



SHIBUKAWA CURRENT

Shibukawa International Association
400th Edition, February 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.



Dear Readers,

The old Japanese name for February is **Kisaragi** which literally means "wear more clothes," to keep warm. Even if it's still cold, you can enjoy winter sports, relax in hot springs, and admire wonderful snowy scenery in Shibukawa or around the city.

February 3 is **Setsubun**, a Japanese tradition that celebrates the end of winter and the start of spring. Literally meaning the "seasonal division" it originally referred to the days before the beginning of each of the seasons, but today only the day before **Risshun**, the beginning of spring in the traditional Japanese calendar, remains as Setsubun. To celebrate the coming of spring and to drive away evil spirits, **Mamemaki**, a bean-throwing ceremony is held at Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples all over Japan. At home, many families also do Mamemaki. They open the window and throw **fuku mame** (fortune beans) toward the outside while shouting **Oni wa soto!** (evil spirits outside), then throw them inside the house shouting **Fuku wa uchi!** (good luck within!). It is believed that people will be healthy and happy if they eat the number of fuku mame equal to their age.

The days are getting longer and the cold weather is getting milder, although it still can happen to snow. February 11 is **Kenkoku Kinen no Hi** (National Foundation Day).

February 23 is **Tenno Tanjobi**, the holiday celebrating Emperor Naruhito's birthday.

After mid month, **Haruichiban** rages through the country. This is the first southern storm of the year.

Mizusawa Kannon Temple (水澤観音)

みず さわ かん のん

Mizusawa Kannon is the 16th of the 33 temples dedicated to Kanzeon, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy that are visited during the Bando Kannon Pilgrimage. Founded over 1300 years ago, the temple was designated as the place of imperial prayer by Empress Suiko.

The principal object of worship is a Eleven-Headed Thousand-Armed Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of compassion statue enshrined in the Main Hall of the temple complex. Visitors to the temple can pray for their wishes to come true by ringing the temple bell, rotating the pedestal in the Rokkakudo pagoda, a unique structure in Japan, or praying to the Kannon statue.

There is also a farmers' market and rows of stalls selling Yakimanju, the local delicacy of Gunma and other local specialties. around the temple grounds.

The street in front of the temple is known as Mizusawa Udongai, the famous Mizusawa Udon Street where over a dozen, long-established restaurants serve "Mizusawa Udon," one of the three most famous types of udon noodles in Japan.

Shibukawa City 20th Anniversary Commemorative Ceremony

(しぶかわし たんじょうから 20 しゅうねんきねんしきてん
渋川市の誕生から20周年記念式典)

A Commemorative Ceremony for the 20th Anniversary of "New Shibukawa City" will be held at Shibukawa Shimin Kaikan on Saturday, February 21, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Doors open at 9:00 am. The event includes a screening of the city PR video introducing the charms of the city and of the Shibukawa City song, "Let's All Work Together," starting from 9:15 am.

Part 1: Commemorative Ceremony

Part 2: Shibusui Festival: A special concert by the Shibukawa Citizens' Wind Orchestra and elementary and junior high school students' wind ensembles and brass band

Capacity: 250 people living, working or studying in Shibukawa, who can attend both parts. Admission is free of charge, but advanced reservations are required and on a first-come-first-served basis.

Reservations: February 1- February 12 by phone or by email to the City Secretariat. Please provide your name, address, your employer's name or your school name, if you are a student, and your contact number. For phone reservations, please call the office during their operating hours, from 8:30 am to 5:15 pm, every day except Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. (Tel: 0279-22-2110)

Email: hisyo@city.shibukawa.gunma.jp.

Children's Art Exchange Exhibition

(しまいとしじどうさくひんてん
姉妹都市児童作品展)

The Exhibition aims to convey friendship through children's paintings, further deepening cultural exchange and cooperation between Shibukawa and its sister and friendship cities. This year's exhibition will present works by children from Hawaii County and Shibukawa City, depicting all the things they love about their hometowns. Admission is free!

Where: Shibukawa City Hall Dainichosha, 2nd Floor, Ajisai Salon

When: February 20 to March 6, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, every day except Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays (Last day until 3:00 pm.)

Shibukawa Kominkan Matsuri

(しぶかわこうみんかん
渋川公民館まつり)

The event will be held at Shibukawa Kominkan from Friday, February 27 to Sunday, March 1, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, and includes:

Exhibition of works by local residents' groups: February 27 to March 1, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at Shibukawa Bijutsukan

Choral concert by Shibujo High School students: Sunday, March 1, from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, at Shibukawa Kominkan Hall

Tea party: Sunday, March 1, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm, at Shibukawa Kominkan Library

Free Collection of Used Magazines: February 27 to March 1, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, last day until 12:00 pm (Limit 3 magazines per person.)

Grow Your Love of Flowers - Workshop

(はな した たいけんきょうしつ
花に親しむ体験教室)

Enjoy seasonal flower arrangements to feel the coming of spring! This is a hands-on experience where participants will be introduced to Yoseue, the Japanese art of group planting, and create their own living floral arrangement. The workshop will be held at Dainichosha, the Shibukawa City Hall's second building on Saturday, March 7, from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

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

Fee: 2,000 yen (material costs such as flower seedlings and bowls)

Application: until Monday, February 16, by phone (Tel: 0279-25-8307) or online at: <http://www.logoform.jp/form/6c9p/978644>.



Shibukawa City Public Library Events (しづかわしりつとしよかんもよおもの 渋川市立図書館催し物)



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

- ★ **Kids Movies:** "Bunbuku Chagama" and others on Saturday, February 14 from 11:00 am to 11:30am
- ★ **Kamishibai storytelling by Story Reading Group "Moe no Ko":** "Obake Byoki ni Naru" and others on Saturday, March 7, from 2:30 pm to 3:00 pm
- ★ **Movies:** "Sore Dake ga Boku no Sekai" (That's My World), a 2018 Korean family drama comedy, on Sunday, March 15, from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Ikaho Ice Skate Rink (い か ほ スケートリンク)

Come to the Gunma Prefecture Sports Complex Ikaho Ice Rink to spend a beautiful winter day skating. The 400-meter ice rink will be open until February 28, and the indoor first rink until March 31.

Fees: Adults: 1,250 yen, 930 yen after 5:00 pm. High school students and younger: 720 yen, 510 yen after 5:00 pm. It is free for preschool children. Skate rental: 310 yen. Gloves and hats are recommended.

Opening hours: ① 9:00 am - 3:30 pm / ② 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm, everyday except on Mondays

Tel: 0279-72-3144 (Gunma Prefectural Sports Center Ikaho Link)



Filing of 2026 Income Tax Return (かくていしんこくし 確定申告のお知らせ)

Income Tax Return (Kakutei Shinkoku) is a procedure in which taxpayers report their total income earned the previous year, from January 1 to December 31, and pay or adjust their tax amount accordingly.

This year, the filing period for the final return is between Monday, February 16 and Monday, March 16.

Method: You can submit your Japanese tax return forms and documents in-person or by mail to your local tax office (Zeimusho), or you can file online via the National Tax Agency's (NTA) e-Tax system.

Under the 2025 Japan tax reforms, both the eligibility conditions and the amount for certain deductions have changed. To calculate your 2025 taxes and generate the required forms, you can use the NTA website's Final Tax Return Preparation Corner (Kakutei Shinkokusho-tou Sakusei Corner) online service.

An English guide is available to help users navigate the online tax return preparation service.

For more information please visit the NTA website at <https://www.nta.go.jp/english/index.htm>.

You can also visit your local tax office for assistance and consultation, but reservation may be required.

TEL: 0279-22-2251 (Shibukawa City Hall Tax Office)

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

Where: Isesaki City Hall, 5F Conference Room No 4, Hihashi-kan (2-410 Imaizumi-cho, Isesaki City)

When: Sunday, February 22, 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, Nepalese and Tagalog

Reservation & Inquiry: One-Stop Consultation for Foreign Residents of Gunma

Tel: 027-289-8275 (Monday - Friday, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm) / **090-1215-6113** (on February 22 only)

(Walk-ins are welcome, but priority will be given to reservations.)

On-duty Clinics in February (2月の休日当番医)

Internal Medicine		Surgery		Dentistry
2/1 (Sun)	Kawashima-naika -clinic (川島内科クリニック) Tel: 23-2001	Okamoto-naika-clinic (岡本内科クリニック) Tel: 20-5353	Takano-gekaichoka-iin (高野外科胃腸科医院) Tel: 24-2454	Fukuda-shika-iin (福田歯科医院) Tel: 23-6677
2/8 (Sun)	Sato-iin (佐藤医院) Tel: 52-3003	Itamino-clinic -Hasegawa-iin (痛みクリニック長谷川医院) Tel: 30-5055	Hokumo-byoin (北毛病院) Tel: 24-1234	Seki-shika-iin (関歯科医院) Tel: 25-0530
2/11 (Wed)	Kosei-iin (厚成医院) Tel: 22-1060	Sato-iin (佐藤医院) Tel: 54-2756	Adachi-seikeigeka (あだち整形外科) Tel: 30-1170	Ishida-shika-iin (石田歯科医院) Tel: 25-0411
2/15 (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	Shibukawa-iryō-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010	Hokkitsu-shika-shinryōjo (北橘歯科診療所) Tel: 52-3762
2/22 (Sun)	Nara-naika-iin (奈良内科医院) Tel: 25-1155	Shinto-saito-iin (榛東さいとう医院) Tel: 54-1055	Sekiguchi-byoin (関口病院) Tel: 22-2378	Hirakata-shika-iin (平形歯科医院) Tel: 22-0953
2/23 (Mon)	Shibukawa-chuo-byoin (渋川中央病院) Tel: 25-1711	Komayose-kodomo -shinryōjo (駒寄こども診療所) Tel: 55-5252	Arima-clinic (有馬クリニック) Tel: 24-8818	Funaoka-shika-iin (船岡歯科医院) Tel: 23-8211
3/1 (Sun)	Ishikita-iin (石北医院) Tel: 22-1378	Tsukagoshi-clinic (塚越クリニック) Tel: 60-7700	Adachi-seikeigeka (あだち整形外科) Tel: 30-1170	Shimizu-shika-iin (清水歯科医院) Tel: 54-3413

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 be 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: 0279-22-2463)**

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/kokusaikouryukyoukai/p000024.html>