



# SHIBUKAWA CURRENT

Shibukawa International Association

398th Edition, December 2025



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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 for the winter holiday season. Lights will be on nightly from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm starting Monday, December 1, 2025 through Saturday January 31, 2026.

## 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 24, 2026, 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 8 to Monday, December 22

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



## 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 2026 Shibukawa New Year's Concert by the Gunma Symphony Orchestra, with conductor Daichi Deguchi and saxophonist Kohei Ueno, will be held at the Shibukawa Shimin Kaikan Large Hall.

**Date and Time:** Monday, January 12, 2026, 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). Children under school age cannot attend the concert. Advance tickets are currently available for purchase through the Shimin Kaikan Box Office, either in person or by phone during normal operating hours (**Tel: 0279-24-2261**), or 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)

The event will take place at Akagi Kenko Koen (Health Park) daily from December 6 to December 25, between 5:00 pm and 8:00 pm. Visitors can enjoy beautiful light displays as well as the city's largest lighting equipment in the shape of a western-style castle, that illuminate the venue, creating a magical atmosphere. The Lighting Ceremony is scheduled to take place on the first day, December 6, from 5:00 pm to 5:15 pm, featuring organizers and guests greetings, and the lights switch-on with all participants counting down together and enjoying the moment the lights turn on.

Shibukawa City Boys and Girls Choir and Shibukawa Girls' High School Choir will be performing on the main stage before the official lighting ceremony, from 4:30 pm to 5:00 pm.

On the same day, sport and health challenges including jump rope, freestyle frisbee, and foot reflexology endurance will be held within the park from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm. Prizes will be given to participants, so please feel free to join!

Also, food and drink vendors will set up stalls from 3:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the East parking lot.

Free parking is available at the Akagi Kenko Koen parking lot.

Please note that events may be canceled due to inclement weather or other reasons.

## Tori no Ichi Fair (とり いち 酉の市)

Tori-no-Ichi fairs, also known as "rooster markets," are held on the "rooster days" of the Chinese zodiac at Otori shrines and other temples across Japan, in November or in December. These fairs feature stalls selling decorative rakes called kumade, which are believed to bring good luck and prosperity for the coming year. This tradition is a way for people to pray for good fortune, health, and success in business. In Shibukawa, Tori-no-Ichi is held from old times annually on December 16 at Yasaka jinja, a shrine that is generally quiet but gets crowded during the fair. The Yasaka Shrine Omikoshi, a city-designated tangible cultural property, and Shibusawa Eiichi's framed Japanese calligraphy "Yasaka Shrine" 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 (伊香保リンクー 一般開放)

Ikaho Ice Rink is open for the winter season! The 400-meter outdoor rink will stay open until mid-February, the first indoor rink until the end of March, and the second indoor rink until the end of February.

**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 310 yen (sizes from 15 cm to 30 cm). 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), every day except Mondays (closed the following day if Monday falls on a national holiday or the 10th), December 31, and January 1. 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 refer to the following **URL:** <http://www.gunma-sports.or.jp/>, or call to the Ikaho Ice Rink at: **Tel: 0279-72-3144**.



## Onogami Onsen Marathon (小野上温泉マラソン)

The Onogami Onsen Marathon will be held around Onogami Koen on Thursday, January 1, 2026.

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

All participants will receive an entry ticket to the Hata no Yu hot spring.

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

## Grow Your Love of Flowers - Workshop (花に親しむ体験教室)

Come and join this hands-on workshop where you'll be introduced to Yoseue, the Japanese art of group planting, and create your own colorful New Year's living floral arrangement. The workshop will be held at Dainichosha, the Shibukawa City Office's second building, on Saturday, December 20, from 10:00 am to noon.

**Limit:** 25 people (randomly selected if more than 25 people apply).

**Fee:** 2000 yen (material costs such as flower seedlings and bowls.)

**Application:** until Wednesday, December 10, by phone (**Tel: 0279-25-8307**) or online at: <http://www.logoform.jp/form/6c9p/978644>



## Free Legal Consultation for Foreigners (外国人無料法律相談)

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

**When:** Sunday, December 7, 2025 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
12/7 (Sun)	Nakano-iin (中野医院) Tel: 22-1219	Shibukawa-chuo-byoin (渋川中央病院) Tel: 25-1711	Kato-seikeigeka-iin (加藤整形外科医院) Tel: 20-1007	Sakura-shika (さくら歯科) Tel: 30-6333
12/14 (Sun)	Nara-naika-iin (奈良内科医院) Tel: 25-1155	Shinto Wakaba-clinic (榛東わかばクリニック) Tel: 20-5531	Tomaru-clinic (とまるクリニック) Tel: 26-7711	Takizawa-shika-iin (たきざわ歯科医院) Tel: 55-6480
12/21 (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	Ino-seikeigeka-rihabiri-naika (井野整形外科リハビリ内科) Tel: 30-5255	Kobuna-shika-iin (こぶな歯科医院)  Tel: 22-4939
12/28 (Sun)	Yuasa-naika-clinic (湯浅内科クリニック) Tel: 20-1311	Shinto-saito-iin (榛東さいとう医院) Tel: 54-1055	Shibukawa-iryo-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	Esu-shika (エース歯科) Tel: 55-1181
12/29 (Mon)	Iguchi-iin (井口医院) Tel: 25-1100	Sato-iin (佐藤医院) Tel: 54-2756	Sekiguchi-byoin (関口病院) Tel: 22-2378	Akagi-shika-iin (あかぎ歯科医院) Tel: 20-6522
12/30 (Tue)	Kawashima-naika-clinic (川島内科クリニック) Tel: 23-2001	Sato-iin (佐藤医院) Tel: 52-3003	Otaki-clinic (大滝クリニック) Tel: 30-5800	Meiji-shika-shinryojo (明治歯科診療所) Tel: 25-8101
12/31 (Wed)	Honzawa-iin (本沢医院) Tel: 23-6411	Okamoto-naika-clinic (岡本内科クリニック) Tel: 20-5353	Adachi-seikei-geka (あだち整形外科) Tel: 30-1170	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](mailto:sia-shibukawa@city.shibukawa.gunma.jp)**

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

