

FESTIVALS

Oct.1 - Dec. 14 EHIME KENMIN-SOGO BUNKASAI (Ehime Pref. Cultural Festival)

愛媛県民総合文化祭

4th - 14th Art & Culture festival of disabled persons Ehime prefectural art museum
Works of disabled persons are exhibited.

July 20 - January 12 next year NATIONAL EXHIBITION OF KAMABOKO-ITA -NO-E

9:00-17:00 Closed on Tuesdays & from Dec. 28-January 3

At GALLERY SHIROKAWA Shirokawa-cho, Seiyō City 西予市城川町

The national exhibition of paintings on *kamaboko* (fish-paste) boards started about thirty years ago. This year 6,331 paintings were sent from all over the country and abroad. The painting which won the first prize this year is the one titled “*Banban hagukumu yoni* (the world where all living things are given loving care) 万万育む世に”. It was painted by Shimizu Hiroyuki 清水宏志 (78 years old) from Ehime prefecture, showing a mother woodpecker feeding her baby in the hole of a tree trunk.

Admission: Adults - ¥ 500 High school & University students - ¥ 300

Children younger than junior high school students - free

<https://www.city.seiyo.ehime.jp/miryoku/galleryshirokawa/> (0894-82-1001)

DOGO-ONSEN YEAR-END CLEANING

The Dogo bath buildings are cleaned at the end of the year so that everything will be fresh for the New Year. Big bamboo brooms about 6 and 2 meters long are used.

The baths are closed on the following days for cleaning.

2nd Dogo-onsen Honkan (Main Bath) / *Ashiyu* (foot bath) - till noon

3rd Dogo-onsen Bekkan (Bath Annex) Asuka-no-yu 飛鳥乃温泉

Tsubaki-no-yu 椿の湯

(Tel. 089-921-5141)

Dec. 8 HARI-KUYO 針供養 (Memorial Service for Needles)

Hari-kuyo was started to give women a break in the days of *danson-johi* 男尊女卑 (dominance of men over women) in the 18th century. Broken or old needles were placed at a small altar and people gave thanks to the needles' faithful service. Women did not do needlework on that day. This traditional event has been handed down as an annual event of schools for tailors, dress and *kimono* makers. In Matsuyama it is observed on Dec. 5th at Matsuyama Designer College in Tsujimachi 1-33, where about 50 teachers and students stick about 1,300 used needles into large *konnyaku* (devil's tongue) cakes at an altar, giving thanks to them and praying for better sewing skills. The priest of Shōju-ji chants a sutra and the needles are put in *Harizuka* (a burial mound for needles) at the temple.

Dec. 13 SUSUHARAI 煤払い (Soot Sweeping) Temple Cleaning at Ishite-ji 9:00

This is not only a thorough cleaning, but it has the religious significance of purification. The faithful of Ishite-ji and temple staffs clean the temple as a rite to prepare for welcoming the New Year.

Dec. 14 GISHI MATSURI 義士祭り (Faithful Retainer Festival)

A memorial service is held at Kosho-ji temple 興聖寺, in Suehiro-machi about 100m south of the Matsuyama City Station. After taking revenge for their master's death, the famous 47 *roshi*, masterless warriors of Ako fief, were divided and sent to four fiefs. Ten of the *roshi* were sent to Nakayashiki (Annex house) of Matsuyama fief in Edo. In those days it was forbidden to take revenge for their master's death so their only honorable alternative was to commit ritual suicide (*seppuku* 切腹). One samurai of Matsuyama fief helped two of the *roshi*, Otaka Gengo and Kimura Okaemon, to kill themselves (*kaishaku* 介錯) in 1706. The samurai brought back hair which had been cut from their topknots and a monument with their hair buried in it was built at Kosho-ji. A ceremony for the ten departed souls has been held every year since 1945. (Tel. 089-941-4471)

10:00 *Gishi* parade

11:00 *Uchiiri-soba* (revenge buckwheat noodles) ¥ 300

12:00 Memorial service, dedication of haiku, and *shigin* (recitation of Chinese poems)

Otaka Gengo was known as a haiku poet and his dying poem was as follows,

<i>ume de nomu</i>	梅で飲む	drinking <i>sake</i> viewing <i>ume</i> blossoms
<i>chaya mo arubeshi</i>	茶屋もあるべし	there should be a tea house
<i>shide no yama</i>	死出の山	in the other world

Mid Dec. HO-ONKO 法恩講 (The memorial service for St. Shinran 親鸞聖人)

At Enko-ji temple 圓光寺 on Gintengai Street near Matsuyama City Station

10:00 *Furofuki-daikon no Osettai* ふろふき大根のお接待 (Service of Daikon simmered in kelp broth with *yuzu* (citrus)-flavored soybean paste sauce) Fare: Free

St. Shinran (1173-1262) was a Buddhist monk of the Kamakura era (1185-1333), who founded the True Pure Land Sect (Jodo-shinshu 浄土真宗).

Enko-ji was built about 350 years ago.

In the precinct stands a circle stone slab with a haiku carved on it:

<i>Furofuki wo</i>	風呂吹を	in order to eat <i>furofuki</i>
<i>kuini ukiyo e</i>	食ひに 浮世へ	come to the transient world
<i>hyakunenme</i>	百年目	for the first time in 100 years.”

This haiku was composed by Masaoka Shiki at the 100th memorial service of Meigetsu-shonin 明月上人, the 7th priest of the temple. (Meiji 29 1896)

When Matsuyama City was established in 1889, the first city office was placed at the temple for about two years until the new office was built. In the precinct stands a stonemonument on which “the Birthplace of Matsuyama City” is written. Now there arebenches and swings for children, giving people a place to rest.

Mid to late Dec. SHIWASU 師走 (The year-end rush)

Shiwasu was the name used for December in the old days when Japan followed the lunar calendar. It is still used today to mean the last month of the year, when everybody

is very busy trying to tidy up loose ends. *Shi* in “*shiwasu*” means a teacher or master in education or the arts, or a religious leader, such as a priest. *Wasu* means to run. In other words, *shiwasu* is the time when even the teacher, who is ordinarily calm and dignified, runs around trying to get everything done.

Dec. 22 TOJI 冬至 (Winter Solstice)

Toji is the shortest day of the year. It is said that you won't get a cold or paralysis if you eat pumpkin or *azuki-gayu*, porridge with *azuki* beans, on this day. Some people take a bath with *yuzu* peel (citron).

Dec. 31 OMISOKA 大晦日 (New Year's Eve)

On this day people finish doing the yearly house cleaning and prepare *osechi-ryori*, the New year's food. Late at night people eat *toshikoshi-soba* (year-crossing buckwheat noodles) and visit temples to ring out the evils of the past year and pray for health and happiness in the coming year.

Dec. 31 JOYA-NO-KANE 除夜の鐘 (The watch-night bell)

Joya-no-kane is the ringing of temple bells just before midnight on New Year's Eve. The bells are struck 108 times to relieve the human suffering caused by people's earthly desires, which amount, according to Buddhist belief, to 108. In Matsuyama, one of the most popular temples to visit at midnight is Ishite-ji. There you ring the bell and rub smoke from the large incense burner over your body to ensure good health. Be sure the smoke is from the incense that you purchased yourself, or it will have no effect.

Closed on the last few days of the year

Government offices: Dec. 29 to Jan. 3

City service centers: Iyotetsu Takashimaya , : Dec. 29 to Jan. 4

Fuji Grand Matsuyama : Dec. 29 to Jan.4

Banks: Dec. 31 to Jan. 4

Post offices: Dec. 31 to Jan. 4

City libraries: Chuo, Hojo, Nakajima: Dec. 29 to Jan. 5

Mitsuhamma library is closed until March 31 next year for renovation.

City passport center: Dec. 29 to Jan. 4 (Fuji Gran Matsuyama Annex 2F)