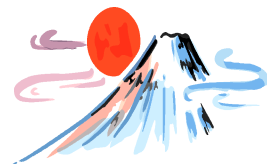




SHIBUKAWA CURRENT

Shibukawa International Association

399th Edition, January 2026



To 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.



Happy New Year Everyone!

In Japan, January is called **Mutsuki**, which means the month of affection, and reflects the custom of families and friends gathering together to celebrate the New Year, 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 5 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 12 in 2026. 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)

2026

The Shibukawa International Association would like to thank you all for your cooperation and participation in the city events in 2025. 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 24!

Hatsuichi (初市)

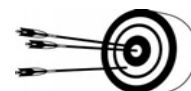


Shibukawa Hatsuichi, the first market of the year, is held annually on January 12 along the street between the Shinmachi Gosaro Intersection and the Post Office. The street will be closed for the market, from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm. Stalls selling lucky charms like daruma dolls, maneki neko, and cocoon ball decorations line the street, attracting crowds looking for Little New Year's items. People dispose of their old daruma dolls, and purchase new ones for the new year. When purchased, both of the daruma's eyes are blank. Make your wish while painting one of the doll's eye, then fill in the other eye when the wish comes true. Pay parking is available at the municipal parking lots No. 2 and No. 3.

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.

When: Tuesday, January 6, from 10:00 am



Miyada Fudosen Festival

(みやだふどうそんたいさい
宮田不動尊大祭)

The festival is held annually on January 28 on the day of Gokaicho, a special event of unveiling a Buddhist image. In nearly life-size with the height of 166 cm, the Miyada Fudosen is an Acala stone statue 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 for public viewing and prayer during the Festival.

Komochi Robai no Sato

(こもちろうばいのさと
子持ロウバイの郷)

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 Wintersweet, or Japanese Allspice tree bloom during the coldest time of the year, with beautiful flowers that have vibrant yellow, waxy petals and delicate fragrance. The best time to see these flowers is from early January to mid-February.

The 31st Shibukawa City Band Festival (第31回渋川バンドフェスティバル)

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, and everyone is welcome to attend with ease and comfort!

When: Saturday, January 31, from 0:30 pm (doors open at 12:00 noon)

Venue: Shibukawa Shimin Kaikan Main Hall. For the event, parking is also available at the Shibukawa City Hall parking lots, so please use them if the main venue lot is full.)



Tokutomi Roka Memorial Literature Museum E-sugoroku Exhibition

(とくともろかきねんぶんがくかんの「絵双六」開催
徳富蘆花記念文学館の「絵双六」開催)

Sugoroku is a traditional Japanese board game that was very popular in the Meiji and later periods. The exhibition features 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: Sunday, January 4 - Thursday, February 26, 2026, 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})

In this hands-on cooking class Ms. Kato Charash will teach you how to cook two delicious Thai dishes, Pad Gapao Rice (Pad Krapow) and Bananas in Coconut Milk (Kluay Buat Chi). and then you will enjoy the food you have prepared. The class will be held at Shibukawa Chuo Kominkan, 3rd floor, Cooking Room on Saturday, February 28, 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 (for the ingredients)

Sign up: January 5 - January 19, by phone (Your name, address, and phone number are requested.)

Tel: 0279-22-2463 (Shimin Kyodo Suishin Ka)



Strawberry Picking (いちご狩り^が)

There are many sunny days in Shibukawa during the winter, and from mid-December to early June, you can enjoy the delicious juicy, ripe strawberries, fresh from the field at one of the local strawberry picking farms in Akagi, Komochi district, etc.



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 is offering three free training sessions for skiers of all ages and levels as follows:

- 1st Session: Sunday, January 11, 2026
- 1st Pole Session: Sunday, January 18, 2026 (Giant Slalom ski training)
- 2nd Session: Sunday, January 25, 2026 (Pole training is also available)

You have to pay for your lift tickets and ski equipment rentals, but discounts are available.

Venue: Katashina Kogen Ski Resort.

Application: Applications must be submitted online up to three days prior to the date of each session.

You can apply by scanning the QR code below. Please also apply for the discounted lift tickets and rental equipment. The registration and the payment of the discounted fees must be made in person on the day of each session at the "Country Child", inside the Ski Resort Management Center. Registration for the Ski Sessions will open from 8:30 am to 8:50 am, and for the 1st Pole Session around noon, right after the Citizens' Tournament. For detailed informations, please visit the Shibukawa Ski Club website at:

<https://ameblo.jp/shibukawaskic/>

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 むりょ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 25, 2026, 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: 090-5054-5215 (This number is available only on the consultation day.)



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

	Internal Medicine		Surgery	Dentistry
1/1 (Thu)	Harasawa-iin (原沢医院) Tel: 72-2503	Furumaki-naika-iin (ふるまき内科医院) Tel: 25-8881	Hokumo-byoin (北毛病院) Tel: 24-1234	Fukushima-shika-iin (ふくしま歯科医院) Tel: 22-0154
1/2 (Fri)	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	Arima-clinic (有馬クリニック) Tel: 24-8818	Iizuka-shika-iin (いづか歯科医院) Tel: 22-0808
1/3 (Sat)	Saito-naika-geka-clinic (斎藤内科外科クリニック) Tel: 22-1678	Sekiguchi-iin (関口医院) Tel: 55-5122	Takano-geka-ichoka-iin (高野外科胃腸科医院) Tel: 24-2454	Smile-shika-clinic (スマイル歯科クリニック) Tel: 30-5033
1/4 (Sun)	Nakano-iin (中野医院) Tel: 22-1219	Miyukida-naika-iin (みゆきだ内科医院) Tel: 60-6070	Kato-seikeigeka-iin (加藤整形外科医院) Tel: 20-1007	Takeuchi-shika-iin (たけうち歯科医院) Tel: 25-7700
1/11 (Sun)	Kamiyama-naika-iin (神山内科医院) Tel: 22-2181	Takeuchi-shonika (竹内小児科) Tel: 30-5151	Tomaru-clinic (とまるクリニック) Tel: 26-7711	Yamashita-shika-iin (山下歯科医院) Tel: 22-0648
1/12 (Mon)	Ishikita-iin (石北医院) Tel: 22-1378	Oi-naika-clinic (大井内科クリニック) Tel: 30-5575	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
1/18 (Sun)	Shibukawa-chuo-byoin (渋川中央病院) Tel: 25-1711	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	SHUN-dental-clinic (SHUN デンタルクリニック) Tel: 25-7961
1/25 (Sun)	Otani-naika-clinic (大谷内科クリニック) Tel: 20-1881	Honzawa-iin (本沢医院) Tel: 23-6411	Otaki-clinic (大滝クリニック) Tel: 30-5800	Mitake-shika-iin (三剛歯科医院) Tel: 72-3430

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, every day between 7:00 pm and 10:00 pm.

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>

