

To Ishikawa Alumni Association Members,
いしかわ同窓会の皆様へ

Hello everyone! My name is Kaneko, and I am the coordinator of the Ishikawa Alumni Association (IAA). I sent you the 20th Ishikawa IAA newsletter today. This newsletter issued once every month.

Season's Greetings and best wishes for a Happy New Year.

Today, I want to introduce to you about Japanese New Year's celebration.

New Year, although "Shogatsu" means January, it is generally celebrated for the first three days or the first week of January and is the most important period for the Japanese. Schools and business close for one week or more, after about December 29th, and many people who live away from their families return home to spend this time with their families. To prepare for "Shogatsu" a general house cleaning is done, and New Year's pine and bamboo decoration, sacred straw festoon, and round mirror-shaped rice cake are set out. On New Year's Eve, bells speeding the old year are 108 times rung at temples and the New Year is welcomed by eating year-crossing noodles. On New Year's Day, many wear Japanese style Kimono and people go for the first temple or shrine visit of the New Year and pray for health and happiness in the New Year. Shogatsu is also enjoyed by reading New Year's cards and by children receiving New Year's gifts.

New Year dishes, Osechi-ryori are special side dishes eaten on the first three days of the New Year. Tiered lacquer boxes are abundantly loaded with multi-hued side dishes, grilled or boiled dishes and vinegary dishes. It appears that present-day Osechi-ryori was developed with the particular practice of keeping it as is for a while, because it is splendid to look at and also out of consideration for reducing housewives' work for three days. There are some regional differences but Osechi contents are essentially fixed. Those contents are respectively charged with wishes: for example, sea bream (Tai) is "auspicious" (medetai), herring roe (Kazu no ko) indicates "the prosperity for one's descendants" and sea tangle roll (kobu maki) means "happiness" (yorokobu).

Kadomatsu are decorations made with assembled pine branches enhanced by stems of bamboo and sprays of plum tree. During the New Year period, a pair of them, one for each side and placed in front of the house gate. In Japan pine, bamboo, and plum tree are taken as good luck, and pine in particular has been valued since ancient times as meaning longevity. Originally, Kadomatsu were for receiving the year of god.

Shimekazari decorates doors at New Year and serves as a charm against evil spirits. The sacred Shinto rope is hung to indicate a purified place for receiving divinities. The Shimekazari is made by attaching good luck charms like bitter oranges, ferns and lobster to the sacred Shinto rope.

Hatsuyume refers to the dream that occurs the night of New Year's Day to the morning of the 2nd. If it is an auspicious dream, it is said that the coming year will be a good one. Good dreams, counting from the top, are said to be about "first, Mt. Fuji; second, hawks; third, eggplant"

Zoni is a soup with rice cake (mochi) and vegetables and is an essential dish for celebrating the New Year. In the Kanto area, zoni is generally prepared as a clear

soup with square mochi, while in Kansai, it is made with bean paste and round mochi. But the seasoning and other ingredients are different according to each region and household.

Kagami-mochi is a set of two round shaped flat rice cake large and small, about 10-20cm in size stacked on a stand. At New Year, they are displayed in the alcove and offered to the Shinto and Buddhist deities. In Japan there are the old beliefs that at New Year the revered divinity known as the year god (Toshigami) visits homes and the original significance of Kagami-mochi was as worship offerings to the year god.

Nengajo, this is a card sent as a greeting for the New Year. It usually has a picture of an animal appropriately corresponding with that year's sexagenary cycle (eto) and is sent so that it arrives on New Year's Day. Japan Post cards indicating a New Year's gift are popular, because a prize is awarded by lottery. Most business Nengajo come complete with the printed contents, while writing one's own Nengajo can tax one's ingenuity. Nengajo also arrive from old friends, it is a pleasure both to write such cards and to receive them.

Otoshidama is money given at New Year to children by parents and relatives who come to visit. Originally, it was said to be a custom born from sharing rice cakes dedicated to the deities at New Year as something bestowed anew by the deities. In recent years, along with the reduced number of children, the amount of Otoshidama money given to one child is increasing. So much that it is not so strange for parents with a lot of expenses at this season to want to make a loan of the money to their children.

I am sending you this mail to inform you that there is no cause for concern in Ishikawa, and that we are all grateful to you for the concern you have shown towards Ishikawa.

We hope that many members visit Ishikawa in future. We look forward to welcoming you here again to Ishikawa.

In addition, many countries around the world have been extending their warm support to Japan, and we will never forget this.

Thank you.
Warm regards,

Ishikawa Alumni Association Secretariat

こんにちは！ いしかわ同窓会事務局の金子です。
第20回目のいしかわ同窓会ニュース・レターをお送りします。このニュース・レターは毎月1回お送りしています。

新年明けましておめでとうございます。皆様のご多幸をお祈りいたします。
今回は日本のお正月を紹介します。正月とは1月のことですが、祝う期間はふつう最初の7日間または15日までで、この期間を松の内といいます。学校や会社は12月29日から1週間ほど休みとなり、家族と離れて暮らしている人の多くも帰省して家族と一緒に過ごします。正月を迎えるにあたっては大掃除をし、門松やしめ飾り、鏡餅の準備をします。大晦日の夜には寺で108つの除夜の鐘が鳴らされ、年越しそばを食べて新年を迎えます。和服を着ることも多く、1月1日の元旦には神社に初詣に行って新年の健康と幸福を祈ります。届いた年賀状に目を通すことや、

子供にとってはお年玉をもらうことも、お正月の楽しみの一つです。

おせち料理は、正月三が日に食べる特別な料理です。漆塗りの重箱には、口取り、焼き物、煮物、酢の物、などが色とりどりに盛り付けられます。3が日くらいは主婦の家事が軽減されるようにという配慮もあって、現在のおせち料理が出来上がったようです。地方によって多少の違いはありますが、おせちの中身は大体決まっています。そして、鯛は「めでたい」、数の子は「子孫繁栄」、昆布巻きは「よろこぶ」といったように、おせちの中身にはそれぞれ願いが込められています。

門松は松の枝を組み合わせて作った飾りに竹や梅が添えられたもので、正月の間、家の門前に一対置きます。日本では松竹梅は縁起が良いとされており、特に松は古来、長寿を意味するものとして尊ばれてきました。本来門松は年神様を迎えるためのものです。

しめ飾りは正月の飾り物として、魔よけの意味があります。しめ縄は神を迎える清浄な場所を示すためのものですが、そのしめ縄をもとに橙やシダ、伊勢エビなどの縁起物をつけて作った飾りがしめ飾りです。

初夢とは、元旦の夜から2日の朝にかけてみる夢のことです。縁起の良い夢を見るとその年が良い年になるといわれ「一富士、二鷹、三なすび」というように吉夢の順番があります。

雑煮は、餅や野菜を入れた汁で、新年を祝うために正月には欠かせない料理の一つです。関東地方の雑煮は四角い餅を入れたすまし汁仕立て、関西地方は丸い餅を入れた味噌仕立てというのが一般的ですが、味付けや中に入れる具材はその地方や家庭によって異なります。

鏡餅は10~20cmくらいの大小2つの平たい丸い餅を、式台の上に重ねたものです。正月には床の間に飾り神仏に供えます。日本には、正月に年神様が家々を訪れるという古い信仰があり、その年神に鏡餅をお供えして祀ります。

年賀状は新年の挨拶のために出す書状で、その年のえとにあたる動物の絵を添えることが多く、元旦に届くように送ります。日本郵便のお年玉付き年賀はがきは、抽選で商品が当たるので人気があります。ビジネス上の年賀状は印刷した文面で済ますことも多いのですが、個人の年賀状は工夫を凝らしたものが多くあり、懐かしい友人から年賀状が届くこともあり、書くのも受け取るのも楽しいものです。

お年玉は、正月に両親や挨拶に訪れた親戚などが子供に与えるお金です。元は正月に神にささげた餅などを改めて神様から賜ったものとして各自に分け与えたことから生まれた習慣といわれていますが、近年では子供の数の減少と共に1人あたりに与えるお年玉の金額が高額化しています。この時期には出費の多い両親が子供にお金を借りたいと思っても不思議ではないほどです。

会員の皆様には、こうした石川県の状況にご理解を賜りたいと、関係資料をお送りいたします。より多くの会員の皆様に本県を訪れていただきたいと心より願っております。ありがとうございました。

私たちは、世界中の皆様より、温かいご支援を賜ったことを、決して忘れることはありません。

いしかわ同窓会事務局

Please click on the following link:
下記のリンクをクリックしてください。

News from Ishikawa Prefecture (Japanese and English)

石川県からのニュース

[http://iaa.ifie.or.jp/j/highlights/pdf/news_ishikawa_prefecture\(20111228\).pdf](http://iaa.ifie.or.jp/j/highlights/pdf/news_ishikawa_prefecture(20111228).pdf)

Reading of environmental radioactivity level by prefecture, Time series data (Graph)

(English version)

環境放射線の読み取りデータ、石川県、時系列(グラフ)

http://mextrad1.blob.core.windows.net/page/17_Ishikawa.html

石川県 環境放射線データ リアルタイム表示

<http://atom.pref.ishikawa.lg.jp/monitoring/Pages/Radiation/FormRadiationMap.aspx>

NISA Nuclear and Industrial safety Agency (English version)

原子力安全・保安院

<http://www.nisa.meti.go.jp/english/index.html>



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