



SHIBUKAWA CURRENT

Shibukawa International Association

403rd edition, May 2026



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Hello Everyone!

May in Japan is a month of fresh, green foliage and splendid weather, with bright and clear days called "Satsukibare", before the setting-in of the rainy season in June.

May 3 is Constitution Day (observed on May 6, May 4 is Greenery Day, and May 5 is Children's Day. These consecutive public holidays are known as Golden Week, and it is one of the country's busiest holiday periods.

Children's Day was formerly called "Tango no Sekku", a day to celebrate the growth of boys. Today, Children's Day is a day to celebrate the growth of both boys and girls. Even now families with boys raise Koi-nobori (carp-shaped streamers). This originated from a Chinese legend of strong carps that could fight their way up to the Yellow River to become dragons. Toward Boy's Day, ornaments such as Gogatsu Ningyo (warrior dolls) and Kabuto (warriors' helmets) are displayed at home, in the hope that the boys will grow as strong and healthy as warriors. Kashiwa-mochi and Chimaki are the traditional Japanese sweets are eaten on the day.

Mother's Day in Japan falls on the second Sunday of May (this year, it falls on Sunday, May 10).

May is the season for newly harvested tea. People especially prize green tea made from new tea leaves picked around Hachijuhachiya (the eighty-eighth day after Risshun, beginning of Spring). These are called "Ichiban-cha", first tea leaves and they have a wonderful flavor and fragrance.

Azalea in Nagamine Park (ながみね こうえん (長峰公園のツツジ))

Nagamine Nature Park is located along the Prefectural Road Shibukawa-Matsuida Line connecting Ikaho Onsen, hot spring town and Lake Haruna, close to Tokutomi Roka Memorial Museum. The park, covering approximately 5 hectares, offers great views of the Ikaho Onsen, Mount Akagi, and of the Kanto Plain.

In the first half of May, about 12000 beautiful Mountain Azaleas growing in the park are in full bloom, creating a blaze of color in the park. There is an observation deck at 834 meters above sea level, that overlooks the park and visitors can enjoy the elegant contrast of red flowers and new green leaves of spring, against the backdrop of Mt. Akagi and the buildings of the hot spring town. With many Manyo Kahi (monument inscribed with a poem), this park lends itself to recreation.

Peak season: from early May to mid-May



Hime-gifucho (ヒメギフチョウ)

Hime-gifucho (*Luehdorfia Puziloi*) is a butterfly of the swallowtail butterflies family, Papilionidae, found only in Japan. With black and yellow stripes on the entire wing and a purple band on the rear wing, this lovely creature adds to the color, joy and fascination of nature. Designated as a prefectural natural monument, Hime-gifucho is also known as the Spring Goddess, or the Princess of Akagi.

In April and May, the Hime-gifucho butterflies are plentiful around Mt. Akagi.



Fresh Greenery Light-up at Kajika-bashi (「河鹿橋」の新緑ライトアップ)

Located near the Kogane no Yu (Golden Hot Spring) source and Ikaho Rotenburo (open-air bath,) Kajika-bashi over the Yuzawa River is famous for its autumn foliage, but the fresh greenery in early summer is also beautiful. The area around the bridge is lit up after sunset, allowing visitors to admire the beautiful contrast of the fresh green leaves against the red bridge during the day and night. Lights will be on daily from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm, starting Tuesday, May 12 until Sunday, June 14 (lighting hours may be changed or the event may be cancelled without notice due to weather or other circumstances.). If you are coming by car, you can use the parking lot at the foot of the bridge, but there is a limited number of parking spaces. You can also use the Monokiki Parking Lot, next the Ikaho Ropeway, or the Tokutomi Roka Memorial Museum of Literature Parking Lot (charges apply).

Nishiki-e Exhibition & Tokutomi Roka Memorial Tea Ceremony

(錦絵展と徳富蘆花追悼茶会)

The Tokutomi Roka Memorial Literature Museum will display its collection of Nishiki-e, multicolored woodblock prints, starting Tuesday, May 5 to Thursday, June 25, 2026. Also, a Japanese tea ceremony will take place in memory of Tokutomi Roka on Sunday, May 17, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Japanese tea ceremony cost: 500 yen (for the Japanese confections)

Museum hours: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, every day except for Fridays

Admission fee: Adults 350 yen, elementary, junior high school, and high school students 200 yen

1000 People ROCK FES. GUNMA 2026 (1000人 ROCK FES.GUNMA2026)

Held annually at Ikaho Green Bokujo, "1000 People ROCK FES. GUNMA" is a music event bringing together vocalists, guitarists, bassists, and drummers to perform a specific song, that is set every year for all participants to learn and play together in unison. The designated song for 2026 is "Sekai no Owari" (The End of the World) by THEE MICHELLE GUN ELEPHANT. In addition, the "ROAD TO 1000 People ROCK," a community development project that introduces children to music, will be held at the same time.

Date & Time: Saturday, May 30, 2026, rehearsals begin at 11:00 am followed by the performance at 2:00 pm. If it rains, the event will be postponed to the next day, and if it rains again on the next day, it will be canceled.

Participation fee: 3,500 yen for elementary school students and above. Tickets are currently on sale at Ticket Pia or at Dust Bowl Musical Instruments stores in Gunma Prefecture.

Please check the event's official website for participation and the latest information at: <https://1000-rock.com>

"Get Closer to Flowers" Workshop

(花に親しむ体験教室)



This workshop is recommended to anyone who love flowers and plants, and wants to start Yoseue, Japanese container gardening. It will be held at Dainichosha on Saturday, May 30, from 10:00 am to noon.

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

Fee: 2000 yen (including flower seedlings and bowls cost)

Application: by phone until Friday, May 15

Tel: 0279-25-8307

Ekimae-dori Pedestrian Mall

(駅前通り歩行者天国)

The event will be held at the Ekimae-dori pedestrian precinct on Sunday, May 24, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. There will be plenty of things to enjoy like a variety of local dishes, stage performances by local entertainers, and handicraft vendors,

Registration for the 36th Gunma Marathon (第36回ぐんまマラソンのエントリー)

The marathon will be held rain or shine on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 (National Holiday) at Shoda Shoyu Stadium Gunma (within Gunma Prefectural Shikishima Park). There will be three categories:

- ① **Full Marathon** (42.195km) / Capacity: 5,500 people / Entry Fee: General (18 years and older) 13,500 yen
- ② **10km Marathon** (10km) Capacity: 4,000 people. Entry Fee: General (18 years and older) 6,500 yen / Junior and High School Students 3,500 yen
- ③ **Riverside Jogging** (~4.2km) / Capacity: 6000 people / Entry Fee: General (18 years and older), 4,000 yen / High school students and younger 2,000 yen / Junior High School Students and younger 2,000 yen

Registration: Entries are now being accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until the registration deadline, 11:59 pm, August 17, 2026, or until the capacity limit for each category is reached. To register, you must create a free RUNNET JAPAN membership account, which is required to access entry forms and manage participation. For information on how to register and make the payment, please refer to the Gunma Marathon website.

Kyudo Course Registration (弓道教室生徒募集)

Participants will learn the techniques of Japanese archery, including proper posture, handling the bow and arrow, and shooting at a target.

When: May 16 - June 20, every Tuesday and Saturday, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Where: Miyata Shokai Budokan, Kyudo-jo

Limit: 10 people (elementary school students, grade 5 and older), on a first come, first served basis

Cost: 2,000 yen (including rental of equipment such as the bow, arrows, and glove, along with insurance)

Application: May 6 to May 10, by phone to the Kyudo Club (Tel: 0279-22-0928) or to the Sport Division.

(Tel: 0279-22-2241)



Vehicle-related Taxes (自動車に関する税金)

Automobile Tax and Light Automobile Tax are due on June 1, 2026. Tax payment notification slips will be sent to all vehicle owners (registered before April 1), during the beginning of May. Payments can be made at administrative service windows, banks, the post office, or convenience stores. Bank transfers are also possible.

If you have problems with paying your vehicle tax, contact the offices below for inquiries and consultation:

Tel: 0279-22-2113 (Shibukawa City Tax Office) / **Tel: 0279-22-4050** (Shibukawa Administrative Prefectural Tax Office) / **Tel: 027-263-4343** (Gunma-ken Jidoshazei Jimusho, the Gunma Prefectural Vehicle Tax Office)

SOS Free Legal Consultation for Foreign Residents (外国人無料法律相談)

Where: One-Stop Consultation Center, 1F Showa Prefectural Building, 1-1-1 Ote-machi, Maebashi-shi, 371-0026

When: Sunday, May 17, 2026, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm (doors close at 2:30 pm)

Consultants: Lawyer, Gyoseishoshi (Immigration specialist), and Sharoushi (Labor Consultant)

Interpreters: English, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese and Nepalese

Appointments & Inquiry: One-Stop Consultation for Foreign Residents of Gunma, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, weekdays

Tel: 027-289-8275 / Tel: 090-5054-5215 (only during counselling hours)

(Priority is given to those who have appointments.)

On-duty Clinics in May (5月の休日当番医)

| | Internal Medicine | | Surgery | Dentistry |
|---------------|--|--|--|--|
| 5/3 (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 | Hokumo-byoin (北毛病院) Tel: 24-1234 | Shimamura-shika-iin (しまむら歯科医院) Tel: 20-1182 |
| 5/4 (Mon) | Shibukawa-chuo-byoin (渋川中央病院) Tel: 25-1711 | Shinto-Saito-iin (榛東さいとう医院) Tel: 54-1055 | Ino-seikei-geka-rihabiri-naika (井野整形外科リハビリ内科) Tel: 30-5255 | Yamakawa-shika-iin (山川歯科医院) Tel: 22-0260 |
| 5/5 (Tue) | Honzawa-iin (本沢医院) Tel: 23-6411 | Okamoto-naika-clinic (岡本内科クリニック) Tel: 20-5353 | Sekiguchi-byoin (関口病院) Tel: 22-2378 | Komayose-shika-clinic (駒寄歯科クリニック) Tel: 30-5500 |
| 5/6 (Wed) | Kawahisma-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 | Otaki-clinic (大滝クリニック) Tel: 30-5800 | Hoshino-shika-clinic (星野歯科クリニック) Tel: 22-0232 |
| 5/10 (Sun) | Kamiyama-naika-iin (神山内科医院) Tel: 22-2181 | Furumaki-naika-iin (ふるまき内科医院) Tel: 25-8881 | Adachi-seikei-geka (あだち整形外科) Tel: 30-1170 | Sakura-shika (さくら歯科) Tel: 30-6333 |
| 5/17 (Sun) | Ishikita-iin (石北医院) Tel: 22-1378 | Tsukagoshi-clinic (塚越クリニック) Tel: 60-7700 | Takano-geka-ichoka-iin (高野外科胃腸科医院) Tel: 24-2454 | Takizawa-shika-iin (たきざわ歯科医院) Tel: 55-6480 |
| 5/24 (Sun) | Nakano-iin (中野医院) Tel: 22-1219 | Oi-naika-clinic (大井内科クリニック) Tel: 30-5575 | Kato-seikeigeka-iin (加藤整形外科医院) Tel: 20-1007 | Fukushima-shika-iin (ふくしま歯科医院) Tel: 22-0154 |
| 5/31 (Sun) | Saito-naika-geka-clinic (斎藤内科外科クリニック) Tel: 22-1678 | Shinto-Wakaba-clinic (榛東わかばクリニック) Tel: 20-5531 | Shibukawa-iryō-center (渋川医療センター) Tel: 23-1010 | Esu-shika (エース歯科) Tel: 55-1181 |

Night Emergency Clinic (夜間急患診療所)

The clinic provides medical services daily, from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm, in cases of sudden illnesses or injuries.

Patients will be introduced to another medical institution if specialized treatment is necessary.

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/000011/000014/p001414.html>