

Yamanobe-no-Michi

山の辺の道



•Please be nice to nature.
•Please cooperate with the "Take your trash home" campaign.

To the world of ancient romance

Yamanobe-no-Michi, is an ancient road connecting Miwa and Nara. Three government roads created in the beginning of the 7th century and called Upper, Middle, and Lower roads run from north to south in the Yamato basin. Yamanobe-no-Michi extends north from Mt. Miwa further to the east through the foothills. Although it's not possible to exactly trace the road's history, it is believed to have started from Tsubaichi, a marketplace famous in traditional courtship songs, and continue through Miwa, tomb of emperors Keiko and Sujin, and then northward from Isonokami-jingu shrine. Much of the road is designated as part of the Tokai Nature Trail. It runs for 12km from Kanaya in Sakurai to Isonokami-jingu shrine in Tenri, providing well-kept glimpses of the past and conveying the spirit of the ancient poems. Old shrines and temples, kofun tumuli, stone monuments inscribed with poems and historical places appear along the way, inviting travelers into an ancient illusionary world.

Yamanobe-no-Michi poetry monuments



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未通女等が 袖布留山の瑞垣の 久しき時ゆ 思ひき香は
otomera ga / sodofuru yama no / mizugaki no / hisashiki toki yu / omoiki ware wa
Just like Isonokami-jingu shrine has stood at the foot of this mountain for a long time, so I have long loved you.
Man'yoshu, poem 4-501 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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石上 布留の神杉 神びにし 我やさらさら 態にあひにける
isonokami / furu no kamusugi / kamubini shi / ware ya sarasara / koi ni ai nikeru
When I was young, I fell in love a few times, and it was painful. I grew old like the cedar that has stood at Isonokami-jingu shrine for so many years, and I thought I wouldn't love anymore, but I've fallen in love again.
Man'yoshu, poem 10-1927 by unknown poet
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さどはあれて 人はふりにし やどなれや 庭もまがきも 秋ののらなる
sato wa arete / hito wa furi ni shi / yado nare ya / niwa mo magaki mo / aki no noranaru
Is it because the village is falling into ruins, and the people who live here have gotten old? Gardens and fences look desolate, like an autumn field.
Kokin Wakashu, part 4, poem on autumn by Sojo Henjo
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うち山や どごまらずの 花ざかり うちやまや / tozama shirazu no / hana zakari
Today, when I visited Uchiyama-Eikyujii temple, it was wonderfully filled with cherry blossoms. Only local people know about this cherry tree, not the outsiders.
Yamato Pilgrimage, by Matsuo Basho
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月待て 瀬へけりと聞くまに あはれよ ぶかき はつかりの 声
tsuki machite / mine koe keru to / kiku mama ni / aware yo fukaki / hatsukari no koe
Walking down the mountain path waiting for the moon to appear, my companion said, 'I've crossed that peak.' The moon hasn't come out yet, but the voice of a wild goose is faint in the night.
in Furuhoraku 30shu, by Toichi Tootada
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山の辺の道ははるけく野路の上に 乙木の鳥居 来に立つ見ゆ
yamanobe no / michi wa harukeku / nomichi no ue ni / otogi no torii / ake ni tatsu miyu
Yamanobe-no-Michi continues forever. Is it the bright scarlet torii gate of Yatogi-jinja shrine in Otogi village that can be seen from so far away?
By Hirose Toho
- 

あしひきの 山川の瀬の 響るなべに 弓月が嶽に 雲立ち渡る
ashihiki no / yamakawa no se no / naru nabe ni / yutsuki ga take ni / kumo tachi wataru
As the sounds of the rapids in the river that flows down the mountain gets louder, a cloud arises and moves past Yutsukigatake Peak.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1088 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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食道を 引手の山に 妹を置きて 山路を行けば 生けりともなし
fusumaji o / hikite no yama ni / imo o okite / yamaji o ikeba / ikeri tomo nashi
After leaving my wife's corpse buried at Ryuo Mountain, as I return home by the mountain road, I feel sad and empty of life.
Man'yoshu, poem 2-212 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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えにしあや 長岳寺の法の水 むすぶ庵も ほど近き身は
enshi are ya / chogakuji no / nori no mizu / musubu iori mo / hodo chikai mi wa
I have a special affinity for the Buddha of Chogakuji temple, and I am glad to live so close to it.
Hyakugojuban Jika Awase, by Toichi Tootada
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天下おさまる時を朝夕の 月にも日にも 先いなる哉
tenka osamaru / toki o / asa yuu no / tsuki nimo hi nimo / mazu inoru kana
After taking part in numerous battles, peace is my heartfelt desire. I pray for it to the morning and evening moon and to the sun.
Hyakuban Jika Awase, by Toichi Tootada
- 

玉かざる 夕さり来れば 狐人の 弓月が嶽に 霞たなびく
tama kaguru / yuu sari kureba / satsuhito no / yutsuki ga take ni / kasumi tanabiku
As evening light glimmers, clouds drift over the moon in a shape of a hunter's bow.
Man'yoshu, poem 10-1816 by unknown poet
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二古陵に 一人の衛士や ほとどぎす
ni koryo ni / hitori no eji ya / hototogisu
One guard protects two mausoleums from long ago. It is a quiet place where cuckoo cries.
by Takeda Mugaishi
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うま酒三輪の山青丹よし奈良の山の山に 隠るまで道のくまのくままで につらにも見つつ行かむをしばし見せしむ山を心なく雲の隠さふべしや
uma sake / miwa no yama / aoni yoshi / nara no yama no / yama no mani / ikakuru made / michi no kuma / isakuru made ni / tsubara nimo / mitsutsu ikamu o / shibashiba mo / misakemu yama o / kokoro naku / kumo no kakuso beshi ya
My Dear Mt. Miwa! The mountain that I often think of because I long to see it again, searching for it hidden among the numerous mountains of Nara, with the road to it turning and twisting continually. It seems to have been hidden so mercilessly by the clouds.
Man'yoshu, poem 1-17 by Princess Nukata
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巻向の松原も未だ雲いねば 小松が末ゆ 淡雪流る
makimuku no / hibara mo imada / kumo ineba / komatsu ga ureyu / awayuki nagaru
Even though the clouds have not yet reached the cypress plateau of Makimuku, light snow on the tips of pine branches falls as if flowing.
Man'yoshu, poem 10-2314 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
- 

あまくもに ちかくひかりて なるかみの みればかこし みねばかなしも
amakumo ni / chikaku hikarite / narukami no / mireba kashiko / mineba kanashimo
Like lightning and thunder that rumbles through the clouds, meeting that person makes me feel anxious and I shouldn't get close, but if we cannot meet, I feel sad.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1369 by unknown poet
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ぬばたまの夜さり来れば巻向の川音高し もあらしかも 疾き
nubatama no / yoru sari kureba / makimuku no / kawaoto takashimo / arashi kamo toki
When the night came, the sounds of Makimuku River have become so loud. I wonder if the mountain storm has intensified.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1101 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
- 

三諸のその山なみに 子らが手を巻向山はつきのよしも
mimoro no / sono yamanami ni / koraga te o / makimuku yama wa / tsugi no yoroshimo
Mt. Makimuku is near the mountain range of Mt. Miwa, and the way they are lined up is truly beautiful.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1093 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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あしひきの山かも高き巻向の岸の小松に 雪降りけり
ashihiki no / yama kamo takaki / makimuku no / kishi no komatsu ni / miyuki furi keru
Oh, snow is starting to fall on the small pine trees on the cliffs of Mt. Makimuku. It must be because it is higher here than on the plain.
Man'yoshu, poem 10-2313 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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あしひきの山川の瀬のなるなべに 弓月が嶽に 雲立ち渡る
ashihiki no / yamagawa no se no / naru nabe ni / yutsuki ga take ni / kumo tachi wataru
As the sounds of the rapids in the river that flows down the mountain gets louder, a cloud arises and moves past Yutsukigatake Peak.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1088 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
- 

痛足河、河波立ちね巻目の由規が嶽に 雲居立てらし
anashi gawa / kawa nami tachinu / makimoku no / yutsuki ga take ni / kumo i tateru rashi
The waters of Anashi River are rippled. It seems that clouds are gathering around Yutsukigatake Peak of Mt. Makimuku.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1087 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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巻向の山邊とよみて 行く水のみなわの かし世の人われは
makimuku no / yamabe maso yufu mijika yufu / kaku nomi yue ni / nagaku to omoiki
The length of fabric made from ramie of the mountains around Mt. Miwa is short. In the same way, the life of Princess Tootchi was short, even if I had believed that her life would continue on forever.
Man'yoshu, poem 2-157 by Prince Takechi
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神山の山邊長蘇木綿みじか木綿かくの みぬに長く思ひき
miwa yama no / yamabe maso yufu mijika yufu / kaku nomi yue ni / nagaku to omoiki
The length of fabric made from ramie of the mountains around Mt. Miwa is short. In the same way, the life of Princess Tootchi was short, even if I had believed that her life would continue on forever.
Man'yoshu, poem 2-157 by Prince Takechi
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鶯神の音のみ聞きし巻向の松原の山を 今日見つるかも
narukami no / oto nomi kikishi / makimuku no / hibara no yama o / kyo mitsuru kamo
I had only heard of his thunderous reputation, but today, at last, I saw the mountain on the cypress plateau of Makimuku.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1092 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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大和は国のまほろばたなづく青垣山 ごとまれる大和し美し
yamato wa kuni no mahoroba / tatanazuku aogaki / yama gomoreru yamatoshi uruwashi
Yamato is the best place in the country. Surrounded by a blue hedge of overlapping mountain layers, it is truly beautiful.
Kojiki, by Prince Yamatotakeru
- 

がぐ山は 吹火をせし耳と相あひき神代よりかなら しいとへしかなれに 穿つせみもつをみそふらき
kagu yama wa / uebi oshi to / miminashi to / ai arasaki / kamiyo yori / kakunaru rashi / inishie mo / shika nare koso / ususemi mo / tsuma o arasou rashtiki
In the area around Three Mountains of Yamato, Mt. Kagu, Mt. Unebi and Mt. Miminashi, the relationship between men and women has long been complicated. It seems that the tradition of two men fighting for the hand of one woman has been going on since ancient times.
Man'yoshu, poem 1-13 by Emperor Tenchi
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三諸は人の守る山本辺はあしび花咲き末 辺は椿花咲くらくはし山ぞ 泣く見守る山
mimoro wa hito no mamoru yamanobe wa ashibi hana saki urabe wa tsuba hana saku urawagashi yama zo naku no mizu yama
Mt. Miwa is a place where people do not enter without reason, and a mountain which carefully protects each tree and blade of grass. Near the foot of this mountain, Japanese anemone blooms, and towards its summit, camellia blooms. This mountain truly makes you feel beauty from the bottom of your heart and takes care of your emotions, like caressing a crying child, carefully protecting all.
Man'yoshu, poem 13-3222 by unknown poet
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いにしへにありけむ人もわが如か三輪の 松原にかざし折れけむ
inishie ni / ari kemo hito mo / waga goto ka / miwa no hibara ni / kazashi ori kemu
I wonder if the people of long ago did what I'm doing now, breaking off a branch to use as an ornate hairpin on the cypress plateau of Mt. Miwa.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1118 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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古の人の植えけむ杉が枝に霞たなびく 春は来ぬらし
inishie no / hito no ue kemu / sugi ga e ni / kasumi tanabiku / haru wa kinurashi
A haze is drifting through the branches of the cedars planted by people long ago. Spring has finally arrived.
Man'yoshu, poem 10-1814 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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山吹きの立ちしげみたる山清水酌みに 行かぬ道は知らなく
yamabuki no / tachi shigemi taru / yama shimizu / kumi ni ikamedo / michi no shiranaku
Near the grave of Princess Toochi, there is a mountain spring flowing among kerria flowers. The spirit of the princess must pass through them to draw the water from the spring. I would like to go and meet her, but I don't know the way.
Man'yoshu, poem 2-158 by Prince Takechi
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あし原のしげしき小屋にすがだ、みや さいや敷きわが二人寝し
ashihara no / shikeshiki koya ni / suga datami / iyasaya shikite / waga futari no shi
In the humble hut on the plain which grew full of reeds, several fresh frugs of woven bamboo were laid, and the two of us slept there.
Kojiki, by Emperor Jimmu
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狭井河よ雲立ちわたり 吹火山木の葉 騒ぎぬ風吹かむとす
sai gawa yo / unebi oshi to / uebi yama / konoha sayaginu / kaze fukamu to su
Rain clouds have been hovering over the Sai River, and on Mt. Unebi the leaves are rustling in the trees. Strong wind rises.
Kojiki, by Isukeyorihime
- 

わが衣色に染めぬむうまき三室の山 はもみらしにけり
waga koromo / iro ni some namu / umasake / mimuro no yama wa / momiji shi ni keru
The leaves on the trees on Mt. Miwa have changed their colour into beautiful autumn yellow. I think I'll dye my clothes in the same beautiful colour.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1094 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
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うま酒三輪の祝(社)の山照らす秋の 黄葉散らまく惜しも
umasake / miwa no haburi no yama terasu / aki no momiji / chirumaku oshimo
On the mountain where Miwa shrine stands, the vividly coloured autumn maple leaves that shine brightly will be missed when they fall.
Man'yoshu, poem 8-1517 by Prince Nagaya
- 

此の神酒は 我が神酒ならず 倭なす大物主の 醸みし神酒 幾久 幾久
kono miki wa / waga miki narazu / yamato nasu / Onono-nushi no / kamishi miki / ikuhisa / ikuhisa
This sacred sake is not one I have fermented myself. It is the divine sake fermented by Onono-nushi, who created the land of Yamato. May it prosper for many generations to come. May it prosper for many generations to come.
Nihon Shoki, by Takahashi Ikui no Mikoto
- 

夕さらば河城曲なる三輪川の清き 瀬の音を聞くは 良し
yuu saraba / kawazu naku naru / miwa gawa no / kyoki se no to o / kikakushi yoshi mo
When evening comes, hearing the sounds of the pure waters of Miwa River and the cries of the frogs always gives me an indescribable feeling.
Man'yoshu, poem 10-2222 by unknown poet
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磯城野の日本の国に二人ありとし 思はば何か嘆かむ
shikishima no / yamato no kuni ni / hito futari / ari to shi omowaba / nanika nagekamu
In this country of Yamato, if there were two people that I hold dear, how I would lament about this and that. But since there is only one person that I love, there are so many things here and there that I have to take care of.
Man'yoshu, poem 13-3249 by unknown poet
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この川の清き山青峰の 隠る山は 走るのよらし 山の出立のわかし山ぞあたらし 山の荒れまく惜しも
kono kawa no / yoshiyoshi yama no / aoihata no / osaka no yama wa / hashiride no / yoroshiki yama no / idetachi no / kuwashiki yama zo / atarashiki yama no / aremaku oshimo
Mt. Hatsuse and Mt. Osaka are splendidly beautiful mountains that I can see when I run out of my house when I leave my doorway. I want to protect these majestic mountains forever, but unfortunately they get more rugged year by year.
Man'yoshu, poem 13-3331 by unknown poet
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わが衣色に染めぬむうまき三室の山 はもみらしにけり
waga koromo / iro ni some namu / umasake / mimuro no yama wa / momiji shi ni keru
The leaves on the trees on Mt. Miwa have changed their colour into beautiful autumn yellow. I think I'll dye my clothes in the same beautiful colour.
Man'yoshu, poem 7-1094 by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro
- 

紫は灰(灰)さすものぞつば市の八十の ちまたに逢へる見や誰
murasaki wa / hano sasu mono zo / tsubaichi no / yo no chimata ni / aeru ko ya dare
The lady that I met on the road to Tsubaichi marketplace, what is her name?
Man'yoshu, poem 12-3101 by unknown poet

Yamanobe-no-Michi Hiking course



▲ Isonokami-jingu Shrine
This shrine deeply revered by successive generations of emperors boasts many weapons housed in its treasure repository and numerous legends regarding weapons. It is also said that the Nanatsusaya no Tachi (Seven-Branded Sword, a Japanese National Treasure) presented by an emissary of the ancient Korean kingdom Paekche to the Empress Jingu in the 52nd year of her reign is housed here. The god Futsu-no-mitama-no-ookami enshrined here is the dedication of a sword. Prior to the Nara period, the only places that were allowed to use the designation "jingu" (Grand Shrine) were Ise Grand Shrine and this shrine.



▲ Uchiyama-Eikyujii Temple Ruins
Established on the orders of Emperor Toba in 1114. In its heyday, the temple boasted 52 monks living here, but was closed due to the anti-Buddhism movement at the beginning of Meiji era. Now, only the pond of the main hall and the ruins of the Thatched-Roofed Imperial Palace, where Emperor Godaigo stayed during the relocation of the capital to Yoshino in the Nanbokucho period, remain.



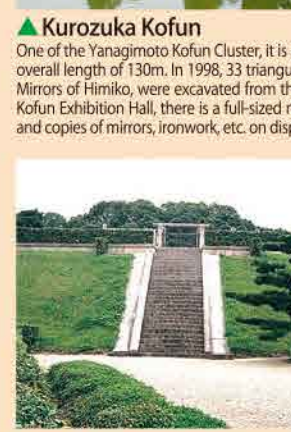
▲ Yotogi-jinja Shrine
The main hall of this shrine that honours the four deities of Kasuga Taisha Shrine has a thatched roof, which is quite unusual. On the path to the bus stop stands the torii gate that was moved here from Kasuga Wakamiya shrine in 1848.



▲ Takenouchi and Kayo Moated Settlements
Although there are many moated settlements in the Nara Basin, Takenouchi is the highest of them in the prefecture (approximately 100m above sea level). It is one of the villages created for self-defense in Yamato region during the troubled times of the Warring States from the Nanbokucho period until the unification under Tsutsu Junkei. The moat surrounding the settlement also served as a reservoir, and they cultivated bamboo groves within the moat. In addition to Takenouchi, another similar settlement called Kayo also remains.



▲ Kurozuka Kofun
One of the Yanagimoto Kofun Cluster, it is a keyhole-shaped tumulus with an overall length of 130m. In 1998, 33 triangular-rimmed mirrors, also known as Mirrors of Himiko, were excavated from the kofun. In the adjacent Kurozuka Kofun Exhibition Hall, there is a full-sized replica of a pit rock burial chamber and copies of mirrors, ironwork, etc. on display.



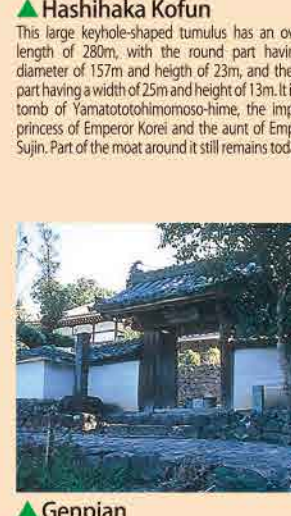
▲ Tomb of Emperor Sujin
The burial mound of the 10th Emperor Sujin was constructed in the first half of the 4th century, and it is also known as Andon-yama Tumulus. The neighboring site, Kushiyama Tumulus, has a rarely-seen "candy-wrap" shape, but the identity of the person buried there is unknown.



▲ Sumo-jinja Shrine
Located along the approach road to Hyozu-jinja shrine, it is believed to be the place where sumo originated. It is situated on the historic ruins of Katayakeshi, and the legendary sumo wrestler Nomi no Sukune is enshrined here.



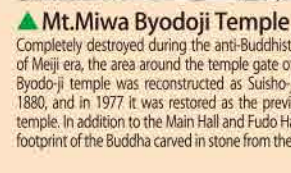
▲ Hashihaka Kofun
This large keyhole-shaped tumulus has an overall length of 280m, with the round part having a diameter of 157m and height of 23m, and the slot part having a width of 25m and height of 13m. It is the tomb of Yamatototomomoso-hime, the imperial princess of Emperor Komei and the aunt of Emperor Sujin. Part of the moat around it still remains today.



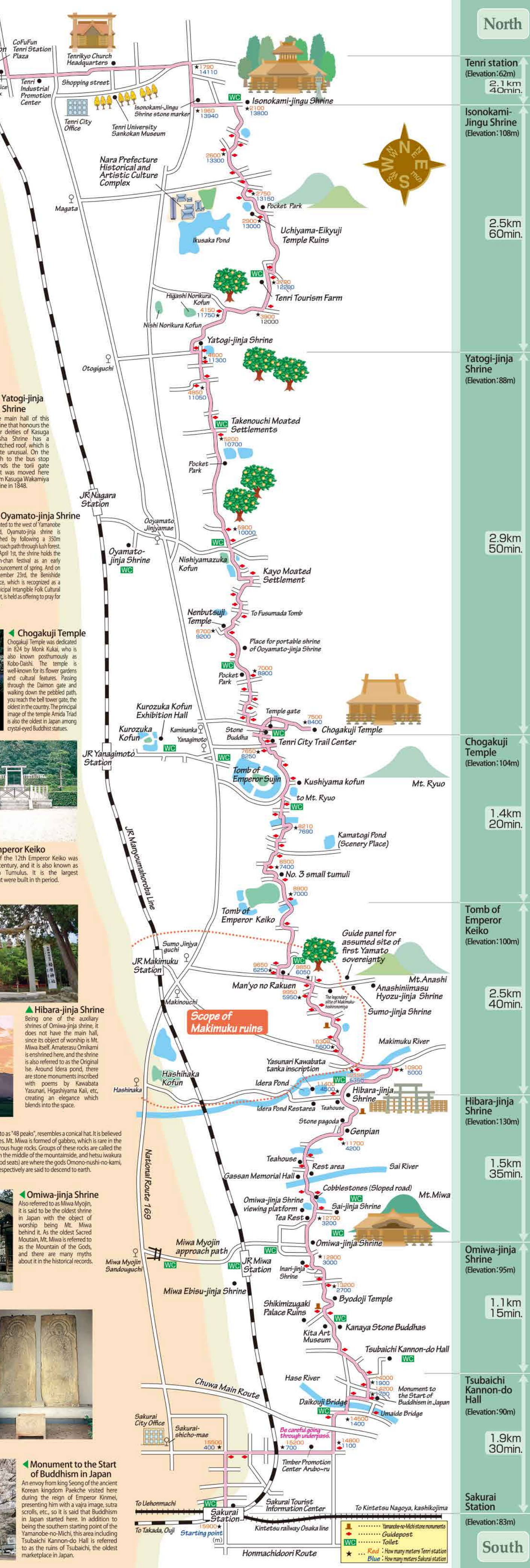
▲ Mt. Miwa
The shape of this beautiful mountain, also referred to as "48 peaks", resembles a conical hat. It is believed to be the most sacred mountain from ancient times. Mt. Miwa is formed of gabbro, which is rare in the Kasuga Mountain Range, and studded with numerous huge rocks. Groups of these rocks are called the oikura iwakura near the summit, nakatsu iwakura in the middle of the mountainside, and hetsu iwakura at the foot of the mountain. Each of the iwakura (God seats) are where the gods Omno-nushi-no-kami, Onamuchi-no-kami, and Sukunahikona-no-kami respectively are said to descend to earth.



▲ Genpian
It is a hermitage of Buddhist priest Genpin Sozu. Originally located in the Hibara Valley of Mt. Miwa, it flourished as a Buddhist temple in the mountains, but fell into ruins and was restored in 1667. It was moved to its present location following the separation of Shinto and Buddhism during the Meiji Restoration.



▲ Mt. Miwa Byodoji Temple
Completely destroyed during the anti-Buddhist movement of Meiji era, the area around the temple gate of the former Byodo-ji temple was reconstructed as Susho-ji temple in 1880, and in 1977 it was restored as the previous Byodoji temple. In addition to the Main Hall and Fudo Hall, there is a footprint of the Buddha carved in stone from the Edo period.



North

- Tenri station (Elevation: 62m) 2.1 km 40min.
- Isonokami-jingu Shrine (Elevation: 108m) 2.5 km 60min.
- Yatogi-jinja Shrine (Elevation: 88m) 2.9 km 50min.
- Chogakuji Temple (Elevation: 104m) 1.4 km 20min.
- Tomb of Emperor Keiko (Elevation: 100m) 2.5 km 40min.
- Hibara-jinja Shrine (Elevation: 130m) 1.5 km 35min.
- Omiwa-jinja Shrine (Elevation: 95m) 1.1 km 15min.
- Tsubaichi Kannon-do Hall (Elevation: 90m) 1.9 km 30min.
- Sakurai Station (Elevation: 83m)

South

Legend: Red line: Yamanobe-no-Michi stone monuments; Green line: Yamato-no-Michi stone monuments; WC: Toilet; Star: How many meters Tenri station; Blue: How many meters Sakurai station