

HIGHLIGHTING
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THE COLORFUL LEAVES OF
AUTUMN IN JAPAN

TOPICS: Addresses by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan on the Occasions
of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games

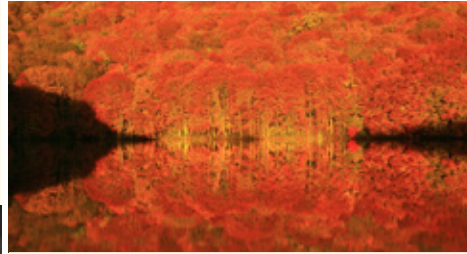
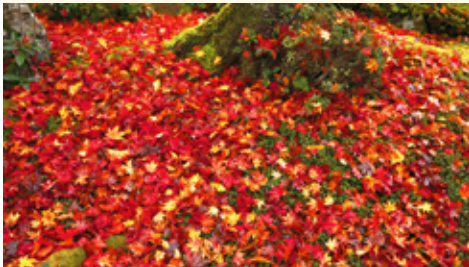
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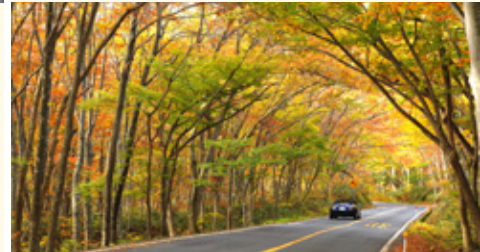
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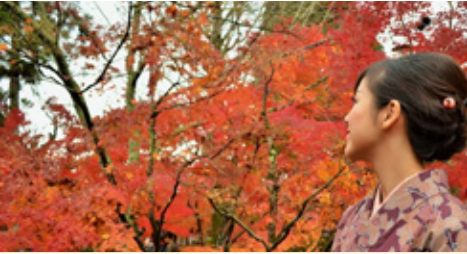
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THE COLORFUL LEAVES OF AUTUMN IN JAPAN

Japanese people have appreciated the changing colors of autumn since ancient times. In this month's *Highlighting Japan*, we introduce some famous spots for viewing the autumn foliage, from mountains and lakes to temples and museum gardens. We look too at some of the beautiful creations that colorful autumn leaves have inspired, including paintings, kimono fabric designs, and seasonal Japanese sweets.

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ON THE COVER

Garden of the Nezu Museum, Omotesando, Minato City, Tokyo
Photo: Courtesy of Nezu Museum

EDITORS' NOTE

Japanese names in this publication are written in Japanese order: family name first, personal name last.

Addresses by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan on the Occasions of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games

His Majesty the Emperor of Japan declared the opening of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games as Honorary Patron, and also held audiences for members of each International Committee and distinguished foreign guests. The following are transcripts of the addresses given by His Majesty on these occasions.

Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (Held from July 23 to August 8, 2021)

On July 23, 2021, His Majesty the Emperor attended the opening ceremony of the Games of the XXXII Olympiad (Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games) as Honorary Patron of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and declared the Games open. Prior to the opening ceremony, in the Imperial Palace, His Majesty held an audience for members of the International Olympic Committee on July 22, and held an audience with foreign heads of state and other dignitaries attending the opening ceremony of the Games on July 23.

Address by His Majesty the Emperor on the Occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the Games of the XXXII Olympiad (July 23, 2021)

I declare open the Games of Tokyo celebrating the thirty second Olympiad of the modern era.



The opening ceremony of the Games of the XXXII Olympiad (Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games)

Tokyo 2020 / Ken Ishii



His Majesty the Emperor (center) attends the opening ceremony of the Games of the XXXII Olympiad (Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games)

Tokyo 2020 / Shugo TAKEMI

Address by His Majesty the Emperor at the Audience with Members of the International Olympic Committee (July 22, 2021)

President Bach,
Members of the International Olympic Committee,
The Opening Ceremony of the Games of the XXXII (32nd) Olympiad is going to be held tomorrow.

At present, countries all over the world are faced with the severe ordeal of the spread of COVID-19, which has been sweeping the world since the end of 2019. The virus continues to make gatherings and connecting with one another difficult.

Under such circumstances, the managing of the Games, while at the same time taking all possible measures against COVID-19, is a far from easy task. I would like to pay tribute to all those who have been involved in the management of the Games for their efforts at various venues.

I believe that the reason for the long and widespread support for the Olympic Games is the spirit of Olympism, which cherishes peace and harmony. I myself have a lasting memory of the closing ceremony of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, where athletes from different countries paraded together shoulder to shoulder, not divided by country, and this became the source of my wish



His Majesty the Emperor at the audience with members of the International Olympic Committee

Photo: Courtesy of the Imperial Household Agency



His Majesty the Emperor at the audience with H.E. Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic

Photo: Courtesy of the Imperial Household Agency

for world peace.

The Tokyo 2020 Games Vision states, “Sport has the power to change the world and our future.” Seeing athletes taking up the challenges of their respective sports, and seeing their families and those who support them, inspires us in many ways. The Tokyo 2020 Games will be held in the face of COVID-19. Caution is also necessary for the heat-wave in the height of summer. I hope that the closely coordinated measures implemented by you and all those involved for the prevention of infection will allow all athletes to compete in their sports in good health with complete commitment and peace of mind. It is my hope that through their performances the Games will be a beacon of hope for a new future. I would like to join you in wishing all the athletes the very best.

Thank you.

Remarks by His Majesty the Emperor on the Occasion of the Audience with Foreign Heads of State and Other Dignitaries attending the Opening Ceremony of the Games of the XXXII Olympiad (July 23, 2021)

Your Highnesses,
Excellencies,

Today, it gives me great pleasure to receive all of you who have come here from around the world.

At present, countries around the globe are facing the very difficult challenge of the spread of COVID-19. It has not been easy for people to gather and connect with one another.

I would like to express my deepest respect for the efforts of all athletes who have continued to do their best under such difficult circumstances in order to participate in these Games, as well as the efforts of their families and all those who have supported them. It is my hope that the athletes will be able to give their best performance in good health fending off COVID-19 and mindful of the hot weather which may be different from that of their own countries and regions.

I believe that the reason for the long and widespread support for the Olympic Games is the spirit of Olympism, which cherishes peace and harmony. I myself have a lasting memory of the closing ceremony of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, where athletes from different countries paraded together shoulder to shoulder, not divided by country, and this became the source of my wish for world peace.

In order to overcome the ordeal of COVID-19, it is imperative for all of us, whether at home or abroad, to work together with an even greater unity of mind. I would like to conclude my remarks with the hope that the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will remind us of the spirit of Olympism, peace and harmony, and that we will relay the torch of that spirit to the future. I would like to join you in wishing all the athletes the very best.

Thank you.

Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games (Held from August 24 to September 5, 2021)

On August 24, His Majesty attended the opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games as Honorary Patron and declared the Games open. Before the opening ceremony, on the same day, His Majesty held an audience for members of the International Paralympic Committee in the Imperial Palace.

Address by His Majesty the Emperor on the Occasion of the Opening Ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games (August 24, 2021)

I declare open the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

Address by His Majesty the Emperor at the Audience with Members of the International Paralympic Committee (August 24, 2021)



His Majesty the Emperor (center left) declares the opening of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games

Tokyo 2020 / Shugo TAKEMI



His Majesty the Emperor at the audience with members of the International Paralympic Committee

Photo: Courtesy of the Imperial Household Agency

President Parsons,
Members of the International Paralympic Committee,
The Opening Ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games is going to be held later today.

At present, countries all over the world are faced with the severe ordeal of the spread of COVID-19, which has been sweeping the world since the end of 2019. The virus continues to make gatherings and connections with one another difficult.

I would like to express my deepest respect for the efforts of all athletes who have continued to do their best under such difficult circumstances in order to participate in these Games, as well as the efforts of their families, coaches, engineers, and all those who have supported them. At the same time, I appreciate that managing the Games while taking all possible measures against COVID-19 is far from easy. In particular, the Paralympics may present difficulties that differ from those



The opening ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games


Tokyo 2020 / Uta MUKUO

at the Olympics: for instance, the potentially higher risk of exacerbation for athletes with weak respiratory function and athletes with underlying disease. Caution is also necessary for the hot weather which may be different from that of their own countries and regions. I would like to pay tribute to all those involved in management of the Games for their efforts at the various venues.

My parents, Their Majesties the Emperor Emeritus and the Empress Emerita, warmly watched over the 1964 Tokyo Paralympic Games with their keen interest in the development of parasport. They have told me various stories about the Tokyo Paralympic Games, and I myself, together with Empress Masako, enjoyed watching some of the competitions at the 1998 Nagano Winter Paralympic Games. We recall fond memories of being deeply impressed with the athletes who eagerly pursued their potential during the Nagano Paralympic Games.

I see the Paralympics, where athletes with disabilities from all over the world challenge their limits with creativity and ingenuity, as an opportunity to remind us of the irreplaceability and preciousness of our individuality. It is my sincere hope that these Games should be an impetus for progress to be made in building a society in which all of us, regardless of disabilities, can live together while placing greater importance than ever before on respecting and caring for one another.

I hope that the closely coordinated measures implemented by you and all those involved for the prevention of infection will allow all athletes to compete in their sports in good health with complete commitment and peace of mind. I would like to join you in wishing all athletes the very best.

Thank you. 

Note: This article has been created with the consent of the Imperial Household Agency and on the basis of materials published by the Agency. The article was edited with the cooperation of the Secretariat of the Headquarters for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games of the Cabinet Secretariat.

Reflection of the sky and red autumn leaves on Tsuta Numa Lake



THE COLORFUL LEAVES OF AUTUMN IN JAPAN



Detail of the Japanese-style painting *Passion* by Kawabata Ryushi

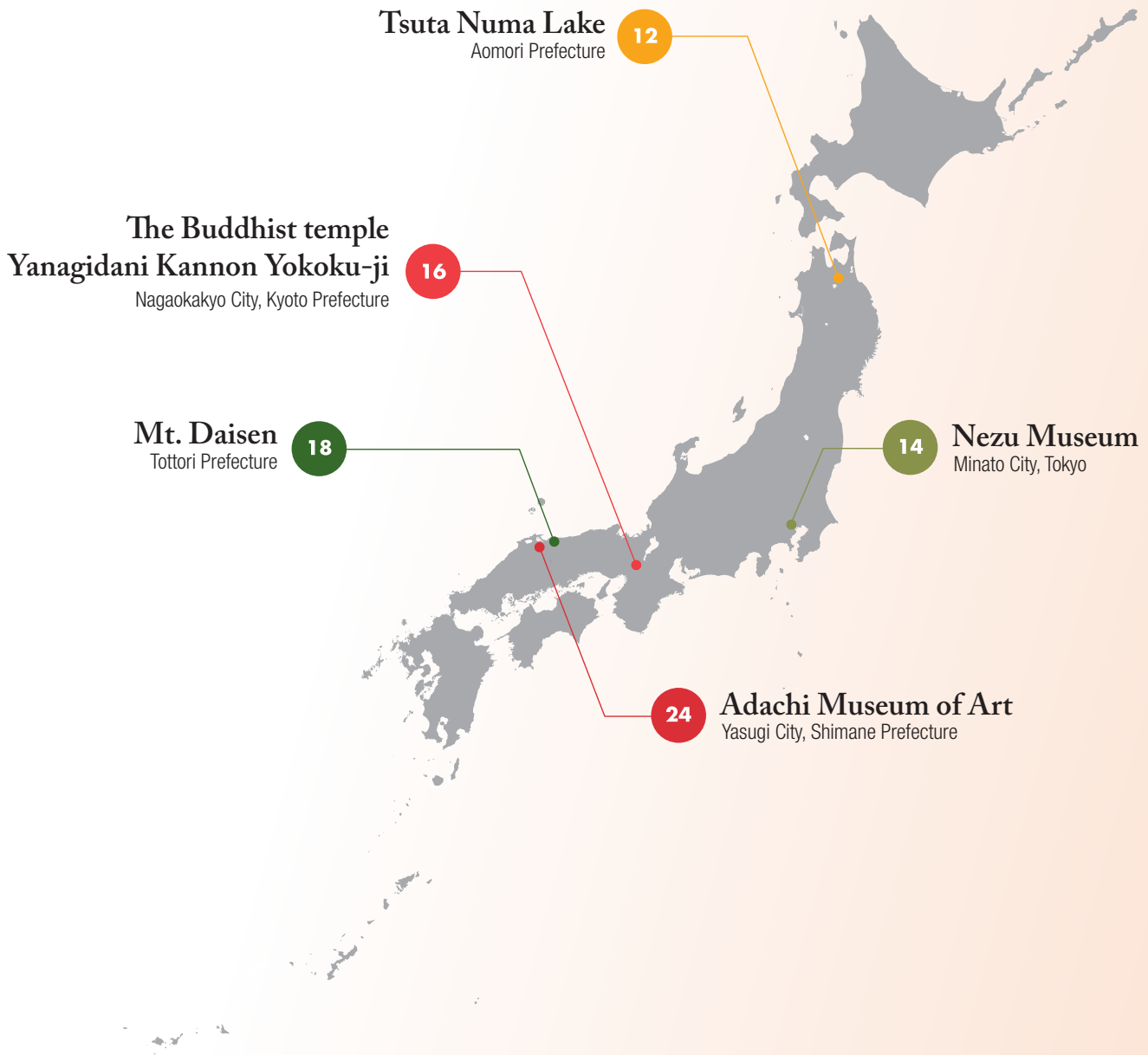


Hana-chozu water basin covered in green moss and decorated with multi-colored maple leaves at Yokoku-ji

Photos: Courtesy of Adachi Museum of Art; Courtesy of Yanagidani Kannon Yokoku-ji

J

apanese people have appreciated the changing colors of autumn since ancient times. In this month's *Highlighting Japan*, we introduce some famous spots for viewing the autumn foliage, from mountains and lakes to temples and museum gardens. We look too at some of the beautiful creations that colorful autumn leaves have inspired, including paintings, kimono fabric designs, and seasonal Japanese sweets.



The Autumn Colors of Japan



Matsutani Shigeru, visiting professor at Kyoto Prefectural University
Photo: Courtesy of Matsutani Shigeru

SINCE ancient times, Japanese people have appreciated the changing colors of fall just as much as the cherry blossoms in spring. We spoke with Matsutani Shigeru, the honorary director of Kyoto Botanical Gardens and a visiting professor at Kyoto Prefectural University, about the highlights of autumn colors in Japan.

Colorful autumn leaves appear all across Japan in the autumn. Is there a particular reason for this?

Japan gets ample rainfall for trees to grow. Also, two-thirds of the country is covered in forests and there are a wide variety of tree species. Deciduous trees whose leaves change color in autumn are distributed across Japan, allowing one to see autumn colors in almost all regions of the country.

For many deciduous trees, the leaves begin to change color when days with a low of 6°C or 7°C continue. As the islands of Japan stretch from north to south, the leaves begin to change in the mountains of northern Hokkaido from the middle of September, and from there, the changing colors move south from the Tohoku region on down to the Kanto region, which is home to Tokyo. Kyoto, where I live, is somewhat to the west, and usually the best time to see autumn leaves is from the end of November until the

beginning of December.

It is thought that the brightly-colored, beautiful fall leaves are due to changes in the amount of red, yellow, and other pigments in the leaves when natural conditions are met. These conditions include ample sun during the day, a great disparity in temperatures between night and day, a low of around 5°C for an extended period of time, and when trees get a suitable amount of water.

Please tell us about the charm of Japan's autumn colors.

There are many varieties of deciduous trees in Japan, so one great attraction is that you can see a variety of fall colors here, including red, yellow, yellowish-brown, and orange. The species known as “Japanese maple” is the tree that symbolizes the autumn colors and has leaves that turn red. This maple grows naturally in many parts of Japan and is also planted in many parks, gardens, temples, and shrines. The ginkgo tree is best-known among trees in Japan that turn yellow. You frequently see this tree as a roadside tree in Japan. Several trees including the oak, beech, and Chinese cork oak that grow naturally in many Japanese forests have leaves that turn yellowish-brown.

Because not only these kinds of deciduous trees grow in the forests of Japan, but also evergreens, you can see greens among other colors during the autumn leaf season. You could say that the charm of Japanese fall colors is the beauty of this combination of various colors.



Red and orange autumn leaves scattered about a moss garden in Kyoto
Photo: Kazenifukarete/PIXTA



The yellow carpet laid by the ginkgoes at Iwato Ochiba Shrine in Kyoto
Photo: masaaki/PIXTA



The bright yellow autumn colors of the ginkgo trees lining Horikawa-dori in Kyoto
Photo: anomeaSW/PIXTA



The many autumn colors of Zuiho-ji Park at Arima Onsen in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture
Photo: masa/PIXTA

Why does Kyoto have such a large number of famous spots for viewing autumn leaves?

Kyoto City is in a basin surrounded by mountains, and so the difference in temperature between day and night is great. From around early November, there are some days where the temperature drops to around 6°C or 7°C. The Kamogawa river also flows through the city, so there is always a moderate amount of humidity. In this way, the city features the natural conditions mentioned before that are needed for the autumn colors to be beautiful. Moreover, there has been a culture of admiring the fall foliage in Kyoto since ancient times. During the Heian period (from the end of the 8th century until the end of the 12th century), when Kyoto was the capital of Japan, among the aristocracy appreciating fall leaves became an important event for enjoying the season, similar to cherry blossom viewing. Nobles would visit the mountains near Kyoto when the leaves changed colors and would compose *waka*¹ poetry about the beauty of the leaves. Eventually, in order to see and enjoy the fall colors up close, Japanese maple and other trees whose leaves change color in autumn were planted at the residences of the nobility. Kyoto is the main setting of *The Tale of Genji*, written by Murasaki Shikibu in the middle of the Heian period, and many depictions of the changing colors appear throughout the story.

Later, trees with leaves that changed color in autumn came to be planted in gardens and on the grounds of temples and shrines in Kyoto. There is an elegance to the autumn leaves of the Japanese gardens at temples and shrines with many hundred years of history. The contrast between the green of pine trees and moss and the red of Japanese maple trees in these gardens is an extraordinary sight.

Can you tell us about a spot for these fall leaves that made a lasting impression on you?

Iwato Ochiba Shrine, located in the mountains of northern Kyoto City, is a small shrine that few know about. An incredibly beautiful spectacle appears when the leaves of the several large ginkgo trees on the shrine grounds change into a bright yellow. When the leaves have finished changing, they fall to the ground, and it appears as if an actual yellow carpet has been laid down.

You can also enjoy various autumn colors in Kyoto at places other than shrines and temples. For example, ginkgo trees are planted along Horikawa-dori, a street that runs north-south through central Kyoto. The sight of rows of large yellow-hued ginkgo trees is truly impressive.

I also recommend the Karato valley, located in Miyama Town, Nantan City, about two hours north by car from the central part of Kyoto City. More than 90% of the nature-rich

Miyama-cho area is covered in forests, and Karato valley is also surrounded by dense forests. When autumn comes, the steep valley is dyed red, yellow, orange, and a variety of other colors from the deciduous trees, in addition to the greens of the evergreens.

It's not in Kyoto, but you can also see incredible fall colors at Zuiho-ji Park in the famous Arima Onsen hot spring resort in Hyogo Prefecture close to Kyoto. The vibrant red of the Japanese enkianthus is particularly impressive.

Please tell us about the fall colors at the Kyoto Botanical Gardens where you served as chairman from 2006 to 2010.

The Kyoto Botanical Gardens holds about 12,000 varieties of plants from around the world on 24 hectares of land. About 55,000 trees are cultivated within the gardens, and of those, about 2,000 have leaves that change colors in the fall. For example, Japanese maple and other trees change colors in autumn in the Nakaragi-no-Mori forest of the gardens. The leaves of the large Formosan gumⁱⁱ tree in the Hydrangea Garden, more than a century old, change from green to yellow, orange, and then red.

Deciduous trees won't show beautiful colors if they don't get enough water before changing. This is why having employees water the trees is extremely important. If there isn't enough water, the ends of the leaves become slightly round. To keep from overlooking this subtle change, employees check the trees one by one each day and sprinkle water where needed.

Please tell us how you recommend enjoying the fall colors.

Tree leaves do not suddenly change from green to red or yellow. The leaves begin to change color from the sunny upper leaves, and this gradually spreads to the entire tree. It's great fun to observe this transformation.

While it's fine to look at the changing trees from afar, I also recommend viewing them up close. You can see the difference in the colors of each individual leaf. Some leaves may have changed color only on the spots that get direct sunlight, with the parts in the shadow still green. You may also discover new beauty by standing directly below the foliage and looking up at the leaves from behind against the sun. ㊦

Interview by SAWAJI OSAMU

i A classic Japanese poetic form consisting of 31 syllables divided into five parts with five, seven, five, seven and seven (5-7-5-7-7) syllables in each. Nowadays, it is also called "tanka."

ii The Formosan gum is a tree in the Altingiaceae family, with three-lobed leaves. This tree is often planted in parks and along roads in Japan.



Fall foliage near the Nakaragi-no-Mori forest in the Kyoto Botanical Gardens

Photo: Courtesy of Kyoto Botanical Gardens



The autumn leaves of the Formosan gum tree in the Hydrangea Garden at the Kyoto Botanical Gardens

Photo: Courtesy of Matsutani Shigeru

Aomori Autumn Colors Set a Lake Aflame


Tsuta Numa Lake in Towada City, Aomori Prefecture, reflects trees with red autumn leaves like a mirror, creating beautiful and glorious scenes.

SASAKI TAKASHI

THE Towada-Hachimantai National Park, located in the mountainous interior of the northern Tohoku region of Japan, is dotted with many places of scenic beauty, from active volcanoes to lakes and marshes surrounded by unspoiled virgin forest. Tsuta Numa Lake is one such place, becoming a popular attraction in recent years in particular for its spectacular autumn colors. Sannohe Rui of the Travel Towada Tourist Information Center explains the appeal of Tsuta Numa Lake.

“The reason for the popularity of Tsuta Numa Lake is, above all, its mirror-like reflection of stunning autumn colors. But since this can only be seen at certain times of the early morning and in certain weather conditions, it’s a truly precious scene!”

In early October, when the peaks of the Hakkoda mountain range seen from Tsuta Numa Lake begin to change color, a red carpet gradually extends toward the foothills. As the air clears and late autumn approaches, it reaches the area known as “Tsuta no Nana Numa,” meaning the seven ponds of Tsuta. The largest of these ponds, with a circumference of about one kilometer, is Tsuta Numa Lake. In late October, when the autumn colors here peak, red-colored trees such as beech and maple appear to burst into flames as dawn breaks and the sun rises over the lake. On a windless day, the surface of the lake becomes a mirror, reflecting the vivid colors of the autumn leaves. Sannohe herself has seen this “miraculous view” only once.



Reflection of the sky and red autumn leaves on Tsuta Numa Lake



Reflection of the red autumn leaves on Tsuta Numa Lake




Reflection of multi-colored autumn leaves on Tsuta Numa Lake
Photo: © Towada & Oirase Tourism Bureau

Tsuta Onsen, a hot spring in the southern part of the Hak-koda mountain range, is the starting point of a roughly 2.8-kilometer nature trail with observation decking that takes in Tsuta Numa Lake and the six other ponds. In addition to the autumn foliage, visitors can enjoy the natural beauty of the abundant seasonal changes on view at the ponds of varying size and the primeval beech forest.

However, lately media coverage and social media activity featuring the spectacular autumn colors of Tsuta Numa Lake in the early morning have led to over-tourism, with concerns increasingly being voiced about tourism's impact on the surrounding environment. In response to these concerns and in light of the COVID-19 situation, the Tsuta Numa Lake

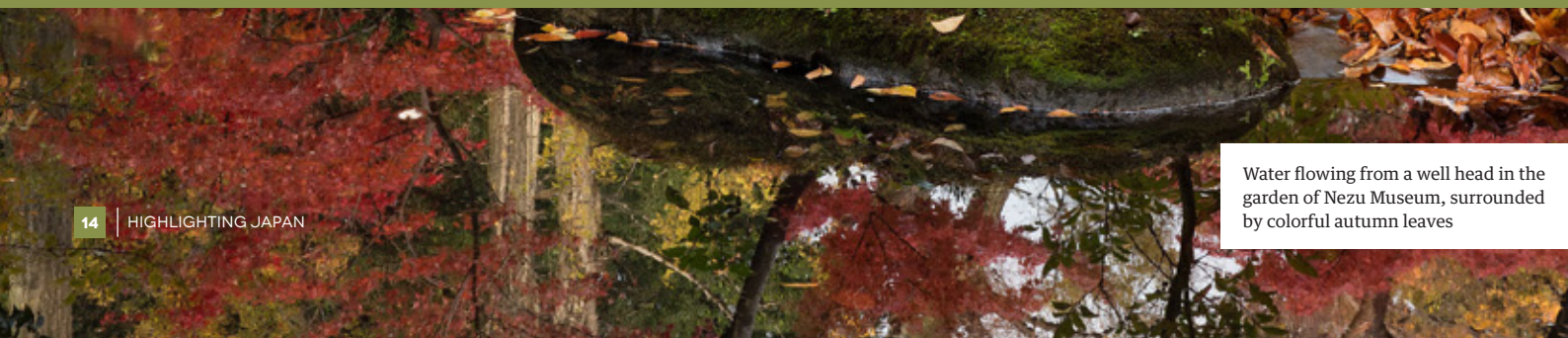
administrators introduced an advance reservation system in 2020 for the autumn leaf-viewing season which also restricts entry to the observation decking in the early morning.

Sannohe hopes that such an initiative will ensure that the natural environment of Tsuta Nana Numa is handed down to future generations, and that the autumn colors of Tsuta Numa Lake will continue to move visitors for many years to come. 





An Urban Art Museum with a Garden of Beautiful Autumn Leaves





Garden view from the entrance hall

Nezu Museum, located in Omotesando in central Tokyo, is an art museum that houses pre-modern art pieces from Japan and other parts of Asia, including National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties. The museum also features a vast Japanese garden and beautiful colored leaves in autumn.

SUGIYAMA MAMORU

NEZU Museum, with its 17,000 square meter verdant Japanese garden, is located in a corner of the city in the Omotesando area of Minato City, Tokyo. Stepping into the garden, you feel as if you are deep in the mountains. There are four tea houses for authentic tea ceremonies in a garden that takes advantage of its terrain's many variations in height, and which is shaped like a basin with a long, narrow pond at its center. Garden features such as a waterfall, bamboo grove and shrine (Kitano Tenjin enshrined at Hibaishi), collectively known as the Eight Views of the Nezu Museum, show off the elegance of the four seasons. The varied scenery and tranquility of the garden can lead visitors to forget that they are in the heart of Tokyo.


The garden is a famous spot within Tokyo for its autumn leaves, and there are many people who visit the museum in fall to appreciate the art exhibitions and to walk among the changing leaves in the garden.

A spokesperson for Nezu Museum says, "In autumn, the ginkgo trees start to change to yellow near the museum building and gradually the Japanese maples change to red usually from the second half of November until around the start of December. I recommend the view of the crimson Japanese maples located around the Hikinsai tea house."

Nezu Museum opened in 1941 in the former residence of Nezu Kaichiro (1860-1940), an entrepreneur known as the "Railway King," to exhibit the pre-modern art works he had collected. Originally a samurai residence, the garden was worked on by Nezu himself. The museum's main building was renovated in 2009 by architect Kuma Kengo, who is known for such works as the Japan National Stadium.

When standing in the entrance hall, the Buddhist stone statues dating from the third to eighth centuries on display in front of the glass wall seem to meld into the garden beyond. This view symbolizes the museum, a fusion of art and garden views.

Nezu Museum houses over 7,400 pre-modern art works in a wide range of genres from Japan and other parts of Asia. The museum holds seven exhibitions each year, each with different themes. Suzuki Kiitsu's (1796-1859) *Mountain Stream in Summer and Autumn*, a work owned by the museum and designated as an Important Cultural Property last year, will be featured in the special exhibition planned for November and December of this year. This painting on a folding screen features a pair of scenes of a mountain stream flowing among rocks and a cypress forest: a summer scene with blooming golden-rayed lilies and an autumn scene with the changing leaves of a cherry tree. The white lily flowers and red cherry leaves are realistically painted with fine brush strokes among the bold composition and vivid color scheme of green, azurite blue, and golden yellow.

Nezu Museum offers a chance to escape from the bustle of everyday life and experience the Japanese autumn through art and a garden—pleasures even to be found in the heart of Tokyo. 



Important Cultural Property *Mountain Stream in Summer and Autumn* by Suzuki Kiitsu, 19th century, Nezu Museum

A Temple's Autumn Colors Bring Comfort

Yokoku-ji temple, founded some 1,200 years ago on the side of a mountain in Nagaokakyo City, Kyoto Prefecture, is a famous spot for viewing the autumn colors.

SATO KUMIKO



Hana-chozu water basin covered in green moss and decorated with multi-colored maple leaves

ESTABLISHED in 806, the Buddhist temple Yanagidani Kannon Yokoku-ji stands amid trees on a mountain slope in Nagaokakyo City, Kyoto Prefecture. Sacred water (*okozui*), said to have come from the prayers of the high priest Kukai (774-835) in 811, still springs forth in the temple grounds. Believed to have a wondrous power to heal eye diseases and other ailments, the miraculous water attracts many pilgrims.

The beauty of the temple grounds, which showcase the natural topography of the surrounding area, has recently been popularized via the internet. Five *chozu-sha* (water basin pavilions) are dotted around the temple grounds for visitors to purify

their hands. Recently, the *hana-chozu*, water basins decorated with seasonal flowers and leaves, have been a hit with young people, who take striking “Insta-worthy” photos to post on social media. Hana-chozu were introduced to the temple by Kusaka Shun’ei, the present temple abbot, who says he “wanted temple visitors to enjoy the seasons through all five senses and to experience a feeling of peace.”

Yokoku-ji temple is especially beautiful in November each year when the maple trees in the temple grounds turn red and yellow. During “Momiji Week” (Autumn Maple Week) from mid-November to early December, the hana-chozu are decorated with maple leaves at different

Autumn leaves viewed from the upper floor of the Kami-shoin study



Yokoku-ji temple viewed through colorful autumn leaves



stages of changing color, some still green, some just beginning to change, and some in full autumn colors, in a vibrant range of shades.

During Momiji Week, the Kami-shoin study, normally closed to the public, is open for viewing. The two-storey Kamishoin Study was built at the turn of the twentieth century as a tea-ceremony house for entertaining special guests. From the upper floor, visitors can look out over the Jodo-en garden, a scenic garden bursting with a tapestry of autumn colors that constantly delight.

As autumn deepens, Yokoku-ji temple, with its atmosphere of solemnity and serenity, is blanketed in the gorgeous gradations of autumn foliage from green to yellow to red, bringing comfort to the hearts of many people. 🍁



Hana-chozu decorated with maple leaves at different stages of changing color, from green to yellow through orange and red, and showing the shadows of maple leaves above

Mt. Daisen Covered in “Seven Colors”

Mt. Daisen in western Tottori Prefecture is famous for its autumn leaves. In autumn, it is covered in richly colored leaves and the whole mountain is said to have autumn leaves of “seven colors.”

SASAKI TAKASHI

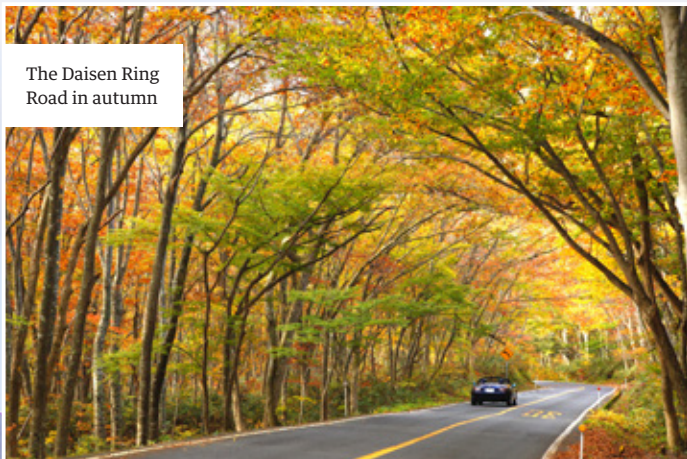
TOWERING 1,709 meters above sea level in western Tottori Prefecture, Mt. Daisen (its highest peak, Mt. Misen) is the tallest mountain in the Chugoku region of western Japan and one of the “100 Famous Japanese Mountains.” The mountain is sometimes called the Houki Fuji (“Houki” is the former name of the western half of Tottori Prefecture) because of its resemblance to conical Mt. Fuji

when viewed from the west. When viewed from the north or south, by contrast, the mountain appears craggy with steep cliffs formed by eruptions and landslides when the mountain was still an active volcano. And a beech forest stretches out along the base of the mountain, making this a famous area for its striking views of the autumn leaves.

“The vegetation on the mountain is extremely abundant,” says Adachi Tomoko from the Daisen Tourism Organization, “and in autumn not just the beech, but oak, maple, Japanese rowan, and other deciduous trees change colors all at once. This is why the leaves turn shades of vermilion, orange, yellow, and more in the autumn, and the whole mountain is said to take on seven colors.”

According to Adachi, Mt. Daisen has been venerated as a sacred place in Japanese mountain worship since ancient times, and as entry to the mountain by ordinary people was strictly regulated until the early modern era, wide areas of nature remain untouched.

There are a number of particularly popular places from which to view the autumn leaves of Mt. Daisen. The about



The Daisen Ring Road in autumn



900-meter-high Kagikake Toge Pass, for example, affords a sweeping view over the autumn leaves at the foot of the rugged southern face of Mt. Daisen. The Noroshi-dai Observatory, a viewpoint on the slopes of Mt. Goenzan, affords an unobstructed view of the northern face of Mt. Daisen. The Kinmon (Golden Gate), a natural opening between rock walls considered by mountain worshippers to be the “entrance” to sacred Mt. Daisen, affords similarly expansive views towards the mountain’s northern wall. There’s also an enjoyable view from the 64-km Daisen Ring Road, which circles Mt. Daisen on its slopes and passes through tunnels of trees with brightly colored autumn leaves.

The peak of the autumn leaf season is from the end of October through the start of November, when the temperature suddenly drops and winter approaches. At this time, it may be possible to enjoy magical scenes of Mt. Daisen with its colorful autumn leaves lightly covered in white snow. 🍁



Mt. Daisen viewed over the Sadagawa river from the Kinmon (Golden Gate)



Mt. Daisen covered in colorful autumn leaves and a light dusting of snow

All photos: Courtesy of Karaki Takashi

Mt. Daisen in autumn viewed from the Mt. Goenzan Noroshi-dai Observatory

Kimono with Autumn Leaf Patterns

Famous for its gorgeous colors and patterns, the kimono, Japan's traditional garment, uses various means to express the passage of the four seasons. In the autumn, kimono with red leaf patterns are especially beautiful.

YANAGISAWA MIHO

THE kimono, Japan's traditional garment, is fashioned from delicate woven fabrics and dyed silk.ⁱ Many of the patterns use *kacho-fugetsu* (lit. flowers, birds, wind and moon) motifs to express the four seasons.

Takada Hiroshi, the third-generation proprietor of Komonya Takadakatsu, a kimono manufacturer and wholesale business that also reproduces traditional patterns, comments, "The shape of the kimono remains essentially the same irrespective of the season. Japanese people have traditionally expressed the four seasons through patterns and colors in the kimono within the constraints of this shape that remains the same."

The predominant motifs are plants that evoke each of the four seasons, typically cherry blossoms in spring, morning glory in summer, *momiji* (red maple leaves) and chrysanthemum in autumn, and pine and bamboo in winter.



Woman wearing a white kimono with a pattern of a few autumn leaves and tied with a reddish *obi* sash

Among these motifs, the *momiji* is featured in a variety of patterns that can be worn nearly all year round. For example, kimono with a pattern of *ao-momiji*, fresh green maple leaves that have not yet turned red, can be worn from May through the summer. Red *momiji* leaves, or the *Tatsutagawa* motif, a design that depicts scattered *momiji* floating on running water, are standard patterns for kimono worn in the autumn. The

Tatsutagawa motif is derived from a waka poem by the ninth century poet Ariwara no Narihira. The poem describes how the water of the *Tatsutagawa* river, a famous spot for viewing the autumn leaves in Nara Prefecture south of Kyoto, is colored red with scattered *momiji* leaves.ⁱⁱ

The *ofu* pattern, which is decorated with cherry blossoms for spring and red *momiji* leaves for autumn, can be worn in both seasons.




A kimono decorated with the *ofu* pattern, which shows cherry blossoms for spring and *momiji* maple leaves for autumn



A kimono decorated with the autumnal *Tatsutagawa* motif

In addition to the patterns, the obi sash or accessories can also be used to express the seasons.

Takada continues, “Other ways to express autumn are, for example, to choose a red-colored *obi* (kimono sash belt), which evokes autumn leaves, to accompany a cherry-colored kimono, or to use an *obidome* (ornament worn over an obi) in the shape of an autumn leaf as an accessory to a chic plain kimono. One of the joys of wearing kimono is to find various ingenious ways to match your outfit to the season.”

It is fair to say that arranging the kimono to express a sense of the season is an expression of the Japanese spirit that loves nature and seeks to coexist with it. 



A woman wearing a kimono tied with a red-colored *obi* sash evoking the autumn leaves

i Some famous textiles in Japan are Nishijin woven fabric from Kyoto, Yuzen dyed fabric from Kyoto, and Kaga Yuzen dyed fabric from Ishikawa Prefecture.
ii *Such beauty unheard of/even in the age of the raging gods—/the Tatsuta River/ tie-dyeing its waters/in autumnal colors.* Translation by Peter MacMillan, *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each* https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202010/202010_02_en.html

Autumn *Wagashi* Bring Color to Kyoto



A single Momiji, one of Kagizen Yoshifusa's classic autumn *wagashi*, here announcing the maple leaves' change in color from yellow to orange



Kyoto is one of Japan's most celebrated places for colorful autumn foliage. Here, heartfelt love for these beautiful autumn colors has long been expressed in *wagashi*, traditional Japanese confectionery.

SATO KUMIKO

Jo-namagashi (superior fresh sweets) in the autumnally-colored shape of three ginkgo leaves

JAPAN has four distinct seasons and a culture has been developed that cherishes a sensibility to these. *Wagashi* (Japanese sweets) are a fine example of this tradition. Kyoto *wagashi* in particular, loved by court nobles and tea masters since ancient times and by writers and artists in the modern era and later also, have a long history of gradual refinement.

Confectionery store Onkashi Tsukasa Kagizen Yoshifusa has been making *wagashi* in Kyoto's Gion district for around three hundred years. Imanishi Zenya, fifteenth generation head of the store, says, "We announce the coming season to our customers by incorporating small seasonal changes in our *wagashi* ahead of time."

One of the store's classic autumn *wagashi* is called *Momiji* (Japanese maple). Each day, the *Momiji* displayed in the window of the store gradually change color from yellow to red, just like the maple leaves, conveying to passersby the atmosphere of the autumn season as it gradually deepens.

This type of *wagashi* is known as *jo-namagashi* (superior fresh sweets). Hand-made by highly skilled confectioners, *jo-namagashi* are said to have originated in Kyoto in the early seventeenth century and eventually spread throughout Japan.

Jo-namagashi can be made to represent not only seasonal flowers, but also things such as seasonal scenes. This is achieved through the use of ingredients such as sweet red bean paste (*anko*) made by boiling and straining red azuki beans, colored dough made from white kidney beans or white azuki bean paste mixed with flour and other ingredients (*konashi*), and transparent agar made from seaweed. Chestnuts are another essential seasonal autumn ingredient. With sophisticated hand skills, *wagashi* confectioners use spatulas and other tools to shape these ingredients into maple leaves, for example, which are then colored to create beautiful and delectable sweets that are pleasing both to the eye and to the palate.

Namagashi contain a large amount of water. In contrast, dry

wagashi contain just a small amount of water and are called *higashi* (dry sweets). Kyoto is home to a type of *wagashi* called *oshimono* or *uchimono*, which is made by placing sugar or rice flour into wooden molds and then knocking it out of the molds. Those made from *wasanbon*, Japanese sugar made from sugar cane in the traditional way, are considered to be the most luxurious. The wooden molds are made to create the forms of flora, fauna, and other natural phenomena characterizing the four seasons, and have been handed down from generation to gen-



Kagizen Yoshifusa's autumnal *higashi* (dry sweets) assortment entitled *Minori no aki* (Autumn berries)



A confectioner prepares a line of *jo-namagashi* sweets

eration in long-established *wagashi* stores—some at Kagizen Yoshifusa have been used for one or two centuries. The *momiji* maple leaf is one of the most popular autumnal designs for *higashi*, and features as the central motif in a design known as *fukiyose* that represents the colorful fallen leaves and nuts and berries blown by the wind. Stores in autumn are adorned with these *fukiyose* arrangements of *higashi*, which look like veritable jewel boxes. Recently, *higashi* have gained popularity among young people, who are finding that they go well with coffee.

Summer in Kyoto is hot, but once September has passed, the wind gradually turns autumnal as the city approaches the season of autumn colors. Autumn *wagashi* appear slightly earlier than the actual autumn colors, and so herald the coming season. 🍁

Autumn Leaves by Yokoyama Taikan (left screen)



Appreciating Autumn Foliage Masterpieces and a Garden's Autumn Colors

The Adachi Museum of Art in Yasugi City, Shimane Prefecture, famous for its beautiful Japanese-style gardens, houses a collection of Nihonga (Japanese-style painting) masterpieces depicting autumn leaves.

SUGIYAMA MAMORU

THE Adachi Museum of Art in Yasugi City, Shimane Prefecture, is famous both in Japan and overseas for the beauty of its traditional Japanese landscape gardens. The grounds of the museum feature a variety of charming gardens that display vibrant red foliage in autumn, including the main Dry Landscape Garden that incorporates natural mountain scenes behind the garden.



The Dry Landscape Garden at the Adachi Museum of Art in autumn

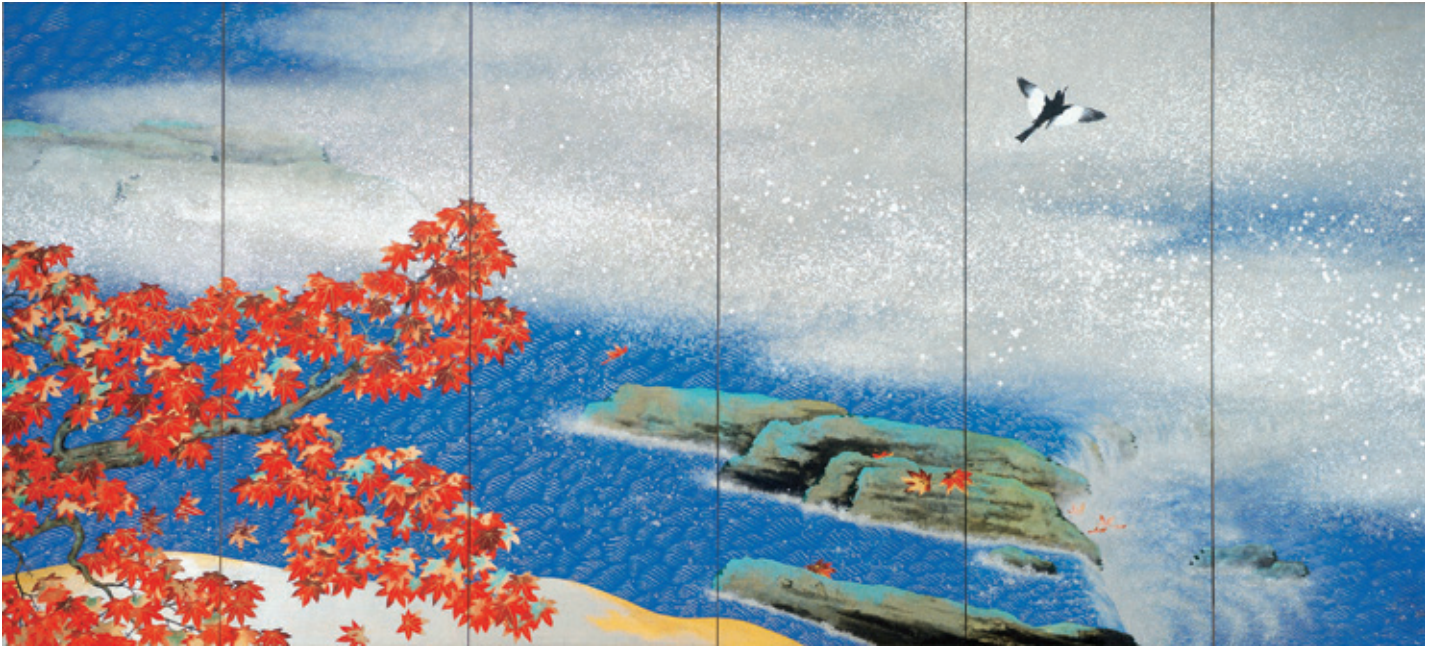
All photos: Courtesy of Adachi Museum of Art

The museum houses a large collection of Nihonga¹. A particular famous Nihonga painting in the museum's collection is brought out every year for the special autumn exhibition. That work is *Autumn Leaves*, a *byobu-e* created by the master of Japanese painting (Nihonga) Yokoyama Taikan (1868-1958, hereinafter "Taikan") in 1931. *Byobu-e* are paintings on folding screens, furnishings used to divide and decorate interior spaces. *Autumn Leaves* consists of a pair of six-panel folding screens, each approximately 1.6 meters high and 3.6 meters wide, depicting a resplendent maple tree, its boughs laden with autumn leaves and extending out across a backdrop of a river running with brilliant blue water.

"The piece has such youthful vigor that it's hard to believe Taikan painted this work when he was over 60 years old," says curator Kisa Fuyumi. "The use of intensely colored pigments and multiple shades to depict the maple leaves creates a three-dimensional effect. This is Taikan's masterpiece, demonstrating his bold use of newly available materials, such as his use of platinum foil to portray the glittering surface of the river."

In order to create the most aesthetically pleasing result when the screen is opened, Taikan's composition deforms the

¹ In the broad sense, Nihonga are paintings that employ traditional Japanese artistic techniques and materials. In the narrow sense, they are modern (late-nineteenth century until now) Japanese paintings that employ traditional Japanese artistic techniques with an awareness of Western paintings.



Living Framed Painting, a “framed” view of the Dry Landscape Garden in autumn from inside the museum.



maple leaves by horizontally elongating them slightly more than they appear on a real tree. The painting features a blend of light and dark colored autumn leaves arranged in superb harmony.

The Adachi Museum of Art’s collection of some 2,000 works comprises mainly Nihonga, and includes one of the best-known paintings by Kawabata Ryushi (1885-1966), a master of modern Nihonga who ranks alongside Taikan. That work is a byobu-e entitled *Passion (Aizen)* painted in 1934. *Passion* depicts a pair of mandarin ducks tracing circles as they paddle through water covered with fallen red-tinged maple leaves. The Japanese title “*Aizen*” means love between a man and a woman, and the surface of the water dyed red with autumn leaves is said to represent the surge of love. The expressions on the faces of the mandarin ducks and the trails formed by their movement on top of the leaves that float on the water are depicted realistically. At the same time, the composition is decorative, with autumn leaves painted in the same saturated tone—unlike Taikan’s *Autumn Leaves*—occupying most of the picture. The vibrancy of the leaves in their full autumnal glory is prominent in this work, leaving a lingering impression on the viewer.

Adachi Museum of Art founder Adachi Zenko (1899-1990) had an unwavering belief that “A garden is thought of as a living canvas.” A visit to the museum in autumn is a chance to appreciate the autumn foliage masterpieces on display along with the garden showing its autumn leaves. 🍁



Passion by Kawabata Ryushi



Spreading the Use of an Online Screening System for Expectant Women to the World

Use of an online screening system to help women give birth safely is spreading in Japan and overseas.

UMEZAWA AKIRA

AN online antenatal health screening system has been developed that allows expectant women to listen to the heartbeat of their unborn child by themselves and to have the condition of the fetus checked by a doctor remotely, sim-

ply by attaching a palm-sized sensor to the abdomen.

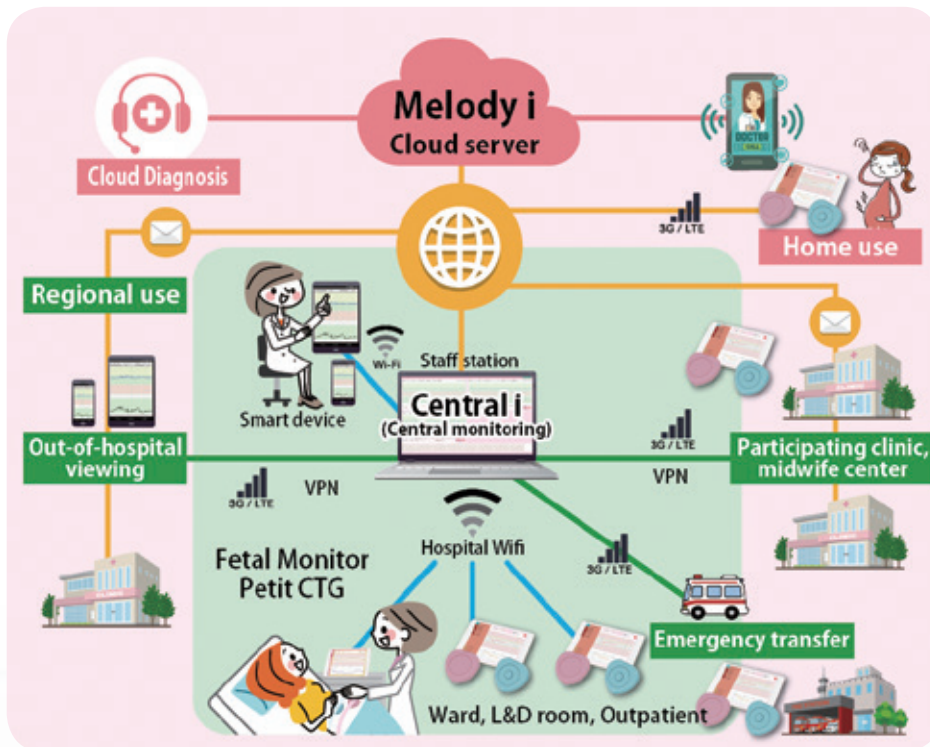
At the core of the system is the “Mobile Fetal Monitor iCTG,” an IoT-based fetal monitor consisting of two heart-shaped sensors, one pink, one blue. The pink sensor measures the

heartbeat of the fetus in the woman’s body, while the blue sensor measures the interval and intensity of the woman’s contractions. Both are controlled by a tablet connected via bluetooth. The data measured by the sensors are transmitted in real time to a doctor located remotely via the perinatal e-Health platform “Melody i.” The data can also be sent to a central hospital that has an NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit).

The system was developed by Melody International Ltd., founded in 2015 and based in Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture. Company CEO Ogata Yhuko explains what led to the development of the system.

“In Japan, women are becoming mothers at a later age, so the ratio of pregnant women at risk of experiencing complications in their pregnancy is on the rise. At the same time, the number of medical institutions with childbirth facilities has fallen by over 20 percent during the past decade, and in particular there is a severe shortage of obstetricians in rural areas. Women there sometimes have to

Operational System of the perinatal e-Health platform Melody i. The system enables integrated online connection between expectant women, doctors and hospitals.



drive more than two hours on mountain roads to get to the hospital for a check-up. Monitoring of the condition of the mother and fetus by a doctor in real time alleviates the burden of hospital visits. And if an abnormality is detected, the patient can quickly ask the doctor for a medical assessment and treatment,” she says.

The path to development of the system involved various difficulties.

The fetal heart monitor used in hospitals is about the size of a household printer, and the sensor and body are separate. Ogata managed to fit the sensor into a palm-sized box without sacrificing any aspect of its functionality by such means as building the speaker into the sensor. However, this built-in speaker creates interference between the sound of the heartbeat and the sound from the speaker, which made noise cancellation a challenge.

Says Ogata, “It was a long process of trial and error to extract clear and accurate heart rate data out of a complex signal mixed with noise.” The integrated sensor and speaker allow the woman to attach the sensor herself by locating the fetus intuitively as she listens to the heartbeat. “We couldn’t give up on this integrated system,” says Ogata.

2019 saw the full-scale launch of the system into the Japanese market, and

its use in university hospitals and other healthcare settings across the country has expanded rapidly as the spread of COVID-19 accelerates the need for the technology.

Japan is not alone in facing the challenge of securing a stable supply of obstetricians and strengthening perinatal care services. In 2016, the Mobile Fetal Monitor iCTG was provided to Chiang Mai, Kingdom of Thailand, under a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) project, and in November 2020 was provided to the Kingdom of Bhutan with support from JICA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

“I’m hoping that this system will come to be used more widely to provide security and peace of mind in childbirth for all expectant mothers around the world,”

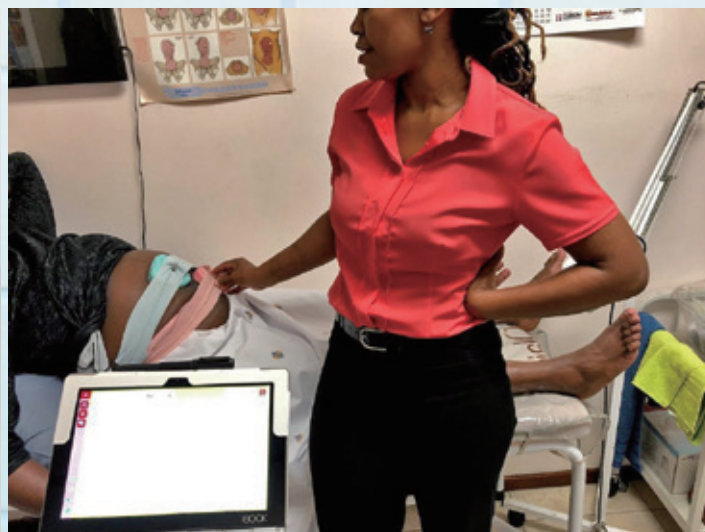
says Ogata.

Feedback from users has been positive, with some reporting less stress due to the reduced financial and time burden of hospital visits, while others say that hearing the fetal heartbeat firsthand has helped the father and siblings develop a bond with the baby even before it is born.

Commenting on her strong ambitions for the future of the system, Ogata says, “Our aim is to lower the cost through mass production, make it even smaller and aim towards creating a telemedicine platform for expectant women. In particular, we are committed to using our technology to help strengthen healthcare systems in developing countries where there is a shortage of medical specialists.”⁷



Handover ceremony for the “Mobile Fetal Monitor iCTG” at the Ministry of Health, Kingdom of Bhutan, June 2021



A pregnant woman wearing a “Mobile Fetal Monitor iCTG” in a demonstration in the Republic of South Africa



A Polish Artist Capturing Life in Japan

Polish-born Mateusz Urbanowicz is an artist known for his work on several anime and for his books of illustrations. His exquisite, nostalgia-evoking paintings of Japanese scenery fascinate people around the world.

SATO KUMIKO

OLD shops that make long-time residents of Tokyo feel nostalgic (*Tokyo Storefronts*). Dimly lit back alleys like portals to other dimensions (*Tokyo at Night*). These two series of illustrations were painted by Mateusz Urbanowicz, a Polish artist whose works are receiving great reviews. Urbanowicz

typically uses watercolors in his paintings to depict so much detail that the viewer can sense the breath of the people that live in the places portrayed in his work.

“For example, when I see washing drying on the second floor of a small shop, I try to imagine who lives there,” he says. “I want to draw a story within a

single illustration.”

When he was a student studying electrical engineering in Poland, Urbanowicz had the chance to participate in a presentation for a Japanese pen tablet manufacturer. Pen tablets are digital tools that allow artists to create art on the computer using a special touch pen and digitizer, similar to using pen on



An illustration from the series *Tokyo at Night*

paper. When Urbanowicz drew an illustration on a tablet as a test, a large crowd gathered around. This marked the beginning of his interest in digital art. He went to Kobe Design University to study animation and comics, continuing to graduate school.

In 2013, after graduating, Urbanowicz was hired by the animation production company CoMix Wave Films Inc. where he was involved in the production of *Your Name.*, an animated film released in 2016 that became a hit in Japan and around the world. Urbanowicz worked on the background art for the film under director Shinkai Makoto, whose works have a reputation for breathtakingly beautiful background art.

“Shinkai Makoto considers the scenery of downtown Tokyo to be as beautiful as nature and portrays the beauty overlooked by everyone in their everyday lives,” says Urbanowicz. “His digital paint-

ing techniques have influenced me.”

In his free time, Urbanowicz likes to go for walks with his camera in hand, searching for common yet beautiful and memorable scenes. One day, he went to visit Seiseki-sakuragaoka in Tama City, Tokyo, which was the setting of director Miyazaki Hayao’s animated film *Whisper of the Heart*. A painting, *Bicycle Boy*, based on the impressive scenery he saw there, became the first in a series of Urbanowicz’s own illustrations. The *Bicycle Boy* series, comprising ten watercolor paintings, conveys the breath, physical warmth, and feelings of a young boy, without any dialogue or written explanations. The series marked the beginning of the popularity of Urbanowicz’s illustrations, speaking to the hearts of people in Japan and abroad.

Most modern works by illustrators in Japan are actually created digitally. Since going freelance in 2017, Urbanowicz has

distanced himself from the digital drawings from his time at the anime studio and continues to release works drawn by hand using pencil, pen, and watercolor on paper.

“With digital art,” Urbanowicz explains, “you can easily make numerous edits and can draw by zooming into details. Since you can’t do that when drawing on paper, there is less ‘digital’ clarity, but equally, it leaves more room for the viewer’s imagination.”

Urbanowicz says that he would like to try and create his own manga and anime. Let’s lookout for the stories Urbanowicz will weave as he encounters scenes and people on his wanderings in Tokyo and other parts of Japan. [J](#)



An illustration from the series *Bicycle Boy*



Urbanowicz on the streets of Tokyo with camera in hand



The Nishi-Awa area in Tokushima Prefecture, where villages seem to cling to the slopes of the mountains

Nishi-Awa Steep Slope Land Agriculture System

The “steep slope land agriculture system” used in western Tokushima Prefecture for some 400 years has been designated (March 2018) as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

YANAGISAWA MIHO

IN hilly or mountainous areas of Japan, slopes are often excavated to create flat areas for the cultivation of crops. Terraced rice paddies are one example. However, there is a place where for more than 400 years mountain slopes have been farmed just as they are. This is an area of western Tokushima known as the Nishi-Awa region where farming takes place on plots with elevations of between 100 and 900 meters in four locations: Mima City, Miyoshi City, Tsurugi Town and Higashi-miyoshi Town. (“Nishi” means “west” and Awa is the old name for

present-day Tokushima Prefecture.) In some places, slopes are as steep as 40 degrees, and to farm on such an incline unique knowledge and techniques have been developed.

One of those techniques involves the use of *kaya* (grass) collected from nearby grasslands.

If nothing is done, the soil of sloped areas will naturally be washed down little by little by rain, wind and other natural forces. In the Nishi-Awa region, they use *kaya* as a measure against this. A field to grow the *kaya* is located somewhere and the grass is harvested in the

fall. The harvested *kaya* is then piled up in a conical shape, left to dry well, and then chopped up finely. By distributing this dried grass in the fields, the soil is fertilized and surface slippage can be prevented. This also controls the growth of weeds and keeps the soil from drying out, and is essential to farming on slopes. The *kaya* piled up in conical shapes seen from autumn into early winter is called *koeguro* locally and is a symbol of Nishi-Awa agriculture.

The people here have also been creative with their farming tools. As agricultural tools for flat land are difficult to use on sloped areas without alteration, unique agricultural tools were developed here, such as tools angled to match the steepness of the land used for cultivation. Unique techniques meant to improve the soil environment have been passed down here for generations. These include returning soil that has moved down the slope back up using a tool known as a *sarae*, and creating soil by smashing up the many pebbles in the fields.

The only blacksmith in Nishi-Awa who can make and repair these unique tools does so in response to requests.

Fujimoto Masaya, who works at the Tsurugi Town Hall in one part of the Nishi-Awa region, says, “In order to preserve these blacksmith techniques, we have started to seek support from



The sole blacksmith in Nishi-Awa



A farmer works to return the soil from lower down on the slope back to the top using a tool called a sarae



Keoguro, bundles of kaya (grass) piled up in a conical shape



Unique farming tools developed and handed down in Nishi-Awa

local ironworks to have companies, not individuals, learn and pass on these techniques to the next generation.”

Presently, as well as growing grains such as millet, many farmers in the Nishi-Awa region grow small amounts of a variety of agricultural products, including the traditional vegetables of buckwheat, potatoes, and Goushuimo potatoes. However, this doesn't tend to bring in much income.

“If this farming does not continue to happen, this system of agriculture and these landscapes will be lost,” Fujimoto says. “We are working to increase the added value of these agricultural products, such as the introduction in recent years of a brand certification system for agricultural products produced through this system in collaboration with the prefecture, city and town.”

The landscape of the Nishi-Awa region, with approximately 200 villages still clinging to the steep mountain slopes, is said to be just as it was long ago. Protecting this globally-rare and unique agricultural system will also lead to the protection of this unique landscape. 7

Courtesy of Yatsushiro City



GI JAPAN PRODUCTS



Yatsushiro Shoga

八代生姜

Yatsushiro Ginger

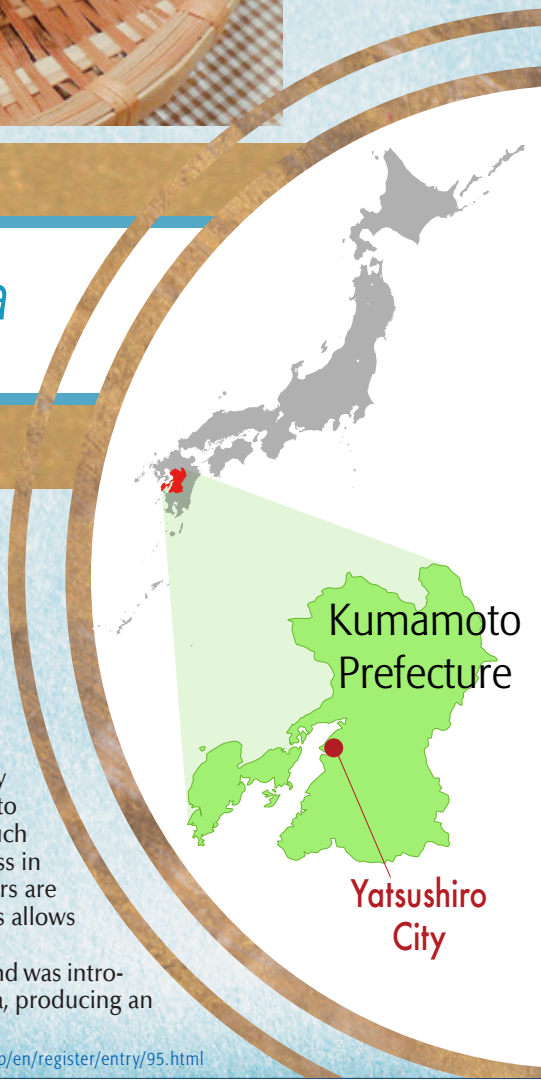
Yatsushiro Shoga is a type of ginger produced by careful trimming of enlarged rhizomes and shipped in accordance with strict standards. This ginger features a colorful appearance with less unevenness and damage than other types of ginger, and has a fresh and slightly spicy flavor. Yatsushiro Shoga is highly appreciated in markets for its superior quality and stable shipment throughout the year, and it is traded at a high price compared with common ginger.

For the production of Yatsushiro Shoga, a superior line of the variety Oshoga is cultivated in the producing area, the Yatsushiro region. A disease-free and superior rhizome collected in the region is used for seed ginger.

The producing area of Yatsushiro Shoga has a valley-like topography surrounded by mountain forests with altitudes exceeding 500 to 1,000 meters. Valley-shaped fields tend to lack sunlight. Thus, local farmers have established unique techniques for cultivation, such as sparse planting to allow for rhizome enlargement, as well as for maintaining freshness in storage. By digging trenches in the tuff stratum (rock formed from volcanic ash), farmers are able to secure a storage location at a temperature and humidity suitable for ginger. This allows for the shipment of high-quality ginger around the year.

Ginger cultivation began in the region at the end of the Taisho period (1912–1926), and was introduced throughout the region in 1931. As of 2018, 111 farmers cultivate Yatsushiro Shoga, producing an annual shipment of 605 tons.

Text and images courtesy of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: <https://gi-act.maff.go.jp/en/register/entry/95.html>



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