

NIC Walking Guides

①6 Hiking on the Nakasendo

Part 4



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 **Takenami 武並**. The journey takes about 1 hour and cost 1,110 Yen.

The Minoji Highway section of the Nakasendo - which was runs along a mountain ridge - is 3 km north of the Takenami Station.

This hike continues on from where “**Hiking the Nakasendo Part 3**” finished, and will take you along the Nakasendo Highway from Fujimura Kousatsuba to Okute-shuku heading towards Hosokute-shuku.



Fujimura Kosatsuba 藤村交差

A kousatsuba – a contemporary public bulletin-board - was set up in each shukuba (stage) and village by the Tokugawa Shogunate for travelers and villagers during the Edo period. Fujimura Kosatsuba was set up in Fujimura village, situated at the side of what is an ordinary road now.



Hukakaya Tateba

Hukakaya is an old village name. Tateba means a location where travelers could take a rest in the old days. It is said that in the Hukakaya Tateba there was a Chaya Honjin - a teahouse which only court nobles, federal lords, and hatamoto (direct retainers of the shogun) could use. Because it was a long and hilly pass between Oi-shuku and Okute-shuku, there were also several chaya (teahouses) where regular travelers could take a rest. Nowadays, a big guide board shows a map of the Minoji Highway around this area.



Ruin of Uma-Chaya

Uma (horses) were used as the main transportation to carry travelers and living necessities along the Minoji Highway section of Nakasendo during the Edo period. The uphill and downhill were hard to pass through, but horses could handle the journey. Chaya (teahouses) where both packhorse drivers and horses could take a rest were set up along Minoji Highway.



Baba-ga-chaya & Chaya-saka

There were a lot of uphill and downhill along the Minoji Highway between Oi-shuku and Okute-shuku, which used to be called "thirteen plus seven mountain pass" during the Edo period. Saka means uphill. An uphill of this area was called "chaya saka", a name derived from a tale of an elderly woman running a chaya (teahouse) on the top of the hill.



Okugo Tateba

Okugo is the name of an old village which existed along the Minoji Highway.

Okugo tateba enabled travelers to enjoy the beautiful landscape when they took a rest, although it was impossible to view landscape from most of the tateba because they were located inside the mountains.



Stone Pillar and Stone Pavement at Kashinoki-saka

Kashinoki is the name of the local area, and saka means uphill. There was a stone pillar on top of Kashinoki-saka which belonged to a part of “Thirteen uphill and downhill “. A famous author during the Edo period wrote a book about passing through the Minoji Highway. A passage was quoted on a stone-pillar. This area on the Minoji Highway was constructed with a stone-paved road.



Gongenyama Ichiri-tsuka

There was a Gongenyama Ichiri-tsuka at the side of the road. Gongenyama is the name of an old village. Ichiri-tsuka means milepost mound which was set up at regular intervals of 3.7 km along Nakasendo Highway from Edo (Tokyo) to Kyoto by the Tokugawa Shogunate. These helped travelers make a guess at their travelling distance.

The Gongenyama Ichiritsuka was the 90th on the Nakasendo from Edo.



Junrei-sui Stone Pillar

Going up the hill further, we find a stone pillar upon which is written “Junrei-sui” at the side of the road. A passage was quoted on the stone pillar from a travel book written by the famous author mentioned above as follows:



There was a spring near here. Water did not flow from the spring usually, but only on August 1st people could receive water from the spring. One day in summer, a pilgrim came down the Minoji Highway. She fell down with sudden illness on the way. When some villager gave her water from the spring, she was rescued from death.

Thirty three Kannon in a Cave

33 statues of the Goddess of Kannon were enshrined in a cave, which was created in order to pray for the safe passage of travelers and horses on the Minoji Highway during the Edo period.



Shirihiyashi Jizo (Helpful Spring)

When a wealthy merchant in Ise (current Mie Prefecture) was traveling along the Nakasendo Highway with his wife, she was suddenly taken ill. After she had a drink of water from a nearby spring, she quickly recovered from her illness. A stone jizo was built by the merchant here as a symbol of his appreciation.



Okute-shuku 大湫宿

Okute-shuku was the 47th shukuba (stage) on the Nakasendo from Edo (Tokyo) during the Edo period. Around that time, Okute-shuku was a small stage with a population of 338, 30 inns, and 66 houses. The old houses and other facilities along the road have been well preserved. The following is an Ukiyoe print that a famous artist, Hiroshige Utagawa drew of the landscape of Okute-shuku.



Okute-shuku Honjin and Waki-honjin

During Edo period Honjin and Waki-honjin were built in Okute-shuku. Honjin is an officially appointed inn established in each shukuba village. Only court nobles, federal lords, and hayamoto were allowed to stay overnight at Honjin. Waki-honjin assisted the Honjin when honjin could not afford to accommodate everyone. Ordinary people were not allowed to use them.

Now the Honjin no longer exist and the old building has been converted into a primary school. This photo below is a Waki-honjin still standing along Minoji Highway.



Okute-shuku Kosatsuba

Okute-shuku Kosatsuba existed near the Waki-honjin. This Okute-shuku Kosatsuba – public bulletin board – set up by Tokugawa Government during Edo period has been kept in good condition.



East Gateway of Biwa-toge

Biwa-toge (Biwa mountain pass) was the highest mountain pass along the Minoji Highway, which was a 558 meters high and 730 meters long stone paved road.



Yasesawa Ichiri-tsuka

Yasesawa Ichiri-tsuka is the 91st milestone mound from Edo. It is 3.7 km from the previous Gongenyama Ichiri-tsuka.



Benten-lke (Benzaiten pond) 弁天池

Benzaiten-pond is situated 2 km west from Yasesawa Ichiri-tsuka. A statue of Benzaiten (the goddess of fortune) was set up in the center of the pond. It is said that iris flowers bloomed around the pond during the Edo period. Many travelers used to take a rest at this oasis on the Minoji Highway.



Koshindo Temple (庚申堂) in Hosokute-shuku (細久手宿)

At the east gateway of Hosokute-shuku is Koshindo Temple. Hosokute-shuku village suffered from a great fire during the Edo period. After the blaze, Koshindo Temple was built by the villagers as an lucky charm to ward against disasters.



Return to JR Mizunami Station

From Koshindo Temple take a taxi back to JR Mizunami Station (approx 13kn South)
Takes 20 minutes. Costs 3500 - 4000 Yen. Call Heiwa Taxi: 0572-68-6111.

Alternatively, take the Mizunami Community Bus (瑞浪市コミュニティバス) to JR Mizunami Station. It departs from Hosokute-shuku-guchi at 14:12 and costs 300 Yen.
Further Information: www.city.mizunami.gifu.jp/life/bus

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