

Hiroshima NOW

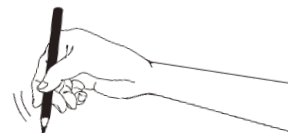
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2024

English No. 21

Useful Japanese daily
rules and customs

Tondo Matsuri



 **Featured words:**

とんど (*Tondo*)・左義長(さぎちょう // *Sagichō*)

Tondo Matsuri is a bonfire festival which usually takes place on January 15. People bring their new year ornaments to burn in a bonfire while wishing for good health and prosperity for the year. New year ornaments include decorative pines (*kadomatsu*), new year decorations (*shimekazari*), and new year calligraphy (*kakizome*).

This traditional custom was originally called *sagichō*, but there are many different names for this traditional event and each local area has its own name, such as *Tondo-yaki* or *Dondo*. In Hiroshima, it is commonly known as *Tondo*.

In Japan, it's believed that the gods known as *Toshigami* visit each home during the New Year season, providing good luck. New year decorations are made to welcome *Toshigami* at the beginning of the year and are displayed at the doors to homes, expressing to the gods that the home is ready to welcome them.

It is said that *Toshigami* return to sky in the flames of bonfires. The larger flames are, the more happiness is on the way. Besides burning the previous year's new year decorations, people also roast mochi rice cakes and eat them while wishing for good health, as well as burn new year calligraphy writings while wishing for improved handwriting.

We hope you enjoyed all the different traditional New Year events for 2024!

