

ALL MAP



Scan for a map of all events and places found in this issue!

# LIFE AND PRAYER WITH WATER

Since long ago, the communities around the great Lake Biwa have been devoutly grateful for the bounty they have been blessed with. Their awe of nature inspired deep belief in the spirits that inhabit the clear and pure local water. Throughout Shiga, water worship is at the heart of a wide variety of local traditions and religious culture.



## CHIKUBUSHIMA - ISLAND OF SANCTUARY

One of Lake Biwa's three islands, Chikubushima is known as "the dwelling of the gods" because since ancient times, the entire island was treated as an object of worship and is also believed to be a natural power spot. With a 2 kilometer perimeter, the island has no permanent residents but welcomes daily visitors to Tsukubusuma Shrine and Hogon-ji Temple. Long associated with water deities such as the dragon that was believed to inhabit the lake, the island holds an annual festival on June 14th to celebrate this deity.

TEL 0749-65-6521  
ADDRESS Chikubushima Hayazakicho Nagahama, Shiga  
OPEN Hours depend on ferry boat schedule  
ADMISSION Adults: ¥400 / Children (12 or under): ¥300  
WEB [https://kitabiwako.jp/en/travel\\_guide/spot/detail?id=1822](https://kitabiwako.jp/en/travel_guide/spot/detail?id=1822)  
\*Note: Smoking in designated areas only



## SHIRAHIGE SHRINE - THE GATE TO LAKE BIWA

The iconic vermilion torii gate standing outside the shrine in the shallow waters of Lake Biwa has become a symbol of Shiga itself. Reflections of the sunrise across the water offer a beautiful backdrop for a magnificent morning view of the gate. Dating back 2000 years, this shrine is known as the oldest in Shiga, and is also the head of 300 Shirahige shrines around Japan. The name Shirahige means white beard, a sign of longevity, so many visitors pray here for a long healthy life. Others pray for fortune or guidance to the enshrined deity, Sarutahiko-no-Okami, a god of the earth known for guidance and strength.

TEL 0740-36-1555  
ADDRESS 215 Ukawa Takashima, Shiga  
OPEN Always open (shrine office open from 9:00am to 5:00pm)  
ADMISSION Free  
WEB <http://shirahigejinja.com>



## ISAKI-NO-SAOTOBİ - 1000 YEAR OLD RITUAL CEREMONY

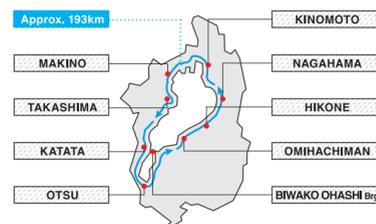
The annual Buddhist ritual, Isaki-no-Saotobi, takes place on August 1st at Isaki-ji Temple. Buddhist monks walk out onto a narrow beam extending from the temple's rocky cliff-face, then jump off the end for a seven-meter drop into the lake below. Through this ritual, the monks embody the spirit of salvation by daring to sacrifice their own bodies for the service of others, an integral lesson of Buddhist practice. Emerging from the water afterward is a symbol of rebirth. This unique ceremony's long history is believed to date back nearly 1,000 years.

TEL 0748-32-7828  
ADDRESS 1391 Shiraicho Omihachiman, Shiga  
DATE August 1st, annual ceremony begins 11:00am  
ADMISSION Free  
WEB <http://www.isakiji.jp/> (Japanese only)

## BIWAICHI -Cycling around Lake Biwa-



"Biwaichi" is a cycling route covering about 200km as it follows the Lake Biwa shoreline. For first-timers or those who prefer a relaxed pace to explore nature, food, and culture along the route, the "Biwaichi Cycling Navi" mobile app is your perfect companion! It includes alternate routes for some backroad biking to experience local Shiga life, while also providing info on recommended stops for food, sightseeing, and scenic views. We hope it helps in making an unforgettable Biwaichi adventure!



## BIWAICHI BEST SHOT!!



BIWAICHI CYCLING NAVI



BIWAICHI RENTAL CYCLE



BIWAKO VISITORS BUREAU

[biwaichi-cycling.com/en/](http://biwaichi-cycling.com/en/) [en.biwako-visitors.jp](http://en.biwako-visitors.jp)



FREE volume 4

# COOL SHIGA

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## CULINARY CULTURE PRESERVING A PAST OF PROBIOTICS

Shiga Prefecture is symbolized by the pure freshwater lake, resting at the heart of its vibrant landscape of mountainous nature. As rain falls on these mountains and forests, it seeps deep into the ground, which provides a natural filter, as the water makes a subterranean journey that will eventually lead to the great mother lake, Lake Biwa.

staples of Japanese cuisine such as soy sauce, miso, sake, and rice vinegar are all made using fermentation processes, but it may come as a surprise that the earliest forms of sushi also involved fermentation. Sushi originated with *narezushi*, a fermented fish or meat preserved with salt and rice, which is said to have been introduced to Japan in the ancient past along with rice farming. *Funazushi* became the dominant local variety of *narezushi*, and is a version made with *funa*, or carp, caught from Lake Biwa. In recent times, *funazushi* has increasingly drawn attention at home and abroad as both a power food and local delicacy.

The unique geography and year-round humidity gave rise to the development of a rich local culture of fermentation here in Shiga. Many common

*continued inside* →



## ABOUT SHIGA

Shiga Prefecture is located just northeast of Kyoto, at the center of Japan's main island. We're home to Japan's largest lake, *Biwako*, or Lake Biwa, and a community of unique culture and traditions that developed over time in harmony with the nature that sustains our local cuisine, industry and lifestyle. Scenic lake views and abundant nature have been a continual source of inspiration for artists. As a junction between East and West Japan, Shiga is also a land of many historic sites such as temples and castle ruins, as well as many enchanting traditional towns.

### Easy access from Kyoto!

- BY SHINKANSEN**
  - Kyoto Sta. to Maibara Sta. in about 20 min.
  - Nagoya Sta. to Maibara Sta. in about 27 min.
- BY JR TRAIN**
  - Kyoto Sta. to Otsu Sta. in about 9 min.



# A GENESIS OF SUSHI

BORN FROM LAKE BIWA 元祖  
阪本屋鮎寿司

## A Funazushi Shop in Business Since 1869

Honke Sakamotoya (本家阪本屋), a *funazushi* specialty shop in Otsu, originated a few centuries ago as a ryotei restaurant in service of the Zeze Domain, the Edo Era domain of the Otsu area, serving freshwater fish dishes including funazushi. In 1869, the restaurant transitioned into a specialty shop, becoming the first to introduce funazushi to the commercial market.

Stepping foot into the historic structure, visitors see packages of *tsukudani* (foods preserved in a soy sauce reduction) made of variety of fishes, such as ayu and shrimp on display, as well as delicately sliced funazushi. Kenichiro Uchida, the fifth-generation shop owner, has continued the funazushi legacy, using locally-sourced ingredients such as carp direct from Lake Biwa and

Omi-mai rice, taking care to honor the recipe that has been passed down since the shop's foundation. Funazushi is typically made with *nigarabuna*, or crucian carp, but there are also many recipe variations for a range of tastes and textures. One variant offered by Honke Sakamotoya is *olzuke*, or "long pickling," which extends fermentation for another year by replacing the pickling rice in the middle of the process.

The shop's current building was built in 1933, and is registered as a national cultural property, offering plenty of historic charm to delight visitors who come from near and far to enjoy this local delicacy.

## Fermentation — A rich tradition of local cuisine

*Narezushi* is the original dish that evolved into the modern sushi we know and love. The original meaning of the word *sushi* was "sour rice," and in *narezushi*, the rice was made sour by fermentation, whereas in contemporary sushi, the sour component comes instead from rice vinegar. *Narezushi* was introduced to Japan in ancient times, along with rice farming, from the Asian continent. People began using the technique for preservation of fish or meat. With few alternatives for preservation, *narezushi* became popular and spread throughout Japan, but today it is found only in select regions. With bountiful rice crops and a lake that provides a ready supply of carp, funazushi became the favored type of *narezushi* in Shiga, and is still enjoyed today as a local delicacy.

Funazushi is one of those delicacies that may not be for everyone as its strong smell is a defining feature. The dish is often compared to blue cheese and has been introduced as the "world's stinkiest food." The smell and flavor can be very different depending who makes it, and how or where it is made. And while the smell and taste are too much even for many local people, there are plenty of devoted funazushi lovers, each with their own favorite flavor profile.



Fifth-generation shop owner, Kenichiro Uchida.

"The taste can vary from year to year or even between containers of the same batch depending on slight changes in weather, storage location, etc. since the fermentation is activated by bacteria in the air," said Mr. Uchida, owner of Honke Sakamotoya.

In spring, carp are caught from the lake and pickled with salt, and in summer are put into tubs with steamed rice. Fermentation is complete before the year's end, so it became a local area tradition for people to put out a spread of funazushi at the feast during the New Year family gathering.

Within 6 months, the probiotic lactic acid bacteria will have consumed all the harmful bacteria, so there is no worry of food poisoning. Mr. Uchida continues, "funazushi is known as nutritious superfood by locals since it contains a lot of vitamins, calcium and protein, believed to help cleanse the blood. So some people eat it to treat allergies such as eczema or hay fever."

In recent years, the lake's carp population has declined due to environmental changes, such as diminishing areas of reeds where carp lay their eggs, and rapid proliferation of invasive species. This in turn has also impacted local funazushi production, yet local people are working hard to both continue the tradition, and to promote a clean and sustainable environment.

### Honke Sakamotoya (本家阪本屋)

TEL 077-524-2406 ADDRESS 1-5-21 Nagara Otsu, Shiga  
OPEN 9:00am to 6:00pm CLOSED Sundays WEB <http://www.sakamotoya.biz/index.html>



Tsukudani made with traditional recipe, Samples available.



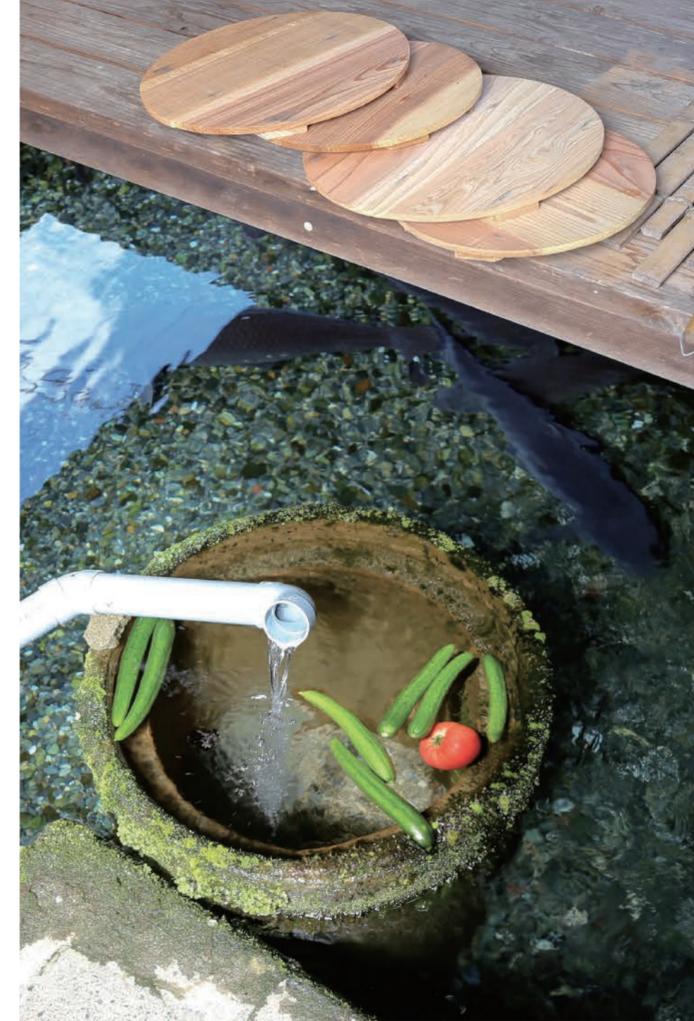
Funu, or carp, during the funazushi-making process (left), and the final plated funazushi (right).



# SUSTAINABLE LIVING BLESSED BY PURE WATER

## Water for Life — The culture of kabata

The Harie District of Takashima City offers a tranquil atmosphere and scenic views of traditional village life as you stroll down the street admiring the traditional *yakisugi* charred cedar siding, or the contrast of red *bengara* stained beams against white plaster walls. Clear channels of spring water flow through the town in a system designed for sustainable balance with the local ecosystem that has lasted centuries. The waterways also connect to each house with a *kabata*, or a basin for everyday household use which is fed by spring water supply and overflows back into the channels. The water keeps a steady year-round temperature of about 13 degrees. Residents use *kabata* for cooking, doing dishes, and cooling their farm vegetables. In the *kabata* overflow area, you will meet the other residents, the local carp. They play a part in keeping the water clear by eating algae and food residue. People believe the deity of water resides in *kabata*, so the New Year begins by gathering fresh water from the *kabata*, offering it at their family altar, and then making the New Year's *ozoni* dish, a soup with mochi and vegetables. The outer portion of *kabata* connect to the water channels shared by all the households, so everyone is careful to keep the water clean for each other, especially those who are further upstream. The mutual trust and care between residents help to ensure a pure sustainable ecosystem.



Cooling vegetables in a Harie District household kabata.

## Satoyama — Supporting life and protecting nature



Waterways fed by mountain waters, and shared by the Harie community.

The life with water here in Harie was featured in a 2004 BBC documentary called "Satoyama: Japan's Secret Water Garden," a work that gained international acclaim. The word "satoyama" describes a concept of sustainable rural life that maintains local biodiversity, and the word's origin comes from "sato" and "yama," or "village" and "mountain." Residents in this village strive to preserve traditional lifestyles by coexisting with nature, which includes sharing the waterways, not only with each other but also with the fishes and creatures as the water connects with surrounding streams and rice fields. Therefore, washing in *kabata* is done only with environmentally-friendly detergents made from recycled biodegradable oils. Keeping the environmental balance sustainable for all life ensures preservation of other local traditions as well, such as making funazushi every year. Utilizing water and nature within the community while carefully ensuring a healthy local environment enables a sustainable balance for the people, and moreover, for all of the life in the area's surrounding ecosystem.



An approved local guide is required for all visitors to Harie. See below for details.

### Harie Shozu no Sato Committee

ADDRESS 372 Harie Shinasahicho Takashima, Shiga  
EMAIL [shozunosato@lapis.plala.or.jp](mailto:shozunosato@lapis.plala.or.jp)  
ADMISSION By email reservation only, at least 24 hours in advance. Guide fee: ¥1000 per person.  
WEB <http://harie-syozu.jp/>

## Osakana Asahi - Tsukudani Shop of Local Fisherman



Here in the Harie district, Osakana Asahi sells a wide variety of *tsukudani* made from freshly caught fishes of Lake Biwa as well as locally made funazushi. At their outdoor *kabata* shed, you can meet large fishes and a giant salamander, who was rescued after injury and is a nationally-protected species. A pair of side-by-side faucets here also lets you conduct your own taste test between the local tap water and the natural spring water.

TEL 0740-25-3319 ADDRESS 345-1 Harie Shinasahicho Takashima, Shiga  
OPEN 8:00am to 5:00pm CLOSED Irregular closings

# EVENT SCHEDULE

ALL MAP



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## CURRENT AND UPCOMING SHIGA EVENTS IN JULY, AUGUST, AND SEPTEMBER, 2019

### EXCHANGE AND EXPERIMENTATION - TOWARD A NEW GENERATION OF CERAMIC ART



Shigaraki Ceramic Culture Park has provided the opportunity for 1,200 artists from 53 different countries to meet and create. This exhibition explores the future of ceramic arts through the work, words, and visual art of these international artists.

**DATE** June 18 (Tue) to September 6 (Fri), 2019  
**TIME** 9:30am to 5:00pm (admission until 4:30pm)  
**PLACE** Shigaraki Ceramic Culture Park, 2188-7 Chokushi Shigarakicho, Koka City  
**ADMISSION** Adults: ¥500, High School and College Students: ¥380, Children 15 and younger: Free. Group rate for 20 or more: Adults: ¥400, Students: ¥300.  
**TEL** 0748-83-0909  
**WEB** <https://www.sccp.jp/e/>

ENGLISH SIGNAGE ENGLISH ASSISTANCE

### NOH PERFORMANCE: NUE (NIGHTBIRD)



Noh, the traditional theater art that received UNESCO cultural heritage designation, will be performed on a full-scale Noh stage. This play depicts the sorrow of a monster nightbird, or Nue, who was slain after trying to haunt the Emperor. This is a masterpiece of the renowned historic Noh playwright, Zeami.

**DATE** September 7 (Sat), 2019  
**TIME** 2pm to 4:30pm (doors open at 1:30pm)  
**PLACE** Otsu Traditional Performing Arts Center (246-24 Onjojicho, Otsu City)  
**ADMISSION** Prime Seat: ¥5,500 advance ticket or ¥6,000 door ticket  
 Regular Seat: ¥5,000 advance ticket or ¥5,500 door ticket  
 \*Note: no refund after purchase  
**TEL** 077-527-5236 (no English service)  
**WEB** <http://www.dentogoinokaikan.net/>

### INTRODUCTION TO OMI CASTLES CULTURAL LECTURE



Shiga, known in old times as Omi, has been home to about 1300 castles of various scales, such as Azuchi and Hikone Castle. This lecture will introduce the history and viewpoints regarding such local castles, as well as some of the efforts for their preservation.

**DATE** September 28 (Sat), 2019  
**TIME** 10:30am to 4:30pm  
**PLACE** Piazza Omi (1-1-20 Nionohama, Otsu City)  
**ADMISSION** Free. \*Must reserve by email 2 days in advance. Reservations are first come, first served.  
 Make a reservation by email to [ma16@pref.shiga.lg.jp](mailto:ma16@pref.shiga.lg.jp)  
**TEL** 077-528-4678

### 27TH "SALMON WHO FORGOT THE SEA" EXPLORING SECRETS OF BIWA SALMON



"Biwa masu" is a salmon species endemic to Lake Biwa. Its delicious flavor has made it a favorite of local communities. This exhibition explores the evolution and history of Biwa masu based on the latest scientific research. You'll also learn about the history between Biwa masu and Shiga's people, as well as challenges for future sustainability.

**DATE** July 20 (Sat) to November 24 (Sun), 2019  
**TIME** 9:30am to 5pm (admission until 4:30pm)  
**PLACE** Lake Biwa Museum (1091 Oroshimocho, Kusatsu City)  
**ADMISSION** Adult: ¥300 (¥240 group rate), College & SHS Students: ¥240 (¥190 group), Elementary & JHS Students: ¥150 (¥120 group). Group rates are for 20 or more. \*Separate museum admission also required.  
**TEL** 077-568-4811  
**WEB** <https://www.biwahaku.jp/>

ENGLISH SIGNAGE Wi-Fi ENGLISH BROCHURE ENGLISH ASSISTANCE

### 24TH CERAMIC ART MARKET AT SHIGARAKI CERAMIC CULTURE PARK



A chance to "Touch Art and Meet Artists" at this fair of ceramic artists living and working in Shiga. Works range from ceramic wares such as tableware, tea ceremony utensils, and flower pots, to glass wares.

**DATE** September 21-23 (Sat-Mon), 2019. \*Rain or shine unless severe weather  
**TIME** 9am to 5pm (4:30pm on the final day)  
**PLACE** Shigaraki Ceramic Culture Park, 2188-7 Chokushi Shigarakicho, Koka City  
**ADMISSION** Free  
**TEL** 0748-83-0909  
**WEB** <https://www.sccp.jp/e/>

ENGLISH ASSISTANCE

### NAGAHAMA TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ARTS AND FESTIVAL



This event showcases a variety of the local traditional performing arts of the Nagahama area, gathered to perform for the festival audience. Enjoy traditional dance and music that has been passed down through local history, as well as festival costumes and instruments which are also on display.

**DATE** September 29 (Sun), 2019  
**TIME** 11am to 2:30pm (tentative)  
**PLACE** South Square, Nagahama Hikiyama Museum (14-8 Motohamacho, Nagahama City)  
**ADMISSION** Free  
**TEL** 0749-65-6510 (Preservation Society of Nagahama Cultural Properties)

### EMPERORS AND THE OMI REGION - FROM THE MUSEUM OF SHIGA PREFECTURE COLLECTIONS



Koka City is a place with imperial connections as it was once declared the capital by Emperor Shomu. This exhibition features paintings and calligraphic works, as well as relics of successive emperors and beautiful works made by court painters.

**DATE** July 27 (Sat) to September 29 (Sun), 2019  
**TIME** 10am to 5pm  
**PLACE** Tsuchiyama History and Folk Museum (2230 Kitatsuchiyama Tsuchiyamacho, Koka City)  
**ADMISSION** Free  
**TEL** 077-528-4672

ENGLISH SIGNAGE Wi-Fi ENGLISH BROCHURE ENGLISH ASSISTANCE

### THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, SHIGA: ART SPOT PROJECT VOL.2 - SYMBIOSIS



Transit [stone], 2018, by Kakuya Fujinaga. Photo by Mugyuda Hyogo, courtesy of Gallery PARC

An exhibition with the theme "Symbiosis, the harmony between people and land." The primary featured works are by three dynamic young Shiga-associated artists. The exhibition will be shown inside an old traditional house as well as the surrounding area of Taizanjino in Takashima City.

**DATE** September 21 (Sat) to October 20 (Sun), 2019  
**TIME** 10am to 5pm  
**PLACE** Tanaka Tei Nagaya & surrounding area (4915 Tanaka Adogawacho, Takashima City)  
**ADMISSION** Free. Workshop attendance requires reservation.  
**TEL** 077-522-2111 (office hrs 8:30am to 5:15pm weekdays)  
**WEB** <https://www.shiga-kinbi.jp/>

ENGLISH BROCHURE

### GOKASHO TOWN WALK BURATTO GOKASHO MACHIRUKI



This parade features people dressed in various late-Edo to Taisho Period costumes walking through the historical Gokasho Town, formerly home to the famous Omi merchants. During the event, Buddhist treasures and Omi merchant heirlooms are brought out for rare public display at temples and former merchant houses.

**DATE** September 29 (Sun), 2019  
**TIME** 9:30am to 4pm (Procession from 1pm to 2:20pm)  
**PLACE** The area around Kondocho Gokasho, Higashiomi City  
**ADMISSION** Free  
**TEL** 0748-24-5662  
**WEB** <http://www.higashiomi.net/>

ENGLISH SIGNAGE Wi-Fi ENGLISH BROCHURE ENGLISH ASSISTANCE

## BIWAKO HALL EVENTS



**TEL** 077-523-7133  
**ADDRESS** 15-1 Uchidehama, Otsu City  
**OPEN** 10am to 7pm  
**CLOSED** Tuesdays  
**WEB** <https://www.biwako-hall.or.jp/en/>

2019.07.24	Kabuki Performance: Shochiku Dai Kabuki	Theatre
2019.07.27-28	"Turandot" by G.Puccini	Main Theatre
2019.08.05-07	Ryusuke Numajiri Seminar for Conductor V	Main Theatre
2019.08.10	Shakespeare for Children: "The Taming of the Shrew"	Theatre
2019.08.29	Naoki Nizuka Tenor Concert	Ensemble Hall
2019.09.07	Period-Instrument Ensemble: Tablatura	Ensemble Hall
2019.09.14	BIWAKO HALL Vocal Ensemble 69th Regular Concert	Ensemble Hall
2019.09.23	Piano Quintet "Trout" by F. Schubert	Ensemble Hall



Biwako Hall Center for the Performing Arts is one of just a few spaces in Japan equipped with a four-tiered quadruple stage main theatre, as well as a performing arts theatre, and smaller ensemble hall. A wide variety of wonderful performances take place here in state-of-the-art facilities featuring exceptional acoustics to offer immersive enjoyment for audiences here in our lakefront theatre.

Scan code for English Calendar of Biwako Hall Performances:  
<https://www.biwako-hall.or.jp/en/performance/>

