

Gekkoji Neighborhood

The Gekkoji neighborhood in central Fujiyoshida has long been a popular entertainment and nightlife district. From the textile-driven heyday of the Edo period (1603–1868) to an unprecedented boom from the mid-1920s to the mid-1950s, this was where local merchants and entrepreneurs came to entertain clients and celebrate commercial success. With the internationalization of the fabric trade in the 1970s and '80s, economic and demographic changes saw the area's vitality ebb, but it remains the only true nightlife district in the Fuji Five Lakes area. The city of Fujiyoshida is now working with restaurateurs and other business owners to rejuvenate the locale as a nighttime destination, offering stress-free fun for international and domestic tourists with multilingual signage, menus, and brochures.

Shinsekai Kanpai Street

Shinsekai ("New World") Street was a narrow alleyway deep in the Nishiura back streets southeast of Gekkoji station. In the rambunctious postwar period that lasted from the 1950s to the 1970s, it was a particularly lively district, overflowing with music and revelers on a nightly basis. But visitor numbers eventually dwindled, as they did for the Gekkoji neighborhood as a whole.

In 2016, plans for revival began with an official new name: Shinsekai Kanpai (Cheers to a New World!) Street. The city of Fujiyoshida began renting restaurant and bar space to new proprietors, and magnificently weathered 1950s signage now stands alongside sleek, all-new exteriors.

The neighborhood is also home to other lanes with a similar old-fashioned atmosphere, including Million Street and Nenokami Street. Other streets in the area are also lined with restaurants, noodle houses, and bars, some still under the same management as during the postwar boom times.

Several nearby guesthouses accommodate a relatively young demographic of international sightseers, and regular events like street markets and music festivals keep Gekkoji lively.