi はついち (初市)



Hatsuichi, the first market of the year, will be held on Sunday, 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.

The Omato Shinji ritual is held every year in early January. (Tel: 0279-23-1844)

Komochi Robai no Sato

(子持ロウバイの郷)

Komochi Robai no Sato garden stretches on an entire mountain side owned by Shorinji or the Temple of the Seven Wonders. Known as Robai in Japan, the Winter Sweet or Japanese Allspice tree displays beautiful flowers that have vibrant yellow, waxy petals and delicate fragrance, during the coldest time of the year. Seeing this flowers in January makes you feel that winter won't last. The best time to see Robai flowers is Mid-January to mid-February.

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.

Bread Festival at Kamimiharada Kabuki-stage (上三原田の歌舞伎舞台でパン祭り)

Bakeries from Shibukawa City and the surrounding areas will gather under one roof!

On the Festival day, there will be a wide variety of unique breads on display, as well as a selection of bread accompaniments such as coffee and soup.

There will also be a free tour of the venue, Kamimiharada Kabuki Stage, limited to the first 80 people.

When: Saturday, January 25, 2025, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Tokutomi Roka Memorial Literature Museum - Picture Sugoroku Exhibition

(徳富蘆花記念文学館の「絵双六」開催)

E-sugoroku (picture board game) is a dice-based board game that was very popular in the Meiji and later periods, and the colorful and topically diverse sugoroku were enjoyed by both adults and children. This exhibition will feature a collection of e-sugoroku game boards from Meiji period to Showa period.

Where: Tokutomi Roka Memorial Literature Museum in Ikaho Hot Spring Town

When: Saturday, January 4 - Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 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)

Thai Cooking Class (タイ料理教室)^{りょうりきょうしつ}

Join our hands-on Thai cooking class and learn from Ms. Rarita Ono, how to cook two delicious dishes: Thai Green Curry and Hwan Fak Tthong, Thai sweet pumpkin dessert. The class will be held at Shibukawa Chuo Kominkan, 3rd floor, Cooking Room on Saturday, March 1, from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm.

Please bring an apron, a bandana, a hand towel and a face mask.

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

Fee: 500 yen

Sign up: Monday, January 6 - Monday, January 20, by phone

Tel: 0279-22-2463 (Please provide us your name, address and phone number.)



The 30th Shibukawa City Band Festival

(第30回渋川バンドフェスティバル)^{だい かいしぶかわ}



The City Band Festival brings together elementary, junior high and high school students and some people familiar with musical activities such as a brass band to perform on stage.

The admission is free of charge; all are welcome to attend.

When: Saturday, February 1, from 12:30 pm (doors open at 12:00 noon)

Place: Shimin Kaikan Main Hall. It is expected that on the Festival day the parking lot to be congested. Please use the parking lot of the Dainichosha, the Shibukawa City Hall second building.

Shibukawa Ski Club Training Session (渋川スキークラブ教室)^{しぶかわ きょうしつ}

Shibukawa Ski Club offers ski lessons to skiers of any level and age at Katashina Kogen Ski Resort as follows: ① Sunday, January 12 from 8:30 am (basic training)

② Sunday, January 26 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 have to submit your application for the lesson on January 12 until January 8, and for the lesson on January 26 until January 22.

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



Free Legal Consultation for Foreigners (外国人無料法律相談)^{がいこくじん むりようほうりつそうだん}

Where: Ota Intercultural Communication, Tabunka Kyousei Center (Address: Ota-Shi Iizuka-Cho 69-3)

When: Sunday, January 26, 2025, 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 reservations are accepted, but those with prior reservations will be given priority.)

Tel: 027-289-8275 / (Tel: 090-1215-6113 only on January 26)



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

	Internal Medicine		Surgery	Dentistry
1/1 (Wed)	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	Fukushima-shika-iin (ふくしま歯科医院) Tel: 22-0154
1/2 (Thu)	Ishikita-iin (石北医院) Tel: 22-1378	Shinto-Wakaba-clinic (榛東わかばクリニック) Tel: 20-5531	Sekiguchi-byoin (関口病院) Tel: 22-2378	Iizuka-shika-iin (いづか歯科医院) Tel: 22-0808
1/3 (Fri)	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	Tomaru-clinic (とまるクリニック) Tel: 26-7711	Smile-shika (スマイル歯科) Tel: 30-5033
1/5 (Sun)	Kawashima-naika-clinic (川島内科クリニック) Tel: 23-2001	Sekiguchi-iin (関口医院) Tel: 55-5122	Shibukawa-iryo-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	Takeuchi-shika-iin (たいけうち歯科医院) Tel: 25-7700
1/12 (Sun)	Sato-iin (佐藤医院) Tel: 52-3003	Shinto-saito-iin (榛東さいとう医院) Tel: 54-1055	Hokumo-byoin (北毛病院) Tel: 24-1234	Yamashita-shika-iin (山下歯科医院) Tel: 22-0648
1/13 (Mon)	Miyukida-naika-iin (みゆきだ内科医院) Tel: 60-6070	Honzawa-iin (本沢医院) Tel: 23-6411	Shibukawa-iryo-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	Hirakata-naika-shika-iin (平形内科歯科医院) Tel: 22-2233
1/19 (Sun)	Aoitori-family-clinic (青い鳥ファミリークリニック) Tel: 26-2681	Tsukagoshi-clinic (塚越クリニック) Tel: 60-7700	Adachi-seikei-geka (あだち整形外科) Tel: 30-1170	SHUN-dental-clinic (SHUN デンタルクリニック) Tel: 25-7961
1/26 (Sun)	Iguchi-iin (井口医院) Tel: 25-1100	Furumaki-naika-iin (ふるまき内科医院) Tel: 25-8881	Kato-seikeigeka-iin (加藤整形外科医院) Tel: 20-1007	Miyashita-shika-kyosei-shika-iin (宮下歯科・矯正歯科医院) Tel: 24-1939
☆ 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 1:00 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>

