

NIC Walking Guides

⑫ Hiking on the Nakasendo

Part 3



NAGOYA INTERNATIONAL CENTER VOLUNTEERS

Getting There

Take the JR Chuo Line from Nagoya Station. There are regular direct rapid express (kaisoku) services that go directly to Ena 恵那. The journey takes about 1 hour and cost 1,110 Yen.

This hike continues on from where “Hiking the Nakasendo Part 2” finished, and will take you along the Nakasendo Highway from Ena - the west gateway of Oi-shuku - to Takenami – the East gateway of Okute-shuku.

The west gateway of Oi shuku (stage) is situated near JR Ena Station, and is the starting point if the hike.



Turning to right at the second corner from Ena Railway station, this is the old Minoji Highway section of the Nakasendo Highway, which once ran all the way from from Edo (Tokyo).

Walk westward along the Minoji Highway. Along this route you will find the village’s former Shoya house (the house of the village mayor during Edo period); it is now a liquor shop.

There is a stone-pillar guidepost at the junction of Minoji Highway that reads “西行塚 西 3 丁” - which means “approximately 300 meters west of Saigyō-tsuka”.



Former shoya house



Stone-pillar post

Road Map Board

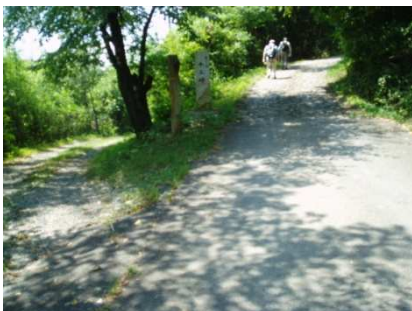
There is a large guide board at the side of the road that shows a map of the route along Minoji Highway from the east gateway of Okute Shuku.



Thirteen mountain passes (十三峠 – 13 touge)

Walk uphill from the guide board and you will come to a stone pillar post that reads “十三峠”.

It is said that the name was derived from the fact that old-time travelers had to go over more than 13 mountain passes to come and go between Oi Shuku and Okute Shuku along the Minoji Highway.



Stonepillar post of the 13 touges



Guidepost

Saigyō-tsuka (Saigyō mound)

The area along Minoji highway is studded with ruins related to Saigyō, who was a famous poet and Buddhist monk during the Heian period (approximately 1000 years ago).

Nearby there is an observation deck which allows the visitor to command a panoramic view of Mt. Ena's surroundings.



Saigyo-tsuka



Mt. Ena area

Ruin of Makikane Ichiri-tsuka - (Makikane Milepost Mound)

Leaving Saigyo tsuka behind, carry on walking up the slope and along the stone-paved road. At the side of the road, you will soon encounter a Makikane Ichiri-tsuka (milepost mound).

At the beginning of the Edo period, the Tokugawa Shogunate set up these Ichiri-tsuka (milestone mounds) at regular intervals of 3.7km along the Nakasendo Highway from Edo to Kyoto.

These helped travelers make a guess at their travelling distance.

This Makikane Ichiri-tsuka was the 88th on the Nakasendo from Edo (Tokyo).



Makikane Oiwake (Makikane Forked road)

After passing the Makikane Ichiri-tsuka , continue walking uphill again.

You will soon encounter a stone-pillar guidepost at the side of the road indicating a fork in the road.

To the left: Ise (current Mie prefecture) via Nagoya .

To right: Kyoto and Osaka

Ruin of Hime-Goten and Kubinashi-Jizo

Further along the Minoji highway, you will find a ruin of Hime-Goten. Hime can mean princess, or a daughter of a court noble or a Daimyo (feudal lord).

Goten means palace. During the Edo period, when a princess and her party made a trip along the Nakasendo Highway, this temporary luxury house was built for them to rest at.

Nearby the ruins of Hime-Goten, there is a Kubinashi-jizo (a stone image jizo without a neck).

The following is a tale of how the jizo lost his neck.

The stone-image jizo was erected by village people living nearby, to pray for the safe passage of travellers. Then one day two lower grade samurais took an afternoon nap at the side of the jizo. When one samurai awoke, he found that the neck of the other samurai had been cut-off. He asked the jizo who had cut off his companion's neck. But the jizo did not reply. This made him angry, so he cut off the jizo's neck.



Ruin of Hime-Goten



Kubinashi-jizo

Midare Saka

Further on, you will see a stone-pillar post showing Midare-saka (disarrayed rapid road), which means the road around the area was very rough and uneven, giving travellers difficulty to breathe or sometimes causing the Daimyo's procession to become disarrayed.



A stone-pillar of Midare saka



Midare saka

Benisaka Ichiri-tsuka (Benisaka Milestone Mound)

Walking on further uphill, you will pass a stone-pillar post of "Nakasendo Hyosaka".

You will encounter another Ichiri-tsuka, named Benisaka Ichiri-tsuka; this means that you have walked 3.7 kilometers from the previous Makikane Ichiri-tsuka.

Benisaka-Ichiritsuka is the 89th on the highway from Edo.



Nakasendo Hyosaka



Benisaka Ichiri-tsuka

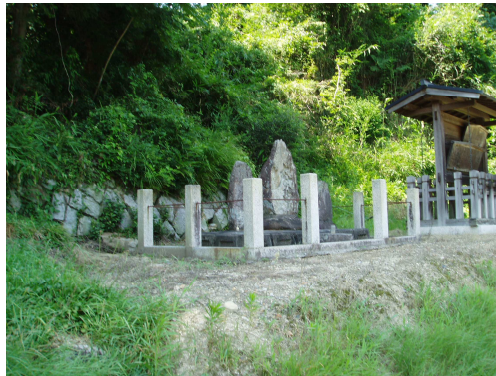
Fujimura Kosatsuba 藤村交差

After the Benisaka Ichiri-tsuka, the road turns to a stone-paved road and you will arrive at Fujimura Kosatsuba.

Kosatsuba means a public information board. These were set up in each shukuba (stage) and village by the Tokugawa Government during the Edo period for travellers and villagers. This Fujimura Kosatsuba was set up in Hujimura village during the Edo period.

The Kosatsuba is located 10 km west of the Ena Station, the hike's starting point. Okute-shuku (stage) is 4 km further to the west.

Turn off the highway and head for JR Takenami Station 武並. It's a 3 km walk south of the Kosatsuba.



- see "Hiking the Nakasendo Part 4" for the next leg of the hike -

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