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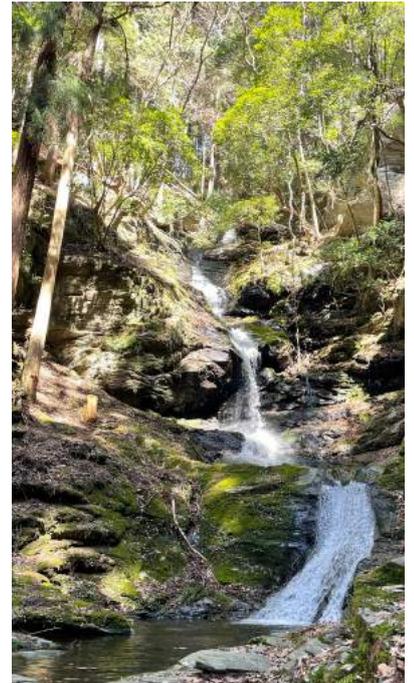


Talking with the people living in Higashi Yoshino Village, we often heard that the best part of this village is the beauty of its waters. In this article, I would like to introduce the natural charms of this place and its waters to our “Na no Ra” readers.

## Nanatakiyatsubo Falls

Higashi Yoshino Village is a village with many waterfalls. The most representative of them is Nanatakiyatsubo Falls. To go there, you first cross the suspension bridge over Shigo River, and climb up a slight slope. Then, its steadily cascading waterfalls come into view. I was left in awe of the wonderful landscape that nature had created.

This area with Nanatakiyatsubo Falls, surrounded by manmade Yoshino cedar forests, is not only one of Japan’s three most beautiful manmade forests, but also has been recognized for the purity and beauty of its waters, and, was selected in 2008 as one of the “100 Famous Waters of the Heisei Era” by the Ministry of the Environment.



According to our guide, Mr. Inoue from the Higashi Yoshino Village Office Regional Development Division, there are 7 (“nana” in Japanese) waterfalls, so there are also only 7 pools. But, in accordance with the famous Japanese proverb “Fall down seven times, get up eight” (*Nanakorobi ya oki*), it has become known as Nanatakiyatsubo. Taking a few deep breaths in this serene place, my heart was soothed, and I felt refreshed. Please visit the falls if you can.

## Yumebuchi

Yumebuchi is located in the sacred grounds of Niukawakami Shrine, which enshrines the goddess of water Mizuhanome. It is also the point at which three rivers (Takami River, Shigo River, and Hiura River) converge, forming a deep azure pool.

According to the Nihon Shoki, Emperor Jinmu visited Niukawakami to pray for victory in war. Here, legend says that he sank a sacred jar of sake in the water and watched the movements of a drunken fish, which were determined to be a sign of his victory in the battle.

Enjoying the view from the vermilion Aritooshi Bridge is nice, but you can also go down to the bank of the azure pool, so I recommend doing so in summer.



## Himukashi no Taki



Near Yumebuchi, there is a waterfall that splits into two streams of water called Himukashi no Taki (literally “Eastern Waterfall”) Falls. It is said that its name comes from being the place located to the east of the Yoshino Imperial Villa.

In front of the falls, there is a sacred rope (*shimenawa* in Japanese) that lends it a mystical atmosphere. It is said that a dragon god lives in the falls, so it is also called “Waterfall of the Dragon God”. Contrary to the West, in East Asia, dragons are associated with water, so that is why one is thought to live in this waterfall.

Also, at Niukawakami Shrine, for a donation of 300 yen you can receive a “Dragon Ball”, which is thought to remove impurities and guide the recipient to good luck. If you make a wish and blow three times into the hole in the ball, it is said that the Dragon God will grant your wish. If you visit, please try it!





## Furusato Village

Welcome to Furusato Village! This facility allows you to enjoy the nature of Higashi Yoshino Village and offers many services, starting with a camping site and lodging, and including a cafeteria, onsen bathhouse, and more.

According to Facility Manager Mr. Ichikawa, it was originally established as Yahata Elementary School in 1912, but in 1989, it was reborn as "Furusato Village" and became a lodging facility. After that, Yahata Onsen was also incorporated, and became a place for leisure activities.

The Visitor Center is a renovated nostalgic school building with over 100 years of history. Inside there is a cafeteria and a place where you can look up travel information. The Furusato Hall next to the visitor center is a lodging facility that can be used by families and groups. There are both tatami rooms and Western-style rooms, as well as a lounge for chatting.

There is also a tent site located right by the bank of Shigo River where you can enjoy camping. It seemed like a place where I could have my ideal summer day, having a barbecue with friends and swimming in the river after, then lighting sparklers at night.

At Furusato Village, the cherry blossom trees in spring, cool streams in the summer, maple and ginkgo trees in the fall, and frost in the winter mean that you can enjoy its beauty across all four seasons. Plus, with easy access to famous waterfalls like Nanatakiyatsubo Falls and Uodome no Taki Falls, as well as mountains like Mt. Isetsujiyama and Mt. Kunimi, it is also a good base for hikers. It is a facility where you can enjoy a relaxing slow-paced lifestyle, so I recommend that you pay a visit here on your next trip.



## Yahata Onsen

Established in 1995 and located next to the Shigo River, here you can enjoy the view of beautiful mountains and streams while taking a bath, which I think is perfect stress relief. There are maple and cherry blossom trees in the mountains, so depending on the season you can enjoy a different view.

The scent of ancient wood drifts up from the bathtub, and the natural granite rock bath is outfitted with a jet spa. The pride of Mr. Ichikawa is the cypress wood bathtub. Ancient cypress is a type of giant tree over thousands of years old which contains essential oils that are purportedly good for blood flow and metabolism. Every week on Wednesday the male and female bath areas are switched, so if you visit twice in a week, you can enjoy both areas.

I tried bathing in the rock bath. The special quality of the water in this bath is its weak alkalinity, which is gentle on the skin. I was able to really relax and enjoy the view of the valley from the onsen. It was so relaxing I did not want to get out! With its mountain streams,

waterfalls, and onsen, I was able to experience the magnificent great outdoors and felt refreshed. Why not experience the beautiful waters and nature of Higashi Yoshino Village for yourself?

**Guilhem Laude**



# The Mountains of Higashi Yoshino

## Experience the charms of a mountain village: Higashi Yoshino Village

Higashi Yoshino Village is filled with the beauty of nature, including the beautiful clear Takami River, and surrounded by mountains, starting with Mt. Takami. In this article, I will introduce the natural charms of Higashi Yoshino and the mountain lifestyle of the past to “Na no Ra” readers. How about taking a journey to one of Nara’s scenic mountain villages?

### Search for mountain wildlife : Japanese Wolf Statue

What kind of wildlife do you think you can find here? If you peer into the Takami River you can see freshwater fish swimming, and if you close your eyes and listen carefully, you can hear the songs of mountain birds. However, there is one animal, the former king of this land in Higashi Yoshino, that disappeared with the passage of time: the Japanese wolf.

Higashi Yoshino is famous for being the location where the last known Japanese wolf was captured. According to a Higashi Yoshino Village Office employee, in 1899, the Chairman of the Zoological Society of London planned a zoological survey of East Asia and, in 1904, Malcom Playfair Anderson, who had just graduated from Stanford University, came to Japan as one of its researchers. After surveying central Honshu, Tohoku, and Hokkaido, Anderson arrived in Nagoya on December 29th, but, as he was only able to capture mice in his traps, he decided to conduct a survey of Nara. There he received word of many hunts in Washikaguchi (present-day Higashi Yoshino Village, Ogawa) and decided to go. On his 10th day in the village, 3 villagers brought Anderson the carcass of a wolf, and, after negotiations, sold it to him for 8 yen 50 sen (around 160,000 yen in today’s currency). They could not have known that this would be the last Japanese wolf captured in Japan.

This last Japanese wolf was a young male and is currently being stored at the Natural History Museum in London. Its size is recorded as follows: head and body at 91.4cm (35.9 in), tail at 34.0cm (13.4 in), and ears at 8.6cm (3.4 in). In addition, Anderson also recorded boars, deer, and serows during his stay.

Based on this story, in 1987, a bronze statue of a Japanese wolf created by Nara University of Education professor Tadakazu Kubota was placed here, intended as a wide-ranging symbol of both the village and its hopes for nature conservation and protection. It is a spot where you can feel the history of the Japanese wolf that once lived in harmony with the mountains. Why not pay a visit to the bronze wolf statue in Higashi Yoshino Village?



### Feel the history of a mountain village:

## Higashi Yoshino Village Folk Museum

Next, I visited the Folk Museum. It uses the structure of the Former Ogawa Dai-ni Elementary School built in 1874, and the cute tiled walls of the water fountain outside paired with the quaint, sturdy wooden construction left over from its time as a school leave quite the impression. This is a facility where you can learn a lot about the history and lifestyle of the villagers.

Having once been a school, the former classrooms have been repurposed as exhibition spaces, with 4 areas in total (① Climate and History of Higashi Yoshino Village, ② Forestry Work, ③ Daily Life of Old, and ④ Festivals). Out of all of the pieces on exhibit, the one I found to be the most interesting was a large mortar and pestle.



*Karausu* (or large mortar and pestles) are a tool used in the traditional making of mochi (rice cakes). They are operated with 2 people, with one person on the left side holding down the pedal with their foot using all their strength to raise the wooden mallet, and the other on the right side shaping the mochi with the pestle while the mallet is raised. When the first person steps off the pedal, the wooden mallet falls down, pounding the mochi.

This process was repeated to create mochi. Although with the passage of time it has become rare to see this method being used, I feel that it is an important tradition in mountain life and Japanese culture.

## Enjoy mountain cuisine: Kinoko no Yakata

Our final stop was “Kinoko no Yakata”, a restaurant specializing in mushrooms. Looking at the outside, the first thing you notice is the large mushroom sign. Heading to the front, I was greeted with a big smile by Hiroyuki Oomae, the owner. First, I sat down with Mr. Oomae for an interview about the restaurant and life in Higashi Yoshino Village.



### 1. How many years has it been since the restaurant opened? What made you want to open a restaurant in Higashi Yoshino Village?

The previous owner ran the restaurant here for 20 years, and it's been a year since I took over as the 2nd generation owner after him. I moved here from outside the prefecture, and previously worked in a railway-related job in Higashi Osaka, but I was interested in rural life and growing mushrooms, so I took over the restaurant from the former owner.

### 2. How many types of mushrooms do you have?

We have over 10 varieties including shimeji, shiitake, *hiratake* (oyster mushrooms), and *numerisugitake* (chestnut mushrooms), and all are grown here in-house.

### 3. Do you receive a lot of tourists? Around what time of year is the peak season?

We receive tourists from many countries. We've had a lot of French, Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese customers, and the peak season is the cherry blossom season. We just had a French tourist at the restaurant a little while ago.

### 4. What kind of place is Higashi Yoshino Village to you?

It's a place that's rich in nature and has lots of friendly people. There are a lot of foreign residents, such as a potter from America, and one from Australia.

### 5. When visitors come from abroad or from other prefectures, is there anything you'd like them to know about Higashi Yoshino Village?

I would like them to know about the history of Higashi Yoshino Village, in particular about the Tenchu-gumi. The Tenchu-gumi, a group of samurai at the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate, fled from the Shogunate government and ended up in present-day Higashi Yoshino Village. There is a monument commemorating them here.

After the interview, I enjoyed the mushroom hot pot set meal. The set includes mushroom rice and 3 types of pickled mushrooms. In the hot pot, mushrooms like shiitake, shimeji, and *hiratake* were piled to the brim. Since there was no meat or tofu, I was expecting the broth to lack flavor, but I was surprised by its richness. I often make hot pots at home, so it inspired me to want to make a mushroom hot pot.

“Kinoko no Yakata”, a shop with a long history loved by customers from around the world and locals alike. Thanks to the warm hospitality of the owners, I had the feeling of being at a relative's house and became immersed in our conversation, losing track of the time. If you come to Higashi Yoshino Village, please visit “Kinoko no Yakata” and enjoy the many delicious mountain foods that you can only find here.

**Samantha Johnson**





One of the most famous products from Nara Prefecture is Nara-zuke. Nara-zuke is a variety of kasu-zuke made by pickling food with sake kasu (lees). In this issue, I visit Ota Sake Brewery (a local brewery in Ikaruga Town, Nara Prefecture) to learn more.

## Nara-zuke (Nara pickles)

The oldest record of Nara-zuke dates back to wood scrolls recovered from excavation at the Heijo-kyo Palace Site, where it is referred to as kasu-zuke. Its origins are in the practice of drinking the top, clear liquid of doburoku (unrefined sake): the rest was used to pickle and preserve vegetables. Later, in the Muromachi period, sake lees began to be used, leading to the creation of the Nara-zuke we know today. Sake brewing and kasu-zuke were both originally used only by the elite, but today Nara-zuke is loved by many as a Nara souvenir. Its development is credited to a Nara doctor by the name of Sousen Itoya, who first sold melons pickled in sake lees as “Nara-zuke”. It became very popular, and when Tokugawa Ieyasu visited during the Siege of Osaka, he enjoyed it. After that, Itoya went to Edo to oversee production of Nara-zuke for the Edo bakufu, and gave up being a doctor to become its official govt.-appointed merchant.

## Ota Sake Brewery

In this issue, we visited Ota Sake Brewery in Ikaruga Town. The brewery was founded in 1869 and has a long history as one of Nara’s oldest sake breweries. In addition to local sake, they also use the sake lees produced in the making of their sake to make Nara-zuke. As you can see in the picture, the brewery is an old building with a lot of history built in the late Edo period. Its 6 wings (main room, tearoom, storeroom, cabin, southern and western warehouse) were designated in April 2001 as Tangible Cultural Heritage. Upon closer inspection, there are no nails used in the construction of its pillars: instead, the wood has been fitted together, a method from the past. At Ota Sake Brewery, unlike most sake breweries, you can participate in a Nara-zuke creation workshop using local vegetables.



Although the Nara-zuke you make in the workshop cannot be consumed until after a year, the ability to look forward to the fruits of your effort is one of the workshop’s charms. This time, I was given a tour by 5th-gen brewer Michiaki Ota. Entering the Nara-zuke pickling facility, I was stunned by the number of Nara-zuke barrels. In total, Ota said that there are roughly 1,000 barrels, ranging from 3 to 10 years old. Since the flavor of Nara-zuke changes with age, people’s

preferences vary. At Ota Sake Brewery, they make it using melons, cucumbers, daikon, and ginger, but the most representative of these is melon. In terms of how to make Nara-zuke, taking the example of melon, first melons are cut in half and de-seeded. Once this is done, salt is added, and it is allowed to sit for 10 days. The melons are then put into the sake lees. This way, the umami is transferred into the fruit, and you can adjust the flavor. In order to achieve the best texture and flavor, it is necessary to regularly change out the sake lees.



Flavor is enhanced with high-quality lees, sugar, shochu, and mirin, but no preservatives, artificial flavors, or colors are added, making it a natural product. Although the production process is long, Ota emphasized that no effort is spared in its creation. In this way, he hopes that the delicious Nara-zuke produced here speaks for itself in one tasting.

Tasting the Nara-zuke made at Ota Sake Brewery myself, I could discern the rich aroma and saltiness, contrasted with a slight sweetness. The texture is crisp and delicious. I felt that it would make for a great palate-cleanser during a meal. I’d heard that Nara-zuke is a polarizing food, but while it was my first time trying it, I would recommend it to others.

If you’ve never had Nara-zuke before, come try a taste of the Edo period for yourself at Ota Sake Brewery. Your favorite kind of Nara-zuke would make for a great souvenir.





Ikaruga Cultural Heritage Center opened in March 2010 as a site for the survey, research, and promotion of the history and culture of Ikaruga Town. Here, you can learn about the artifacts at Fujinoki Tumulus through replicas, see video of the excavation and descriptions of the artifacts, and learn through visuals about the cultural properties of Ikaruga Town starting with Horyuji Temple.

## What is Fujinoki Tumulus?

Fujinoki Tumulus is located in Ikaruga Town, Ikoma-gun, Nara Prefecture, and has been designated as a national historic site. In 1985, Ikaruga Town began an excavation of the site for academic research purposes. Once the digging began, they discovered a vermilion house-shaped sarcophagus inside of a large horizontal stone chamber. There were two people entombed in the elaborate sarcophagus, which was rare in Japan, leading it to become national news in 1988. A study of the bones found that the individual entombed in the north side was a male between the ages of 17 and 25, and the lower-body of the individual in the south side was from a person between the ages of 20 and 40.

However, the gender of the second person could not be confirmed, and while there are many theories as to identity of the individuals, they are also not known. In ancient Japan, crimes or faux pas involving burial rites were known as “Azunahi-no-tsumi”. As an example, if individuals of the same gender were buried together, this would have been considered Azunahi-no-tsumi. Also, as mixed gender combined burials were also not practiced in Japan, this burial is truly an unsolved mystery. In most horizontal stone chamber tombs, the sarcophagus is inserted vertically from the passage, and is then turned ninety-degrees within the space. However, in the case of Fujinoki Tumulus, since the sarcophagus could not be turned from inside, it is evident that the stone hut was built around it. The passage leading to this burial room has been recreated inside the exhibition wing of the Heritage Center, so why not imagine that you’re entering the tomb?



## Gilt bronze saddle fittings



At the time of its discovery, another reason that Fujinoki Tumulus became big news was the condition of the relics found inside without indication of illegal digging. While most tombs fall prey to grave robbery, records suggest that Fujinoki Tumulus was protected by the local temple and community members. One of the representative relics uncovered from Fujinoki is the gilt bronze saddle fittings. These are often referred to as “the most elegant in the world”. Even when considering other equestrian societies throughout east Asia, this kind of fine openwork technique has yet to be found elsewhere. Although I had seen similar gilt-bronze shoes in King Munyong’s Mausoleum in Korea, as well as bronze crowns and swords, I had never seen this kind of saddle fitting. With these kinds of burial accessories, it is clear that whoever was buried here had great power and influence.

Another unique feature of these saddle fittings is the image of an elephant in the metalwork. Although wild elephants did not exist in Japan, it is clear that the individual who created the fitting was familiar with them due to the details of the wrinkles around the eyes, curve of the trunk, and its pose. Looking at these details, it is possible that the design was brought over from the Chinese continent. Finding details like the landscape, waterfalls, and lions hidden in the accessories is another way to enjoy them.



In the Heritage Center, one can find reproductions so real they almost look like the real thing, as well as explanations that are easy to understand for kids and adults alike. This is a wonderful facility where you can not only find historical information about the Fujinoki Tumulus, but also learn about the history of Japan and East Asia. If you’re a fan of Japanese and East Asian history, I think it would be fun to ponder the theories surrounding this tomb while touring the facility. History buffs, definitely pay a visit to the Ikaruga Cultural Heritage Center! (Photos : Ikaruga Cultural Heritage Center)



Along the path to Ikoma Shoten and Hozan-ji, there is a place called "Herb Workshop Hozan". Around the studio, in addition to herbs, there is a garden with various plants. In this issue, I participate in an essential oil distillation experience while having a chat with Ms. Kumiko Sato, the instructor of the workshop.

## Into the world of herbs



Through the studio's core concept of "kindness to people and the planet through herb life", I was able to learn about plants more generally. Among the things I learned is the idea of using the plants around us in daily life for medicinal purposes. For example, the chameleon plant (or "fish mint") is a type of weed that doesn't seem apparently useful, but like ginger and onion, it contains components that are good for the body. When dried and consumed as a tea, it is said to have the effect of clearing toxins from the body from the inside-out. Also, when the leaves are applied directly on the skin, it is said to be effective in treating insect bites.

## Experiencing the world of herbs

In this workshop, we used the rosemary that decorated the entrance to the studio and, through a process called steam distillation, extracted the essence. Rosemary (*Salvia rosmarinus*) has antioxidant properties, which is why it is called a rejuvenation herb. To begin the process of steam distillation, you place the rosemary in a sealed container, apply heat (steam), and release the resulting vapor which contains the essence that will become the essential oil. As there are over 200 kinds of essences and the components and fragrances that can be extracted differ between high- and low-temp heating, it is critical to monitor the temperature and duration when heating. Next, when the vapor is cooled, the difference in density causes it to separate into two distinct layers consisting of herb water (aromatic distilled water) and essential oil. According to Ms. Sato, the herb water's fragrance changes with time.



## Enjoying the world of herbs

Also, during the workshop, Ms. Sato treated us to her homemade herb jelly. Ms. Suzuki, who had come to the workshop to help out, shared that the herb jelly is made from a blend of rosehips and hibiscus. Rosehips contain vitamin C, while hibiscus is full of citric acid, hibiscus acid, and other acidic compounds. The two herbs complement each other very well. When combined, one can expect synergistic effects beneficial for health and beauty.



Since I'm interested in gardening, I asked Ms. Sato and Ms. Suzuki to give me a tour of the workshop's garden. In the garden there are over 400 kinds of plants, but I was surprised that no matter which one I pointed to, Ms. Sato was able to describe it in detail. Among them, there was the Aromaticus plant (aka Mexican mint) known for its strong aroma, Haworthia, a succulent currently trending with young people, and many others that she grows herself. When I asked why she grows so many kinds of plants, she answered that oranges, apples, persimmons, mugwort, geraniums, chameleon plants, and other botanicals with uses for people can all be thought of as friends to herbs, so she likes to grow them to make use of their various qualities.

The relationship between plants and humans has continued unbroken since ancient times, and herbs have continued to play an important role deeply rooted in daily life. Plants aren't just pretty to look at, but also have uses in perfumes and for health and beauty. I was impressed by Ms. Sato for including herbs in her daily life and for her spiritual lifestyle. At "Herb Workshop Hozan", you can enjoy crafts involving herbs such as potpourri creation, and they even offer gardening consultations. In January 2024 the workshop will be renovated. Once the new restrooms and heating installation is complete, it will be an even more pleasant experience to participate. I highly recommend a visit to "Herb Workshop Hozan" to anyone interested in herbs.

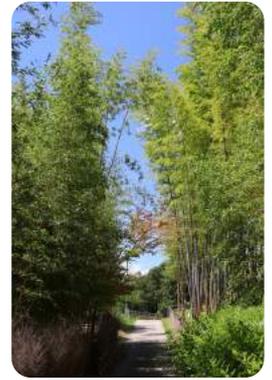




In this article, I pay a visit to the Takayama Bamboo Garden, known as the most famous production area for tea whisks in Japan, to find out why tea whisk creation is such a thriving industry here.

## The Origin of Takayama Tea Whisks

The origins of the “Takayama tea whisk” lie in the mid-Muromachi period, when the chief priest of Shomyo-ji Temple (Shobuike-cho, Nara City) and purported creator of “wabi-cha”, Juko Murata, requested that the son of the lord of Takayama Castle at the time create a tool to stir tea with. Through patrilineal descent, the secrets of tea whisk creation were passed down through the generations to the present-day, and Takayama remains the only area where these tea whisks are produced.



## Tea Whisk Creation Demo



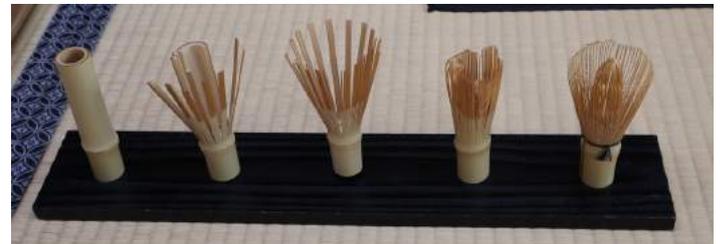
Every Sunday at Takayama Bamboo Garden, as part of efforts to promote traditional Japanese crafts, there is a demo in which participants can watch traditional tea whisk creation at the hands of master craftsmen from the Takayama Tea Whisk Production Cooperative. On the day I visited, I was able to watch a demonstration by craftsmen Yasaburo Tanimura and his son Keiichiro Tanimura, both from the tea whisk workshop “Suikaen Tanimura Yasaburo”.



To strengthen the fibers inside, it is necessary to first age the bamboo used for the tea whisks for 3 years. The aged bamboo is cut in the cold winter months from December to January to remove oils, then boiled in an iron pot. After that, it is dried outdoors for 2 months and, once it turns white, put in storage for an additional 2-3 years. I was surprised by how long it takes just to prepare for tea whisk creation.

There are 8 steps in production. The most important and most difficult is aji-kezuri, in which the inner bamboo skin is shaved from the root to the tip so that the tips become thinner than a strand of hair. It is important to be careful so as not to cut the tips. During this process,

the craftsman also considers how they would like to bend the tips, as you can create a variety of shapes. Mastering just one step in the creation process can take between 2 to 3 years, so it takes a minimum of 15 years to learn the entire process.



The type of tea whisk is based on how many tips there are. Whisks with around 80 tips are referred to as “80-tip,” while those with 100+ are called “100-tip whisks”. The whisk’s shape changes over time. Even using the same whisk, the first cup and the 100th cup will taste different. If the same whisk is used many times, it becomes harder to create foam in the tea, and it can bring the temperature down. In keeping with the tradition of ichi-go ichi-e (one time, one meeting) in tea ceremony culture, sometimes a whisk may only be used once. Used tea whisks are not thrown out, but instead ceremonially

burned at the Nara Prefectural Takayama Tea Whisk Production Coop to express gratitude. In this issue of Na no Ra, I was deeply moved by the “craftsman’s spirit” I felt here. In order to become a skilled craftsman, one must work hard to polish his craft over many years. It is this spirit that has formed the pillars supporting the growth of the Japanese economy.

## In Conclusion

When Mr. Tanimura told me the Heon bamboo, which blooms once in 120 years, was in bloom in the Bamboo Garden, I knew this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I was able to whisk matcha with a Takayama whisk in a tearoom while viewing the garden. Though my first try was a little bitter, I felt very relaxed and had a great experience.



# Editorial



**Guilhem Laude • Left**

The clear rivers that glisten with light filtered through deep Yoshino cedar forests, the azure pool of Yumebuchi filled with sunlight, and the white stones of the riverbank made bright from the strong rays, all of these views of Higashi Yoshino Village left a strong impression on me. I was also humbled by the kindness of the villagers, and thanks to their hospitality, I enjoyed my time in Higashi Yoshino.

Next time, I would like to try climbing Mt. Takami, also known as the “Matterhorn of Western Japan”. Why not take a stroll through Higashi Yoshino Village yourself?

**Samantha Johnson • Below**

As explored in this issue, Higashi Yoshino Village has a clear identity, and the cute PR mascot of the village “Hiyoshi-chan” embodies all of the elements of this identity, including onsen, mountains, cherry blossoms, and the Japanese wolf. Born in 2013, Hiyoshi-chan continues to serve as a symbol of the village today. To cap off your trip, why not buy a Hiyoshi-chan plushie or try out one of Higashi Yoshino Village’s specialties, taamen noodles?



**Lee Youngme • Above**

When you hear "Ikaruga Town", most people think of Horyuji Temple, but through visiting Ota Sake Brewery built in the Edo period and participating in a tour and Nara-zuke workshop experience, I was able to experience firsthand the traditional culture and charm of Nara that has been preserved in Ikaruga Town since ancient times. In addition, by taking a closer look at the elaborate replicas of burial accessories from Fujinoki Tumulus, I could feel the close ties between Korea and Japan. If you'd like to learn more about the charms of Nara, why not pay a visit to Ikaruga Town?

**Xiong Yafang • Right**

In this issue, I visited "Herb Workshop Hozan" and heard more from the staff there while trying my hand at creating rosemary water. At Takayama Bamboo Garden, I watched a demo of tea whisk creation and was impressed by the long hours the craftsmen spend meticulously polishing their craft with all their might. Since there are many charming facilities in Ikoma, I recommend those interested in cultural experiences to pay a visit and, while interacting with the locals, experience the unique charms Ikoma has to offer!



# Past Issues

Issue	Publication Period	Featured Area	Article Information
1	Jan 2014	Soni Village & Mitsue Village	Soni Highlands、 Pottery in Soni Village、 Rural life in Nara, etc.
2	Aug 2014	Yamato Koriyama City	Goldfish scooping in Koriyama City, Koriyama Goldfish Museum, Indigo dyeing, etc.
3	Feb 2015	Tenkawa Village	The Shugendo tradition, Hot springs, Daranisuke traditional medicine, etc.
4	Aug 2015	Ikoma City	Kinki Nihon Railways (Inc.), Hozanji Temple, Ikoma Sanjo Amusement Park, Sekibutsuji Temple, Ueda Syuzou (Inc.), Kuragari Pass, Hygge, Kanon Guesthouse, etc.
5	Feb 2016	Asuka Village	Asuka Guesthouse, Asukadera Temple, Asuka Yumeichi, Asukakyo Tourism Association, Okadera Temple, Tachinbanadera Temple, Nara National Man`yo Centre, etc
6	Aug 2016	Katsuragi City	Kehayaza, Sumo Museum, Takenouchi Kaido, Chujo-do, Taimadera Temple, Taima Yamaguchi jinja Shrine, Sekkoji Temple, etc
7	March 2017	Yoshino Town	Kimpusenji Temple, Umetani Brewery, Mt. Yoshino, Nakai Shunpu-do, Fukunishi Washi Honpo, etc
8	Sep 2017	Uda City	Torimiyama, Murouji Temple, Onoji Temple, Uda Animal Park, Méli-mélo, etc.
9	March 2018	Gojo City	Kaki Museum, Kaki no senmon ishi, Takagamo Shrine, Patisserie client, Baaku, Bakery Yum Yum, Mt. Kongo, Eizenji Temple, Otonashi River, Kongoji Temple, The phantom railroad, etc
10	Sep 2018	Nara City	Yagyū Road, Yagi Brewery Co., Ltd., Cherry blossoms, Nara tea ceremony, etc
11-12	March 2019 Feb 2020	Totsukawa Village	Tanize Suspension Bridge, Seino Waterfall, The longest Japanese bus route (Yashingu Route), Tosenji Hot Springs, Totsukawa Village Folk Museum, Hotel Subaru, Hatenashi Village/Kohechi, Tamaki jinja Shrine, Farm-inn Yamato, KIRIDAS.
13-14	June 2020 Nov 2020	Tenri City & Sakurai City	Head Temple: Hasedera, Haseji, Tenri Station CoFuFun Square, Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail, Nara Prefecture Historical and Artistic Culture Complex, Tenri University Sankokan Museum, Jantako Tenri, Omiwa Shrine, Rose no Kabin
15	July 2021	Places in Nara Connected to Shaanxi (China) and Chungcheongnam-do (Korea) Partner Regions (Special Issue)	Heijo Palace, Mt. Mikasa, Shoso-in Temple, Nara National Museum, Takamatsuzuka and Kitora Tombs, Takamatsuzuka Mural Museum, Yakushiji Temple, Asuka-dera Temple, Ishibutai Kofun, Amakashi-no-Oka, Asuka Historical Museum, Horyuji Temple, Chuguji Temple, Gangoji Temple, and Hannayaji Temple
16-17	June 2022 Dec 2022	Kashihara City & Asuka Village	Kashihara Jinguu Shrine, Kumadera Temple, Imai-cho (Machinami Koryu Center "Hanairaka", Former Kometani Family Residence、 Café Mutsuki), Mizutani Kusakizome, Mendoya, Stone tour, Farmhouse "Kotorian"

Previous issues can be downloaded here:  
<https://www.pref.nara.jp/33842.htm>



# What is “NanoRa”?

"Na no Ra" is made up of articles about places in the prefecture that we, as foreign residents ourselves, visited and thought would be of interest to both visitors from overseas and the local Nara community. We hope it will be of some interest and serve to help everyone discover the charm that Nara holds.

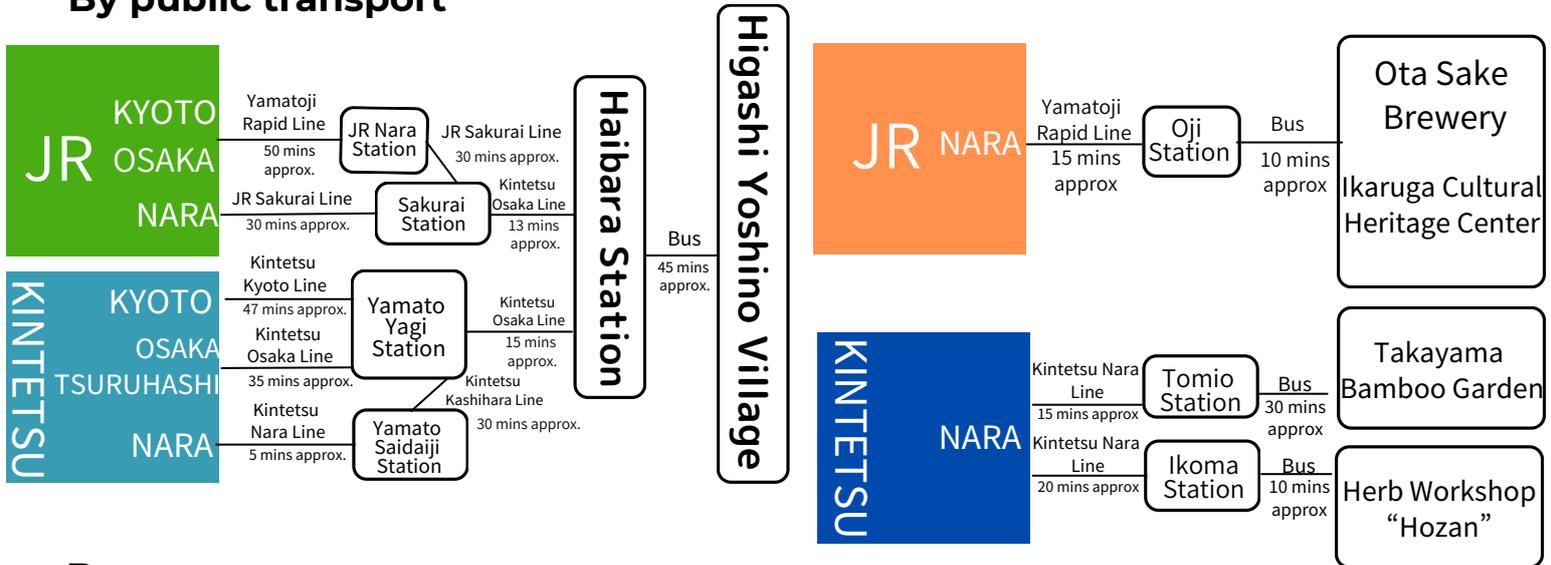
## Special Thanks

In this issue, we would like to sincerely thank Mr. Kazuhiko Inoue from the Regional Development Division of the Higashi Yoshino Village Office, Ms. Honoka Inoue of the Higashi Yoshino Village Board of Education, Furusato Village Facility Manager Mr. Kenji Ichikawa, Mr. Hiroyuki Oomae of "Kinoko no Yakata", Mr. Ota from Ota Sake Brewery, Mr. Hirata from the Ikaruga Cultural Heritage Center, Ms. Sato from Herb Workshop "Hozan", Ms. Suzuki, Mr. Osada from Takayama Bamboo Garden, and Messrs. Yasaburo and Keiichiro Tanimura from Suikaen for their cooperation.



## Access

### By public transport



### By car

from Osaka: 1 hr. 40 mins approx.  
 from Kyoto: 1 hr. 50 mins approx.  
 from Nara: 1 hr. 30 mins approx. } to Higashi Yoshino Village

from Osaka: 45 mins approx.  
 from Kyoto: 1 hr. 15 mins approx.  
 from Nara: 40 mins approx. } to Ikaruga Town

from Osaka: 40 mins approx.  
 from Kyoto: 1 hr. 10 mins approx.  
 from Nara: 30 mins approx. } to Ikoma City

### NanoRa

**Publisher** : International Affairs Division,  
 Office of the Governor, Nara Prefectural  
 Government

**Date of Publication** : March 2024

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 this publication, please contact us.

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