


# Na no Ra

## Issue 13

# Tenri City and Sakurai City

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**Walking at your own pace while discovering all the charms the city has to offer**

Located in the northern part of Nara Prefecture and easily accessible by train from Nara City lay the cities of Tenri and Sakurai. Since you can easily walk to most places in the cities from the local train stations I would definitely recommend both cities to those who enjoy hiking, strolling, exploring local city streets, or to those who want to stop and take time to soak in the scenery throughout their trip.

This time round I wanted to do a feature on Sakurai City’s “Head Temple: Hasedera”, a lovely place with various flowers that you can enjoy all year round, “Haseji”, an eatery with strong historical ties and many cultural properties, where you can easily relax and enjoy Matcha tea and food and Tenri City’s “Tenri Station CoFuFun Square”, a complex situated in front of the station.

**Head Temple: Hasedera - A temple with various flowers that you can enjoy all year round**

Hasedera Temple with its long history possesses many different kinds of flowers that all bloom at different times during the year. Many people come to Hasedera Temple for worship and to look at these flowers.

It’s a 20 minute walk along the path from Kintetsu Hasedera Station to Hasedera Temple. In front of your very eyes you can marvel at the sight of the blooming cherry blossoms, which are there to greet you. Dyed in the colours of spring, you can feel Hasedera’s strong life force from the refreshment of spring, along with the endurance it displays against the cold. At Hasedera Temple or the “Flower Temple”, as it is so often called, you can enjoy several distinct flowers and plants all year round. Spring boasts cherry blossoms, peonies and rhododendrons, summer brings with it hydrangeas. During autumn there are maple leaves, and from winter to spring there are plum blossoms and camellias. You can enjoy the different faces of Hasedera brought about by the changing colours of the flowers found on the temple grounds. A lot of people come during peony season, which is especially beautiful.



In addition, the beauty of Hasedera increases even further when the leaves change colour in autumn. I did not see Hasedera for myself during this period, as I visited during the spring, but the French Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) showed me the pictures she took during her trip in autumn of last year. The temple grounds were wrapped in the colours of autumn giving Hasedera a mystical atmosphere.

Although I have yet to witness Hasedera for myself when the leaves change colour, it’s beauty is sufficiently conveyed through these pictures. This autumn I definitely want to go see this Hasedera for myself.

Why don’t you try taking a walk through Nara’s long history while looking at flowers?

Location: Nara Prefecture, Sakurai City, Hase 731-1, 633-0112

Access: 20 minute walk from Kintetsu Hasedera Station

Website: <https://www.hasedera.or.jp/>



(Pictures of Hasedera Temple during the autumn season: Provided by Véronique Denis-Laroque)

**Haseji- Spend some time with many cultural properties in a place with strong historical ties**

Along the path to Hasedera Temple, is an eatery that harbours prestigious cultural properties. You can feel the long history that Haseji has to offer right from its door step. As soon as you pass through the gate right there is a beautiful garden right before your eyes.

It was Mr. Yamada who showed me around and kindly provided me with information for this part of my article. This private residence was built in the middle of the Taisho Period (1912-1926) and in 2000 its main building, tea house, gate, annex, storehouse and wall were all designated as cultural properties and recorded by the Agency for Cultural Affairs.



According to Mr. Yamada, a long time ago, this part used to be one of the main roads to Ise in Mie Prefecture, just like the Ise Kaido Road, and it used to be quite busy with people from different areas going to pay their respects at the temple.

From the end of the Edo Period (1603 – 1868) sake has been sold here, and continues to be sold at “Yamada Saketen”, a shop specialising in selling local Hase sake, situated right beside Haseji.

Due to the large number of tourists that come to visit the famous flower temple, Haseji is busy all year around. In particular the peony season in spring and during the autumn when the leaves change colour, are when not only many Japanese tourists, but also many foreign tourists such as tour groups from South Korea and China, as well as travellers from Europe and America.

On the first floor is the “Woodblock Print Store House” that’s open to public viewing for a small fee. This time I was given a special look. In the storehouse there are famous woodblock prints and books on display from famous artists such as Shiko Munakata, Yasunori Taninaka, Takashi Ono and Keisuke Miyazaki. I was so surprised to see such delicate prints. They told me that many people come not just for the food and drink, but also to come and see all of the prints in this section.

After speaking with Mr. Yamada I had some matcha tea and Japanese sweets. Being able to spend time in this old private residence’s quiet Japanese style room, which is something I couldn’t ordinarily do, made me feel like I had a place to relax before beginning the rest of my journey. Enjoying matcha while gazing at the courtyard, really made my trip feel even more luxurious and special.

I recommend spending some time relaxing in this prestigious, old private residence, which is along the path to Hasedera Temple.

Location: Nara Prefecture, Sakurai City, Hase 857, 633-0112  
 Access: 10 minute walk from Hasedera Station on the Kintetsu Osaka Line

Business Hours: 11:00 ~ 16:00  
 Holidays: No scheduled holidays (April/May/November without holidays)  
 Website: Haseji (Japanese only)

 <http://www5.kcn.ne.jp/~haseji21/>   
 <http://nara-haseji.com/>

## Tenri Station CoFuFun Square –Enjoy a bustling area in front of the station

Right in front of JR/Kintetsu Tenri Station is the “Tenri Station CoFuFun Square”. For those who are paying a visit to Tenri it’s a great place to stop by at your leisure.

The square itself was designed with the large number of tombs in Tenri City in mind.

Various artists hold performances that convey Japanese culture, and companies do promotions and advertise on the outdoor stage. Inside there are English classes and yoga lessons, craftwork activities among other things are carried out. There’s also the “CoFuFun Marche”, a market where fresh vegetables and special products are sold from Tenri City and Nara Prefecture.

Through the CoFuFun Square and the opening of the market, the exchanges between people are deepened and the city becomes more energetic and bright, which is linked to the city’s revitalisation.

At the “Info & Lounge Cofun” you can find a tourist bureau, the “Park Side Kitchen” and a shop specialising in selling, repairing and renting bicycles. In the tourist bureau you can find tourism brochures on Nara and some books that you are free to browse. It was lunch time when I arrived at CoFuFun, so I ordered from the lunch menu at “Park Side Kitchen”. I ended up eating a healthy meal, made from fresh, Nara vegetables that was quite delicatble.



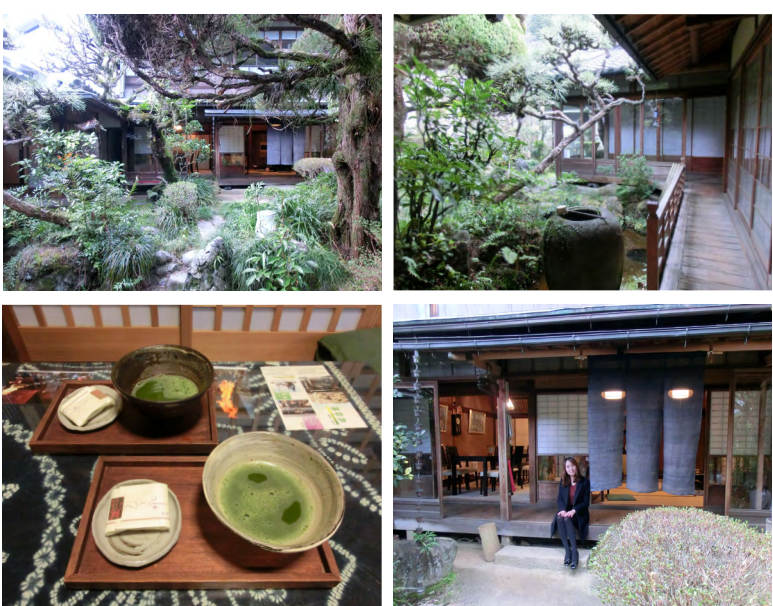
Next, I went to the “CoFuFun Shop”, a special souvenir shop where wooden products such as chopsticks are sold, as well as socks, magnets in the shape of burial tombs, vegetables from Tenri City and Nara Prefecture, green tea and products made in either Tenri City or from within Nara Prefecture. According to those working at the shop, Tenri-based products account for 70 percent of all products being sold, many of which are made by people and students in Tenri City’s welfare institution and the local special needs school. It seems that chopsticks and Chinese zodiac ornaments are particularly popular with foreigners. Why not pop into the CoFuFun shop on your way home and buy a little souvenir?

Try stopping by CoFuFun in the middle of your journey and enjoy the bustling space!



Location: Nara Prefecture, Tenri City, Kawahara Jocho 803, 632-0016  
 Access: Right in front of JR/Kintetsu Tenri Station  
 Website: Tenri Station CoFuFun Square (Japanese only)

<https://cofufun.com/> 



# Tracing the Path of the Manyoshu Poets on the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail

Last year, after three decades the Heisei Era (1989-2019) came to a close a new era, Reiwa, was ushered in. “*Reiwa*” which means “Belle Harmonie” in French and “Beautiful Harmony” in English, derives from Japan’s oldest anthology of Japanese poetry or *Waka*, the *Manyoshu*. This is the first time that an era’s name has been quoted from a Japanese classic. Up until now the Japanese eras have originated from Chinese classics.

The Manyoshu, Japan’s oldest anthology of poems, contains more than 4500 poems composed by various poets from Japanese Imperial Emperors to commoners. Although it remains largely unknown as to when exactly the 20 volume anthology was compiled, it is said that it was created at the end of the Nara Period (710AD-794AD). During that time Nara was called “Yamato”, and it was the capital of Japan. In the Manyoshu, the name Nara can be read in 900 poems and it is also said that the Manyoshu’s origin lies in Nara. This time I am going to write about three poems from the Manyoshu, as well as Japanese history while walking through Nara’s beautiful nature as mentioned by the poets in the Manyoshu.

Extending from Sakurai City all the way to Nara City is Japan’s oldest road, the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail. A large number of the places mentioned by the Manyoshu poets still remain on this trail today. For this article I’m going to walk the 16 kilometre course from Sakurai



The view from the Nara basin

The large trees and grass, and all of the nature on the mountain are respected as an object of worship. A unique and prominent feature of Omiwa Shrine is its lack of a main building.

Within the shrine grounds there’s the Omiwa no Mori observation deck which overlooks the Nara basin. This spot is particularly popular during the cherry blossom season. You can also see Yamato Sanzan, or the three mountains of Yamato/Nara from the deck. These three mountains, Mount Amanokaguya, Mount Unebi and Mount Miminashi are designated as national, places of note. I want to touch a bit more on these three mountains, because they are mentioned in the Manyoshu.

**“Mount Kaguya and Mount Miminashi fought over the love of Mount Unebi. Occuring during the age of the gods, and even during the distant past it happened amongst humans. It seems that humans still continue to fight for the affections of others”.**

### Manyoshu 1-13

This poem was composed by the 38th Emperor, Emperor Tenji (626AD-671AD). Emperor Tenji and his younger brother Emperor Tenmu are thought to have quarreled over their shared love for Princess Nukata, who is credited with composing 13 of the Manyoshu’s poems. A theory exists that suggests that these poems detail the love triangle between these three figures.

Emperor Tenmu is known for being the person who contributed to the Taika reform. The Taika reform established politics centring on the Japanese Emperor. “*Taika*” is also credited as being Japan’s first era.



Monument ingraved with Princess Nukata’s poem



City to the city of Tenri, which features Mount Miwa, a mountain said to to be were the gods dwell.

Walking 15 minutes from Sakurai Station will bring you to a monument, with “The land that introduced Buddhism” wrote on it in Japanese. This monument marks the starting point of the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail. In ancient times, this area was the end point for boats that came up the river from Osaka, and prospered because it was an intersection for several old, widely used roads.

It is said that envoys from abroad were always coming and going from here, and that in the 6th century one of the envoys of the Holy King, Seong of Backje (One of the three kingdoms of Korea) carried over states of Buddha and scriptures to Japan, bringing with it buddhism to, a polytheistic country.

From here I will head towards Omiwa Shrine. Mount Omiwa’s god Omononushi is enshrined at Omiwa Shrine, one of Japan’s oldest shrines. It’s believed that Omononushi created the nation. During the regin of the 10th Japanese Emperor, Emperor Sujin (Exact birth year and death year unknown) a plague spread across the land. It is said that Omononushi was the one to subdue the plague.

**“Oh fair Mount Miwa. How you hide amongst the other mountains of Nara, whose bends in the road seem to pile up from behind. Often looking back from far away, I want to gaze upon thee. Such cruelty is felt should the clouds hide you from me”.**

**Manyoshu 1-17**

Upon departing Omiwa Shrine and walking down a charming path enclosed by a field, there is a monument engraved with this poem. In 667AD Emperor Tenmu relocated the capital from Asuka (Present day Asuka Village, Nara Prefecture) to Omi Otsu-no-miya (Present day, Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture). It seems that this poem was composed when Princess Nukuta moved to the new capital. The view of Mount Miwa seen from where the monument is located, is wonderful, I feel like Princess Nukuta’s yearning feelings for Nara really resonate with me. I can also feel the affection and love that the people from olden times possessed for Mount Miwa.

Walking on a bit further from Princess Nukuta’s monument, you will arrive at Emperor Sujin’s tomb. Surrounded by a pond is what appears to be a hill, but is actually a grave. This type of large scale grave is called a burial mound, (In Japanese the grave of a member of the royal family is called *Ryobo*). In order to make such a gigantic burial mound, a large amount of man-power was needed, meaning the burial mounds represent a society that could manage a concentrated labour force and a large number of people. Around the tomb are *Haniwa* figures, hollowed out terracotta statues. The presence of ornaments and weapons in the tomb, indicates that this is the tomb of an influential figure. The period for burial mounds, such as the keyhole shaped one of Emperor Sujin started to appear around the latter half of the 3rd Century until around the end of the 7th Century, and was considered a period that established political power centring on a single individual.

Emperor Sujin is said to have unified the primitive nation and established the political stronghold at the foot of Mount Miwa. It’s unknown as to whether he really existed or not, but it is said that he was the one to advance domestic rule within Japan at the time. Similarly to Emperor Jimmu, he was known as Hatsukunishirasu Sumeramikoto, and there’s a theory that he was the first Imperial Emperor.

Heading on down the trail, enjoying the view of the rural area, this



Emperor Sujin’s tomb

time I’m going to see the final monument.

**“As I leave my beloved wife’s body on Mount Hikite and come back down the mountain path, I feel as life has left me.”**

**Manyoshu 2-212**

This is a poem composed by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (Unknown birth year-708 ?).

Kakinomoto no Hitomaro is known as a representative poet of Japanese literature and is hailed as a “*Kasei*” or a great poet. 450 of the poems recorded in the Manyoshu were from him. It seemed he composed this poem when he had returned home from walking the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail after burying his wife on Mount Hikite. I think that the feelings that emerge in response to the death of a loved one are universal regardless of the time period and nationality. Seeing this poem I think



Kakinomoto no Hitomaro’s monument

I can more closely understand Kakinomoto no Hitomaro’s feelings.

Moving on from that monument and continuing down the path along the mountain, I finally could see the goal of the hiking course, Isonokami Jingu Shrine.

I was surprised to find that upon entering Isonokami Jingu Shrine that a whole host of cute, free-range chickens were there. Chickens are considered “Messengers of the gods” in Isonokami Jingu Shrine, and as such are revered. Isonokami Jingu Shrine is also one of Japan’s oldest shrines, complete with its own collection of important remains.

The trail continues on until Nara City, but this time, we will be heading towards Tenri City. It takes approximately 30 minutes from Isonokami Jingu Shrine to get to Tenri City. While walking this way you can see the head church of Tenrikyo, a Japanese religion. When you arrive at the station I recommend passing through the main shopping district which is lined with souvenir shops, restaurants, fruit and vegetable shops among others. This charming street also has shops related to Tenrikyo.

Nara is often regarded as being Japan’s starting point. While walking the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail, and visiting some of the country’s oldest shrines, you can see ancient landmarks. Reading the poems in the Manyoshu while appreciating Nara’s beautiful scenes of nature that remain largely unchanged since long ago, you can really understand the emotions of those who lived before. You can also buy delicious fruit and vegetables from an unattended shop. I bought some broccolli, *decopon*, a type of citrus mandarin and *hassaku*, a type of citrus orange. It was a bit troublesome carrying the heavy load in my rucksack, but when I arrived home I was treated to scrumptious, fresh vegetables and fruit which helped me to quickly forget about my tiredness from the hike.



For those who wish to experience Japanese history and culture why not think about walking the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail?

# What is “Na no Ra?”

We’re the Coordinators for International Relations (CIR) for Nara Prefecture. We work at the International Affairs Division of the Prefectural Government. Our aim is to deepen international exchange between Nara and other countries and help to build bridges between them.

“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 will serve to help everyone discover the charm that Nara holds.



## A Word from our Editors

### Hyunjung Nam (Pictured on the left)

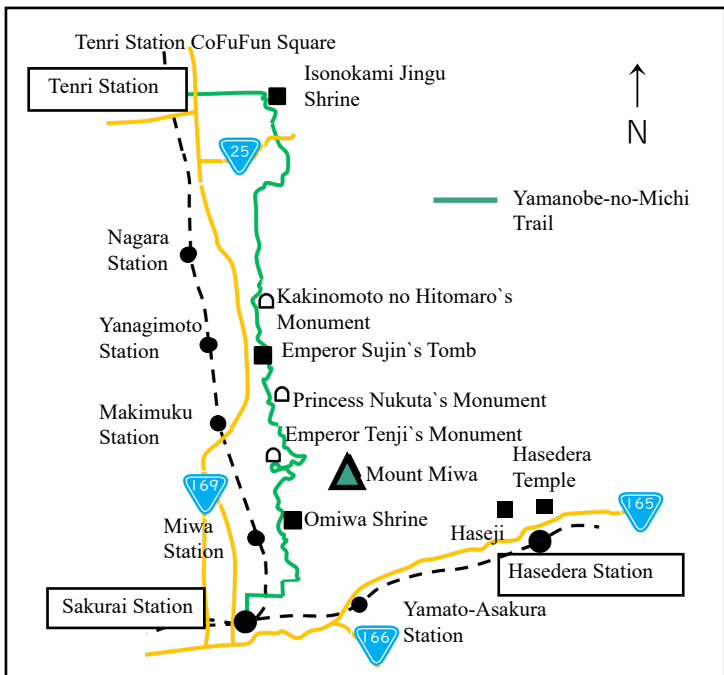
My trip this time round to the cities of Tenri and Sakurai were closely located to the stations making them very convenient. The easy access to these places is certainly one of the most attractive aspects of the trip particularly for those traveling to Hasedera to worship at the temple and for travellers hiking the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail. Think about enjoying the seasonal flowers, and drinking green tea in a special space while spending your time healing. We hope you enjoy all the charming aspects that these cities have to offer!

### Véronique Denis-Laroque (Pictured on the right)

Numerous shrines and temples with a long history still remain on the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail, meaning you can see views of the landscape that have remained unchanged since ancient times. Being able to learn about Japanese history and enjoy Nara Prefecture’s gorgeous nature, really moved me.

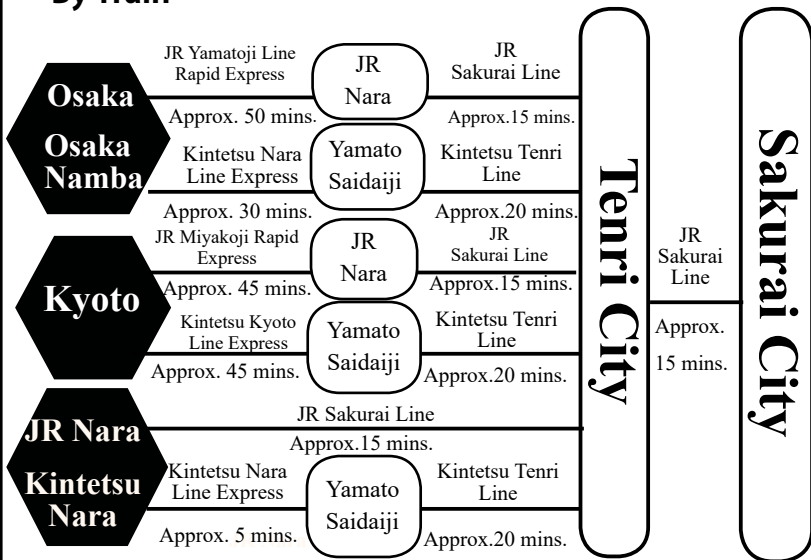
I definitely recommend walking the Yamanobe-no-Michi Trail from Sakurai City to Tenri City, to those who wish to come in contact with the heart of Japan.

## Tenri City and Sakurai City



## Access

### By Train



### By Car

From Osaka: Approx. 1 hour  
 From Kyoto: Approx. 1 hour 20 minutes  
 From Nara: Approx. 30 minutes  
 From Tenri to Sakurai: Approx. 20 minutes

} Until Tenri

## Special Thanks

“Na no Ra” would like to sincerely thank the people of Tenri City and Sakurai City and all those who assisted in the creation of this issue, including the Head Temple: Hasedera, Haseji and Tenri City Public Office.

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