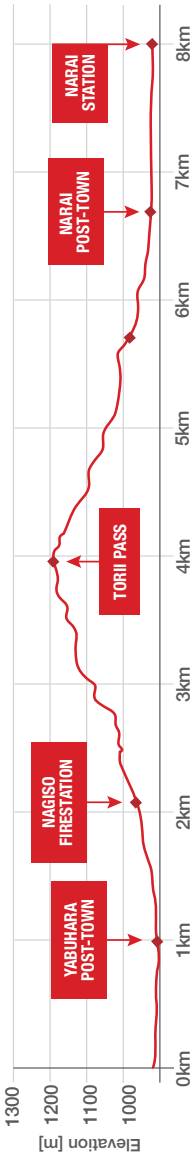


Day 4 Kiso Fukushima → Yabuhara → Narai → Matsumoto

Distance and elevation



"Ohayo Gozaimasu!" Good Morning!

Total walking distance approximately 9km/5.6mi

TODAYS WALK: Yabuhara station → Narai post town via the Torii-toge Pass

Total walking distance: 9km

Elevation at departure: 929m / Elevation at arrival: 939m

Highest point: 1231m / Lowest point: 924m

Cumulative ascent: 491m / Cumulative descent: 481m

Course walking options

RECOMMENDED COURSE:

Start today at Kiso-Fukushima Station for a 8:56am train departure, OR opt to visit the *sekisho* barrier station in Kiso Fukushima this morning, before taking a later 11:04am train to the start of your walk in Yabuhara post town. You will then walk 9km, up and over the Torii Pass before descending into the scenic post town of Narai. As this is the last of the restored post towns on your tour, take some time to soak in its Edo-era charm. Narai is known for its unique architecture, boxwood combs and lacquer ware, and the town's quaint ambience is only matched by the congeniality of its townsfolk. From here, take an afternoon train to Matsumoto station. Walk from here to your accommodation tonight and enjoy the comforts of a modern hotel.

NEED A BREAK:

If you are not feeling well or need a break from walking today, you may take the train directly from Kiso-Fukushima to Narai post town and spend more time there before continuing on your way to Matsumoto. Narai is the next stop after Yabuhara, about another ten minutes on the train. Narai has a number of interesting spots to visit within the town and, especially for those interested in gifts, this is a good spot to get Nakasendo-related shopping out of the way: Kiso timber woodwork, lacquer ware, pottery, etc.

Day 4 Recommended Course Schedule Itinerary Summary

BEFORE LEAVING URARA TSUTAYA, PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU PAY FOR ANY DRINKS AND LEAVE YOUR ROOM KEY ON CHECK OUT.

7:30 Breakfast

8:30-40 Check out and leave the inn to buy tickets/catch your train to Yabuhara

 Alternatively, choose a later 11:04 train departure to prioritize a visit to the *sekisho* barrier station or Kozenji Temple and rock garden in Kiso-Fukushima before your walk (see details below and opposite).

 **8:56** Take a local TRAIN from Kiso-Fukushima木曾福島 to **YABUHARA 藪原駅(JPY240)**

9:11 Arrive Yabuhara Station 藪原駅 and START your WALK: first through Yabuhara town, then up the TORII-TOGE PASS 鳥居峠.

9:50 Arrive at the Torii-toge trailhead

10:45 Arrive at the TOP OF THE PASS. View the local shrine to Mt. Ontake before heading down into Narai post town 奈良井宿.

11:45 Arrive NARAI post town and have lunch (or prioritize shopping).


 **13:25** Local train (JPY590) from Narai to **Matsumoto 松本**

★If you would like to spend a lot more time in Narai post town, or have spent a longer morning in Kiso-Fukushima, there is also a 15:57 Narai train departure that arrives Matsumoto station at 16:48. Please be aware that if arriving in Narai town early, this may feel like a bit too much time for some!

14:21 **Arrive Matsumoto Station**

14:30 Walk (1.5km /approximately 1 mile) or take a taxi to Matsumoto Hotel Kagetsu

15:00 Arrive at the hotel for check-in

 **THOUGH THE RECOMMENDED COURSE ABOVE PRIORITIZES AN EARLIER ARRIVAL IN MATSUMOTO (AROUND 2:30PM), YOU MAY ALSO CHOOSE TO VISIT THE SEKISHO BARRIER STATION OR KOZENJI TEMPLE GARDEN IN KISO-FUKUSHIMA THIS MORNING BEFORE CATCHING A LATER TRAIN, DEPARTING 11:04AM, TO THE START OF YOUR WALK IN YABUHARA. IN THIS CASE, PLEASE AIM FOR THE 15:57 TRAIN DEPARTING NARAI POST TOWN FOR MATSUMOTO (ARRIVING AT 16:48).**

***SEE ALTERNATIVE SITE VISIT NOTES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES. DETAILED ENGLISH MAPS OF KISO-FUKUSHIMA TOWN MAY ALSO BE PROCURED AT YOUR INN.**

★PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE ARE NO CONVENIENT LUNCH OPTIONS ALONG THE WALKING ROUTE FROM YABUHARA TO NARAI POST TOWN. IF TIME ALLOWS, YOU MAY BUY A PICNIC LUNCH AT THE AEON SUPERMARKET NEAR KISO FUKUSHIMA STATION/ THE INN TO EAT ALONG THE TRAIL, OR AIM FOR A LATER LUNCH (LIKELY AROUND 2:00PM) IN NARAI POST TOWN.

Day 4 Optional site visit #1 in Kiso-Fukushima (*requires later 11:04 train departure*)

THE KISO-FUKUSHIMA “SEKISHO” BARRIER STATION 木曾福島関所資料館

Entry: ¥300

Open: 8:30-16:30

CLOSED on Tuesdays between December~March



Directions to the “Sekisho” barrier station:

79 / Photo

Leaving Urara Tsutaya Inn LEFT, follow the slope of the road down. Continue straight where the road merges with another lane reach a zebra crossing (there is a lacquerware shop to the left here).

450m

80 / Photo

TURN LEFT here and soon cross the bridge over a small river. Just after the bridge, TURN immediately RIGHT down the concrete steps/ramp to follow the narrow lane that parallels the river.

60m

81 / Photo

Continue walking along the river way. Climb the STAIRS on the other end, and turn LEFT.

120m

82 / Photo

! NOW YOU MAY RECOGNISE THE FAMILIAR “MASUGATA” TURN OF THE ROAD (GOING LEFT, THEN RIGHT AT 90-DEGREE ANGLES), AS YOU ENTER THE TRADITIONALLY PRESERVED SECTION OF KISO-FUKUSHIMA POST TOWN, CALLED “UENODAN”. WALK TO OTHER THE END OF THIS OLD POST TOWN SECTION TO ENJOY IT IN FULL. THERE IS A SMALL, FREE EXHIBITION HALL OF LOCAL FESTIVAL IMPLEMENTS NEAR THE END OF IT, ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE.

Follow the road RIGHT and down at another “masugata” angle, then left again. You will be passing the local Nanawarai 七笑 (“Seven Laughters”) Sake Brewery on your right.

Come to the main road. *From here, if visiting Kozenji temple/garden, please follow notes on next page.*

300m

TURN RIGHT onto the main road, and follow it, passing two traffic signals intersections, until you reach a slope leading UP to the RIGHT.

380m

Follow the slope up, passing a number of Buddhist statues. The top of this slope marks the main gate of the sekisho.

70m

TURN RIGHT in front of the main gate and then LEFT to enter the grounds of the reconstructed guard house.

20m

83 /The Kiso-Fukushima
“Sekisho” Barrier Station

This main gate is the scene that appears in Hiroshige's woodblock print for Kiso-Fukushima. Here, we can imagine the tension that travellers felt passing through the sekisho before declaring their goods and continuing on their way.

Day 4 Optional site visit #2 in Kiso-Fukushima (*requires later 11:04 train departure*)

KOZENJI TEMPLE 光善寺

84/ Kozenji
Temple

Entry: ¥500

Open: 8:30-16:30 (Dec-March: Possible garden closure due to snow)



Directions to Kozenji temple:

To reach the Kozenji Temple/Garden, follow walking notes on the previous page to the bold text section **“Come to the main road”**.

From here, turn right onto the main road and follow it, passing two traffic signals (and passing the slope leading up to the sekisho barrier station) until you reach a large BRIDGE crossing the Kiso River.

475m

Turn LEFT to CROSS the bridge (there will be a small hydro-electric facility to your right) and follow the road up to a T-junction lane.

130m

Turn RIGHT at the T-junction. Continue on, and the ENTRANCE to Kozenji Temple 興善寺 will be on your LEFT.

90m



★After visiting either the Sekisho or Kozenji Temple (or both if very fleet of foot), please leave enough time to make it back to Kiso-Fukushima station for your 11:04 train departure.

PICNIC LUNCH OPTION: AEON SUPERMARKET イオン

If you have time and would like to buy a *bento* picnic lunch today, Aeon supermarket is close to Kiso-Fukushima station. Otherwise, a later lunch (after 2:00pm) in Narai is likely.

Directions: Urara Tsutaya Inn → Aeon supermarket:

Exiting URARA TSUTAYA inn left. Continue down the road until you see a flight of CONCRETE STAIRS going DOWN to the LEFT. Take these stairs down and TURN RIGHT at the BOTTOM, then LEFT at the PARKING LOT area soon after. This is the roof of the Aeon supermarket.

80m

Continue down the flight of stairs on the other side of the parking lot and you will be at the supermarket entrance.

Day 4 Recommended Course Directions (8:56am train departure schedule)

MORNING DIRECTIONS: Kiso Fukushima→Yabuhara:

After making your way across the road to Kiso-Fukushima Station, if you have one, you may just flash your JR Rail Pass at the ticket gates to get onto your local train towards Yabuhara.

The train from Kiso-Fukushima departs at 8:56am (train bound for Matsumoto City). Buy tickets for JPY240. Your destination is **YABUHARA station** 藪原駅, **arriving at 9:11**.

★It is three stops and nineteen minutes from Kiso-Fukushima to Yabuhara. The stop before Yabuhara is “Miyanokoshi”.

ARRIVAL IN YABUHARA

85 / Photo

On arrival in Yabuhara, exit the station and take some time to use the TOILETS before starting your walk through town and up the **Torii(-toge) Pass**. The map next to the restroom shows the full Kiso Road/Nakasendo Way route all the way from Nakatsugawa in the South to Narai in the North.

Yabuhara Post Town 藪原宿

86 / Yabuhara and Narai: Two towns, one pass

Yabuhara is known for its clear spring water, but as far as its position on the Nakasendo, that is about the extent of its fame. This is because of its geographical position on the “easy” side of the Torii-toge, a pass that was considered difficult only when travelling the opposite way (from Tokyo to Kyoto). It is interesting to note the marked difference in Nakasendo “cred” between the towns on either side of the pass, Yabuhara and Narai.



The Torii-toge Pass

The “Torii-toge” or (“Torii Pass”), at 1197m, used to mark the border between the Shinano and Mino Domains and today constitutes the divide between Kisomura (Yabuhara) and Shiojiri (Narai). It is also the geographical divide between two watersheds: the Kiso River, which runs south to the Pacific, and the Narai River, which runs north to the Japan Sea. Coming from the Tokyo side, this was considered a difficult pass on the Nakasendo, and so many travellers opted to spend the night in Narai post town before climbing it the next morning.

WALKING DIRECTIONS: Yabuhara station to Narai post town:

87 / Photo

- 5a** Exiting Yabuhara station, **TURN LEFT** and follow the road until you reach a **STAIRCASE UNDERPASS** (★**easy to miss!**) to the **LEFT**.

220m



- 5b** Follow this underpass (going beneath the Chuo Line train tracks) and turn **RIGHT** on the other side.

35m

88 / Photo

- 5c** Continue through Yabuhara town and you will pass a feudal era water station, soon followed by a small shop selling snacks.

350m

89 / Photo

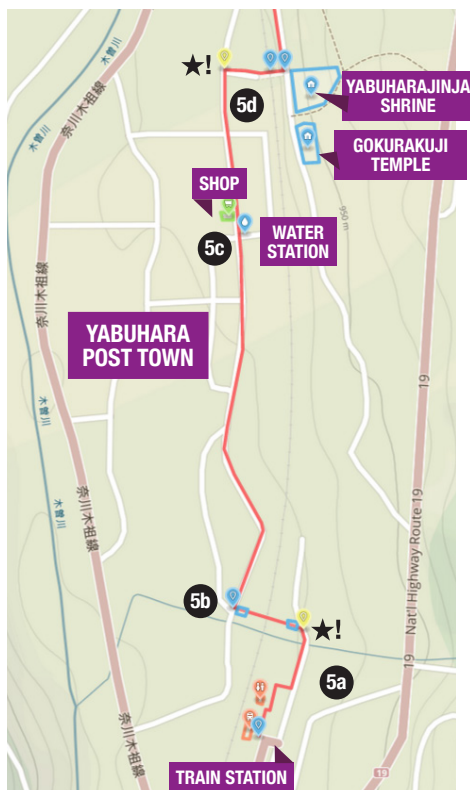
- 180m** **5d** Continue on and turn at the **SECOND RIGHT** after the water station/snack shop. You should see a sign pointing you in the direction of Torii-toge pass 鳥居峠. You will be heading through a short concrete underpass beneath the train tracks.



90 / Photo

91 / Yabuhara-jinja and Gokuraku-ji Temple

- After passing underneath the train tracks, your walking route continues **LEFT**. However, if you are confident in your pace, you may quickly visit the **Yabuharajinja Shrine** and the **Gokurakuji Temple**. Both are 100m to the right (marked by a sign in English).



5e If you have gone to visit the the shrine and temple, head back the way you came. Continue STRAIGHT and head steadily UP. Following the CURVE of the road RIGHT.

230m

92 / Photo

i YOU MAY NOTICE THE SMALL WHITE POST AND SIGN ON YOUR WAY UP. THESE STATE THAT THIS IS WHERE THE ROAD USED TO FORK, LEADING OFF TO THE OLD HIDA HIGHWAY AND THE BORDER BETWEEN THE OLD MINO AND SHINANO DOMAINS. BUT FOR OUR PURPOSES, WE CONTINUE ON THE NAKASENDO.

93 / Photo

5f At a road intersection, continue STRAIGHT ACROSS (★DO NOT follow the curve of the road right).

300m

94 / Photo

5g Continue straight and you will come to larger intersecting road. To the left are TOILETS (the last before heading to the top of the pass) and vending machines across the street at the local firefighter's station. Your route continues STRAIGHT across the road.

210m

95 / More on Torii Pass

You are now leaving Yabuhara post town and starting your ascent of the **Torii-toge Pass**.

FROM HERE, IT IS 1.6KM TO THE TOP OF THE PASS

5h The road soon switches to larch forest. You will come to a sign which designates the Shinano Nature Trail. Leave the road here and continue STRAIGHT onto the FOREST TRAIL (★DO NOT follow the curve of the road right).

96 / Photo

Along the way, you will climb a steeper *ishidatami cobblestone path*.

97 / Photo

At the top of the cobblestone path, ring the the bear bell and continue STRAIGHT up, following the forest trail. **(The red and white sign here designates "no entry" for vehicles only.)**

215m

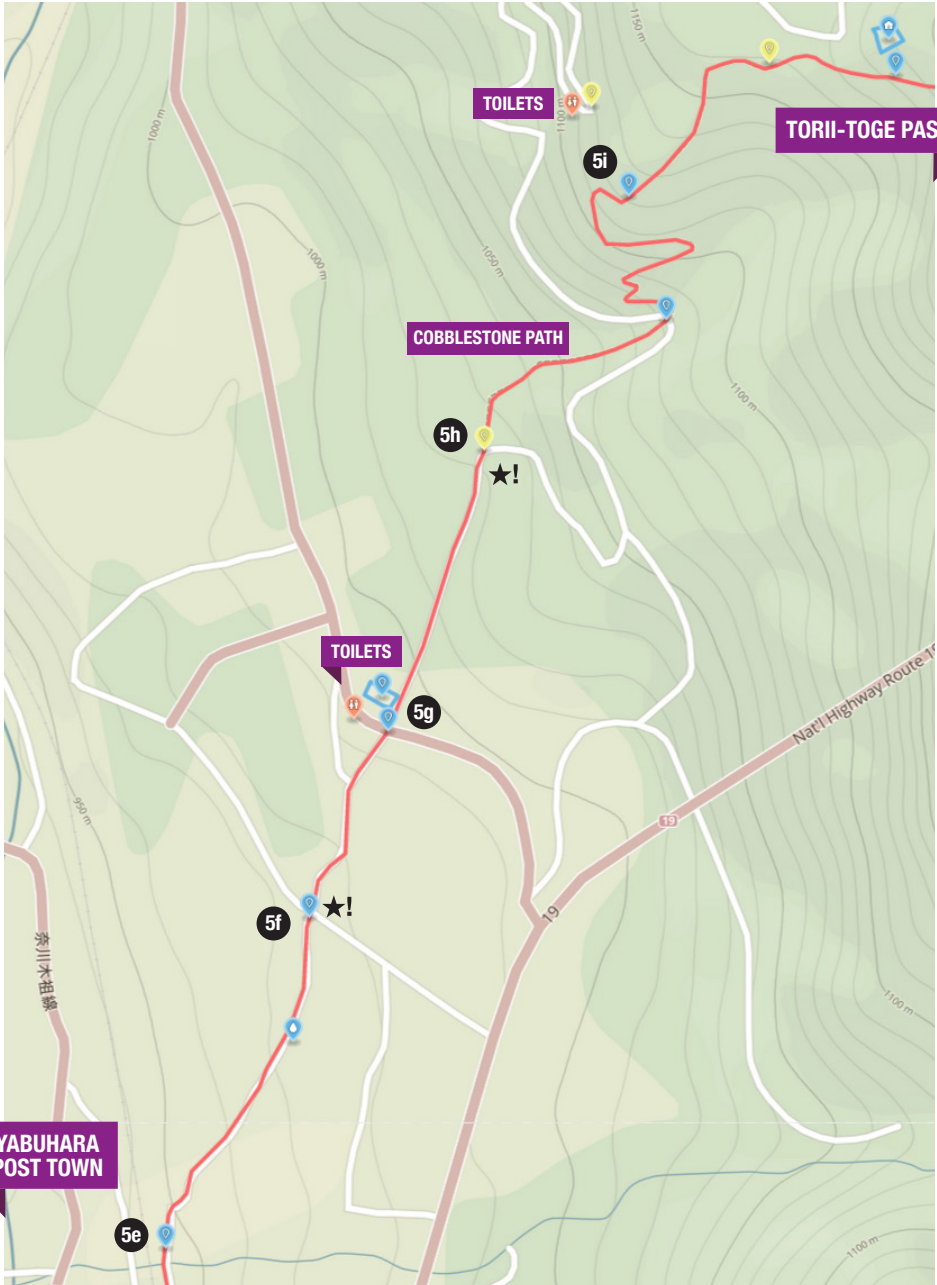
98 / "Battou Kannon" rock

Follow the switchbacks up.

99 / Toilet/ snack break detour

5i All paths up here lead to your destination (the top), but if you need to use the TOILET, turn LEFT when you reach the sign for the **"Former Forest Meteorological Observatory Site"**.

If you would like to avoid the toilet detour, forego the turn at the forest meteorological observatory sign and follow the route STRAIGHT on.



100 / Photo

102 / Torii
Pass water
spring

5j You will soon reach an open area with benches and wooden STEPS leading up left from the main path.



THE STEPS LEAD TO A SHRINE DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP OF MT. ONTAKA. YOU MAY ALSO FOREGO THIS VISIT AND CONTINUE STRAIGHT TO THE TOP OF THE PASS.

103 / Photo

Following the STEPS (about 100 of them) up, you will arrive at the **Ontake Yohajo** 御嶽遥拝所 (literally, Ontake "Place of Remote Worship") shrine. Take some time to view an interesting array of Shinto/Buddhist/Shugendo mountain ascetic statues here.

104 / Photo

★ ***PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH THE TORII GATE* ITSELF. (THOUGH RECENTLY RENOVATED, AT ONE TIME IT WAS IN DANGER OF FALLING OVER, AND IT IS NOT WISE TO PUSH OR LEAN AGAINST THE GATE.)**

105 / Photo

5k From the other side of this shrine gate, you have officially overcome the Torii Pass (1197m). Continue to the LEFT, and it is primarily downhill from here to Narai post town.

FROM HERE, IT IS APPROXIMATELY ANOTHER 3KM TO NARAI POST TOWN

106 /
Local horse
chestnut tree
legend

Pass a bear bell and number of large *tochinoki* horse chestnut trees.

400m

107 / Photo

5l Continue on to another bear bell, and you will reach an intersecting path. Turn RIGHT here.

108 / Photo

Reach another rest stop with TOILETS available. On a clear day, this spot also affords a wonderful view of the Narai River valley and Narai post town below.

200m

5m From the rest stop, soon make a RIGHT (★DO NOT continue straight), following the signs down cobblestone and onto FOREST TRAIL heading for Narai.

20m

The path becomes slightly steeper from here, so take care going down, especially along the rockier areas.

FROM HERE, IT IS APPROXIMATELY 2KM TO NARAI POST TOWN

Ontake Yohaijo 御嶽遥拝所 "Place of Remote Worship of Mt. Ontake"

109 / More on Ontake Yohaijo

This was one of four main points where Ontake-kyo pilgrims could worship the mountain from afar. Prior to the 18th century, commoners were prohibited from climbing the mountain, or rather, did not have the financial means to do so, as it required one-hundred days of meditation and training and cost the equivalent of around 1,000,000 yen in today's terms. As such, they would perform equivalent ceremonies at these shrines. On a clear day, you can just see the tip of Mt. Ontake in the distance.



110 / "Ichirizuka" marker monument

111 / Teahouse shelter

112 / Photo

5n Cross a number of wooden bridges, continuing carefully on the switchbacks and down the forest trail. At a split in the road marked by a stone Buddhist statue, half-buried in rocks from travellers, continue STRAIGHT and DOWN. (Right and up goes to an "observatory" that may offer a view between the trees of Mt. Komagatake.)

1.3km

FROM HERE IT IS ANOTHER 0.66KM TO NARAI POST TOWN

113 / Photo



5o Reach another split in the road and continue STRAIGHT, staying along the COBBLESTONE path to the left (★DO NOT take the forest trail right).

650m

114 / Photo

As the cobblestone path comes to an end, TURN LEFT onto the asphalt road.

115 / Photo



5p Following the curve of the asphalt down, be on the LOOKOUT for a small SIGN (★easy to miss!) pointing to a forest

120m

shortcut LEFT. Again, **the gravel can get slippery**, so watch your footing here!

116 / Photo

5q Emerge from the forest and turn LEFT on the asphalt road down into town.

117 / More on Narai

You are now entering **Narai post town**. Shizume Shrine (founded 1664) will soon be on your left, and there is a sign in English giving a general introduction to the town.

NARAI TOWN CENTER (points of reference):

After coming down Torii-toge Pass, it is about 450m from Shizume Shrine on the outskirts of Narai to the town center. From this point to **Narai Station** (another 600m), there are often more shops open. We recommend walking straight through to a point near the central post office where public toilets are available, followed by a lunch of local delicacies (**Tokuriya**, a second-tier inn of the Edo period, now converted into a restaurant, is one good choice). If you would rather prioritize time perusing the town, you may also buy lunch snacks from vendors along the town avenue (*oyaki* steamed buns recommended!).

118 / Photo

5u TOILET: Walking from the end of the Torii-toge Pass to the town center, clean public toilets are available LEFT of a water spring, off the main road. The Narai central post office (marked by a “〒”) is also here (and a wooden post in Japanese nearby marks where the old Honjin inn would have been).

119 / Photo

120 / Photo

Postcards and town maps/information in English are available at the **Narai Kaikan 奈良井会館 Tourist Information**.

121 / Photo

A large red comb in the eaves marks **Matsuzaka-ya**, the shop of a well-known craftsman and restorer of lacquered combs in town. **Tokuriya restaurant** is next to this building.

Café Fuuka 風花 has a quaint, relaxing atmosphere and the hostess speaks some English. There are also a number of other cafes and shops to explore closer to Narai station, including **Matsuyasabo 松屋茶房**, known for their siphon coffee and cakes.

See more on the sites in Narai on the following pages

TOWN CENTER

TOKKURIYA

TOILETS

CAFÉ FUUKA

TOURIST OFFICE

POST OFFICE

DAIHO-JI TEMPLE AND THE MARIA JIZO

MATSUYASABO CAFE

KISO OHASHI BRIDGE

HACHIMANGU SHRINE & THE 200 JIZO

NARAI STATION

CAFÉ MIYAMA

NAKAMURA RESIDENCE

SHIZUME SHRINE

Narai Post Town 奈良井宿

5r

5s

5u

5q

5p

5o

国道 19号

1050 m

1100 m

1200 m

1300 m

1400 m

1500 m

1600 m

1700 m

1800 m

1900 m

2000 m



Narai is the thirty-fourth of sixty-nine post towns on the Nakasendo and is considered the halfway point between Tokyo and Kyoto. It also has the highest elevation of the towns along the "Kisoji" (Kiso Road) section of the Nakasendo. Due to its geographical position at the foot of a difficult pass, the post town became a hub for travellers, pilgrims, merchants, priests/monks and craftsmen to stay and ply their trades during the hey-day of the Nakasendo. As such, it was the wealthiest of the Kiso valley post towns during the Edo period, as well as the longest (at approximately one kilometer), and was known as "Narai Sengen" 奈良井千軒, or "Narai of a thousand houses".

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

DAY 4 Kiso-Fukushima → Yabuhara → Narai post town → Matsumoto

79 / Photo



81 / Photo



80 / Photo



82 / Photo



83 / The Kiso-Fukushima "Sekisho" Barrier
Station 木曾福島関所資料館

The Kiso-Fukushima "Sekisho" Barrier
Station 木曾福島関所資料館



Before it became primarily a town associated with skiing, Kiso Fukushima was known as one of only two *sekisho*, or *seki*, barrier stations along the Nakasendo route.

The primary purpose of a *seki* was to prevent the movement of two dangerous commodities. One was the smuggling out of Edo of women who were being kept hostage under the *sankin kotai* "alternative attendance" system against the good behavior of their husbands. The fear was that the delicate checks and balances which maintained the peace would be disrupted if a daimyo lord and his immediate family were all removed from the physical control of the Tokugawa shogunate. The second dangerous commodity was arms, especially firearms, moving toward Edo. Daimyo when they traveled to Edo were always with their armed retainers for carrying swords was the right of all samurai and samurai alone, but the size of the party was strictly limited so that no daimyo, especially a *tozama* (i.e. "untrusted") daimyo, could build up an armed force which could contemplate an attack on the castle of the Tokugawa in Edo. Samurai, of course, could smuggle themselves along and be secreted in Edo, but weapons were a different matter. Firearms were particularly worrisome because a small number, if successfully smuggled, could tip the military balance quite suddenly.

The Kiso-Fukushima "Sekisho" Barrier Station 木曾福島関所資料館 (continued)



Seki date back nearly to the origin of the highway system. The Nara period saw the creation of three seki which were considered crucial to the security of the "Home Provinces", those close to Nara. One of these was located at Fuwa, near the Nakasendo post-town of Sekigahara. These fell into disuse as the central authority proved too weak to enforce its will for long. By the 14th century, seki had appeared in great numbers as local lords used them to collect tolls and control traffic through their domains. There were so many that commercial development was seriously impeded.

Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the first two of the three unifiers of the 16th century, abolished seki because of their interference with movement, but Tokugawa Ieyasu revived them not as toll-collecting barriers but as security devices. There were about 50 throughout the Edo period, including the two main ones on the Nakasendo at Kiso Fukushima and Usui on the outskirts of the plain before Edo.

Each guard station was an elaborate construction, in keeping with the important role it played. Gates were placed across the road which were shut after 6 o'clock; travelers who did not make the deadline had to spend the night in the open or return to the previous post-town. All travelers passed through the guard station and were subject to scrutiny by samurai officials. Any traveler or baggage which looked suspicious was taken aside for a careful inspection or questioning. Any person dressed as a male who appeared suspicious was taken into a special room for a physical examination to determine sex. A small prison was maintained and, standards of justice being somewhat more lax than today, manacles, thumb screws and other iron implements of 'questioning' (torture) were kept close at hand.

While smugglers could find themselves in trouble, so too could the guards. There is a story related by Philipp Franz von Siebold, a German doctor who tended the Dutch traders at Nagasaki in the 1820s about a man who was smuggling his daughter down the Tokaido. She successfully passed scrutiny at Hakone barrier in the shadow of Mt. Fuji, but was discovered by a fellow traveler shortly after. A bribe was demanded and refused, whereupon the other traveler hurried to the seki to inform about the

traveler. The guard who had been fooled realized his head might be lost if his lapse were discovered, so he arranged for a boy to be substituted for the girl and when all parties were brought together for an investigation, the smuggler was able to present a boy for examination. He thereupon flew into a rage and killed the informer, solving a problem for the guard as well as himself.

Everyone parted company pleased with themselves and the Tokugawa security system was breached, but only a little.

The two main sekisho on both the Nakasendo and Tokaido highways were chosen primarily for their geographic position. You may notice in Kiso Fukushima that the Kiso Valley's mountains narrow noticeably here and the Kiso River is wider and runs more swiftly. If you could see above those mountains to the East, you would also see the Central Alps' Mt. Komagatake, certainly difficult to breach if one were planning to skirt around the barrier station. Tokugawa Ieyasu carefully chose his locations for the sekisho and even manipulated the positioning of the towns themselves to fit his grand designs for their construction.

Inside the "Sekisho" guard house

Inside the sekisho, various weapons used by the sixty guards on-duty to intimidate potential smugglers can be seen on display. You may also notice the wooden passports that women would have had to carry to pass through the gates, as well as the guard's helmet emblazoned with the crest of the Tokugawa shogunate, the three-leafed hollyhock. Next to the helmet is an "anti-fire grenade" and you can also see various "questioning" devices, including manacles and stocks, as well as an old lacquered case used to hold arrows. The glass cases hold various artifacts uncovered during reconstruction efforts, as well as old map books of the Nakasendo and written letters of permission, signed and stamped by local lords and magistrates, declaring right of passage and for the carrying of various goods. The corridor behind this room has a written record of the important visits and events that occurred at the barrier station from its founding in 1600, as well as various devices used to stop the guards' greatest fear: fire. Arson would have been a very effective means of skirting the barrier station. The large, lacquered fans here would have also been used to create a fire break.

In the other rooms of the guardhouse, you can see a model of the sekisho as it would have looked in feudal times, as well as where the magistrate would have sat while reviewing proper paperwork. The small room off to the side is where they would have checked to make sure females were not dressed as males, and the intimidating samurai swords, arrows, and lances on the walls would have been a further indication to travellers not to mess with the rules of the land.

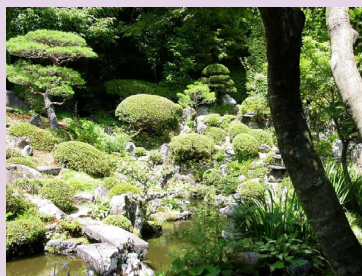
84 / Kozenji Temple

Kozenji Temple 光善寺



Kozenji temple, founded by the eleventh generation of the Kiso family following Kiso no Yoshinaka in 1434, is affiliated with the Rinzaï Zen Buddhist sect. Upon entering the temple grounds, follow the path past the introductory gardens and pay at the reception area inside. Here, after taking off your shoes, you may view some of the artifacts and modern artistic holdings of the temple, including a number of Buddhist mandala and works that the sect has had commissioned by a number of modern artists. This temple also has a very impressive assortment of lacquered works of art, as well as a pottery collection upstairs.

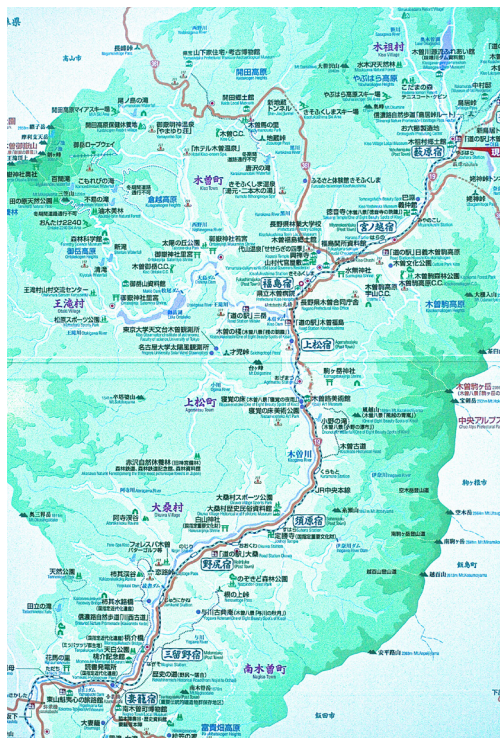
Moving out of the museum area, be sure to follow the path to the main attraction: Japan's "widest" Zen rock garden. This garden, built in 1962, mimics a number of other Zen Buddhist gardens in Japan (including probably the most well-known, Ryoanji, in Kyoto) in that it houses fifteen stones, though there is no one spot in garden where all can be viewed at once. This reflects the Zen Buddhist ideals of introspection and the attempt to reveal the un-seeable through self-reflection and meditation. This garden, then, is ideal for achieving a connection with one's "deep-mind", to be clearly differentiated from the "monkey-mind", or the id and ego that tend to control most of our daily activities. Though many of these gardens leave the symbolism behind the arrangement of the rocks a mystery, this artist was more or less clear: He envisioned the mountain tops of the nearby Central Alps breaking through a sea of clouds above. After taking some time to sit and reflect in the garden, don't miss the "Ten-thousand Pine Garden" through the small stucco entryway nearby.



Going out the small door on the other side of the garden, you will pass the large, trained branch of a pine, a symbol of longevity and strength in Japan. This particular branch is most likely hundreds of years old. In the main temple grounds, an old sakura-cherry tree is propped up on multiple wooden pillars and is supposedly the "second-generation" (i.e. planted using the seed) of a tree planted by the Kiso family at the temple's founding close to 600 years ago. If you follow the white signs past the red gates of an Inari Shinto shrine next to the main temple hall, you will be rising toward a graveyard behind the temple. Follow the stairs, and you will find yourself in front of Kiso no Yoshinaka's grave—or rather one of them. This particular grave houses a lock of Yoshinaka's hair entrusted to his samurai warrior concubine, Tomoe Gozen, upon his death.



85 / Photo



Yabuhara and Narai: Two towns, one pass



Edo-period travellers tired after a long day (remember, sometimes up to 40km per day) would often opt to stay in Narai, rather than venture up the pass. As such, business boomed in Narai and the inns, shrines/temples, wood and lacquer craftsmen of the area tended to congregate near there. Yabuhara, however, would have been an easy “go-through” town. When modernization shifted the railways south and took the economic viability of the area away with it, it was more reasonable for Yabuhara to tear down the vestiges of its feudal past and attempt to modernize with the times. Narai, on the other hand, had a greater share of historically relevant sites and family lines to keep up, and as such, more incentive to retain its Edo-era charm.



87 / Photo



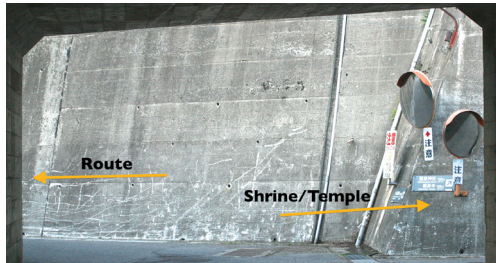
88 / Photo



89 / Photo



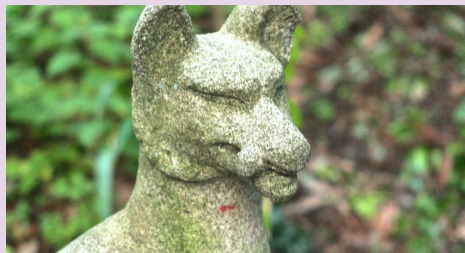
90 / Photo



91 / Yabuhara-jinja and Gokuraku-ji Temple

Yabuhara-jinja and Gokuraku-ji Temple

Yabuhara-jinja, a Shinto shrine, was supposedly founded in the 9th year of the Temmu Emperor (682AD) on the occasion of Prince Minonoo's visit to the area. It originally revered ancient gods from the holy Kumano area of Japan, then was rebuilt as a general town shrine in 1872. Before entering the main shrine gate (again being aware that the path down the center is reserved for the gods), you may want to purify yourself at the small dragon pond (if the water is running). Use the ladle to collect the water and pour it over each of your hands outside of the basin.



Included next to the main shrine are eight "supporting" god shrines, including an Inari god of the harvest. This is characterized by its multiple red "torii" gates and fox guardian statues. Inside one of the fox's mouths is a key to the kura rice storage house.

Other characteristics commonly seen throughout shrines in Japan include the casks of sake rice-wine (which are a symbol of rice, the harvest and purification elements important to Shinto) and the *koma-inu* guardian lion-dogs at the main gate. These are an import from Korea/China and always have one mouth open and one mouth closed, symbolizing the first and last letters of the Japanese alphabet: "a" and "un". Thus, upon entering these gates one is encompassed by the alpha and omega, i.e. the entirety of the universe. (You may also notice the similarity



to the Indian meditative word "ohm", from which this concept has its roots.)

Just below Yabuhara-jinja shrine is the Buddhist temple, Gokuraku-ji. This temple is affiliated with the Rinzai Zen Buddhist school and you will see that it also has a prominent Jizo statue displayed on the grounds. In this context, he is the protector of children who have passed away before their time.

*Yabuhara-jinja and Gokuraku-ji Temple
continued*

You may also notice the large “bonsho” bell, traditionally used to signal the hours of the day, as well as to call the monks to prayers and induce a meditative state. In the past, these bells would also have been used to tell farmers when to enter and leave the fields, but have now often been replaced by speaker systems with music in the countryside. Bonscho bells are rung during the summer spirit-calling “obon” festival because it is said that their sound can reach the underworld. People also line up on New Years to ring them 108 times to cleanse humanity of the 108 Buddhist sins.



92 / Photo



93 / Photo



94 / Photo

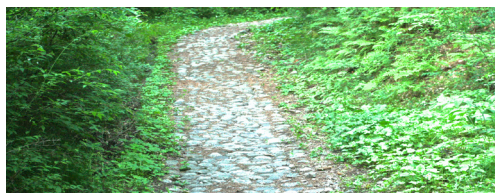


95 / More on Torii Pass

More on Torii Pass

The name *Torii-toge* was applied to this area by Kiso Yoshimoto (1475-1504) upon his victory in battle over Ogasawara of Matsumoto, and it is in reference to the prominent *torii* Shinto gate at the top of the pass. A water spring near the top of the pass is also where Kiso no Yoshinaka (1154-1184) revered Mt. Ontake from afar and prayed for victory in battle over the Taira clan. In 1582, a large battle took place here between Kiso Yoshimasa (1540-1595) and Takeda Katsuyori, son of the powerful warlord Takeda Shingen. Katsuyori had made many attempts to break into the Kiso Valley during the Warring States period, but his hopes were dashed when his 2000 samurai encountered an ambush on the Torii-toge Pass. 500 troops were slaughtered in the narrow ravine of the pass before Katsuyori signaled a retreat home. The bodies of these soldiers were interred in the Hournisawa 葬沢 (literally "burial stream") valley below today's walking path.

96 / Photo



97 / Photo



98/ "Battou Kannon" rock



YOU WILL PASS A MONUMENT TO AN OLD "BATTOU KANNON" HORSE-HEADED GODDESS OF COMPASSION. AGAIN, THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN TO COMMEMORATE A FALLEN HORSE COMPANION ON THE PATH, OR TO PROTECT OTHER HORSES IN MAKING IT UP THE STEEP ASCENT.

99 / Toilet/Snack break (DETOUR)



i IF YOU NEED A TOILET OR SNACK BREAK, FOLLOW THE PATH LEFT AT THE "FORMER FOREST METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATORY SIGN." THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PICNIC TABLES AVAILABLE, OR IF RAINING, YOU MAY TAKE SHELTER IN THE REST HOUSE. TOILETS ARE LOCATED ON THE BACK SIDE OF THE REST HOUSE. PASSING THE REST HOUSE, CONTINUE STRAIGHT INTO THE FOREST (DO NOT TAKE THE ASPHALT ROAD LEFT).



T00 / Photo



T01 / Photo



i YOU MAY ALSO NOTICE A SPRING TO THE LEFT OF THE STAIRCASE THAT HAS BEEN BUBBLING OUT OF ITS SOURCE, 500M UP THE MOUNTAIN PASS, FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS. THIS WAS ANOTHER POINT WHERE KISO NO YOSHINAKA PRAYED TO MT. ONTAKI FOR VICTORY IN DEFEATING THE TAIRA CLAN IN 1180, AND IT IS STILL USED BY TRAVELLING PILGRIMS TO PURIFY THEMSELVES BEFORE WORSHIPPING MT. ONTAKI FROM THE SHRINE ABOVE.

T02 / Photo



T04 / Photo



T03 / More on Ontake Yohaijo

T05 / Photo

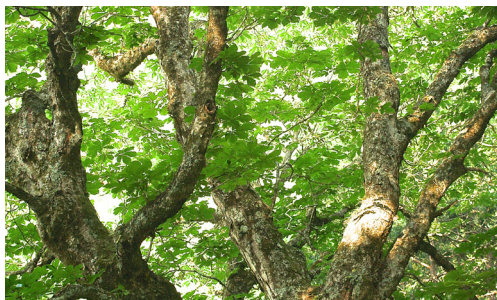
More on Ontake Yohaijo

The mixing of Buddhist and Shinto images is interesting here as the shrine itself, complete with the "torii" gate that gives the pass its name, is clearly Shinto, but it is distinct in that it venerates the mountain as an independent deity. The surrounding statues are a mixture of Buddhist Kannon, Fudomyou (the God of Wrath, with his flaming sword and chain whip, who specializes in burning away sins), and a variety of tributes to mountain and river gods, as well as "reijin" saints, or leading "shugendo" mountain aesthetics whose spirits now reside within Mt. Ontake. All of these point to a healthy mixture of what might otherwise have been opposing religious beliefs in the development of the Ontake religion.

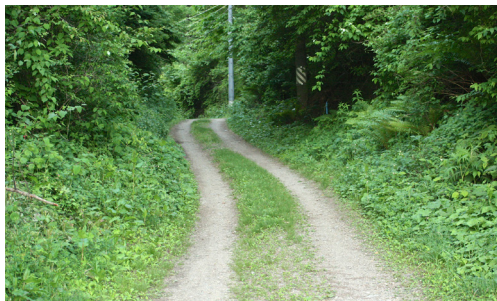


T06 / Local horse chestnut tree legend

You may notice one of these “tochinoki” horse chestnut trees with a hole marked by a sign. This tells the tale of an abandoned child that was discovered here by local villagers. They then took the baby home and raised it happily as their own. The legend says that those who drink the tea made from the fruit of this tree will be blessed with a child. From the time of the pre-historic Jomon era in Japan, hunters and gatherers would use “tochinomi” horse chestnut as a nutritional supplement. Difficult to process due to its astringent toxins, it is no longer prevalent in the Japanese diet, but once may still find “tochi-mochi” (pounded rice-cake mixed with boiled horse chestnut) in the countryside.



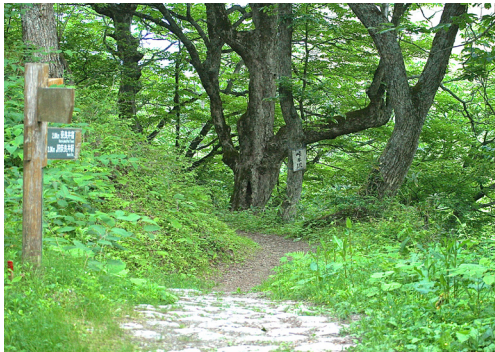
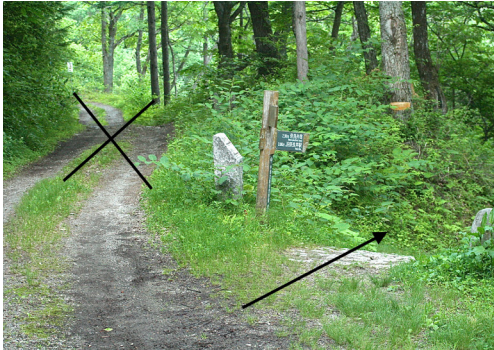
T07 / Photo



T08 / Photo



T09 / Photo



T10 / "Ichirizuka" marker monument



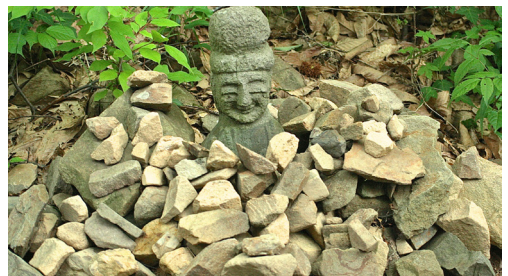
i ON THE WAY DOWN THE TRAIL, YOU WILL PASS A MONUMENT TO AN OLD *ICHRIZUKA* MOUND, WHICH USED TO MARK ONE'S PROGRESS ROUGHLY 4KM ALONG THE ROUTE.

T11 / Teahouse shelter



i YOU WILL ALSO PASS AN OLD TEAHOUSE AND A SIGN COMMEMORATING THE LARGE BATTLE THAT TOOK PLACE HERE BETWEEN KISO YOSHIMASA AND TAKEDA KATSUYORI. A SERENE PLACE, ONE CAN IMAGINE IT IS STILL WATCHED OVER BY THE 500 SAMURAI LEFT BURIED IN THE VALLEY BELOW.

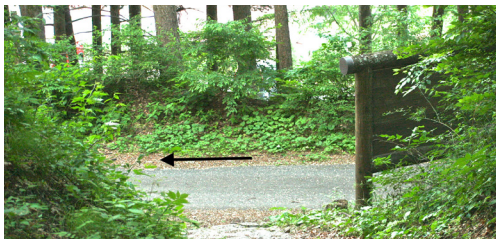
T12 / Photo



T13 / Photo



T14 / Photo



T15 / Photo



T16 / Photo



T17 / More on Narai



There are two main Shinto shrines (Shizume and Hachimangu Shrine) at either end of Narai post town, with five Buddhist temples (Jyoryu-ji, Chosen-ji, Daiho-ji, Honen-ji and Sennen-ji) in between, representing the True Pure Land (Jodo Shinshu), Pure Land (Jodoshu), Soto Zen, and Rinzaï Zen sects. The town is divided into an uptown (called "Kamomachi" 上町) and downtown (called "Shimomachi" 下町), where craftsmen would peddle their woodwork and lacquer ware, and a mid-town (called "Nakomachi" 中町) where the daimyo feudal lord and his retainers would stay. Narai is particularly well-known for its fine-toothed wooden combs, which are made from boxwood because it does not easily conduct static electricity. At least one craftsman in town still restores these combs, some of which can be close to two-hundred years old.

More on Narai (continued)



Narai's Architecture and Preservation:



In 1978, Narai attained special status as a Cultural Asset, and like Tsumago and other preserved areas along the Nakasendo, it receives government funds to retain its Edo-era ambience. Of particular interest in Narai is its characteristic architecture: Second story eaves extend out into the street and narrow entranceways are abutted by uniquely wide lattice shutter-doors called *shitomi*. These shutters slide vertically and would be removed to display the craftsmen's wares to travellers, or to provide a space for families to wait and be blessed during the local *matsuri* festival. The upper, extended eaves would keep snow from falling directly on passersby, and the second story eaves would also protect the craftsmen and their products from rain. (Interestingly, these second story eaves were made with nails hammered from beneath rather than above. Thus, they would fall out from under the feet of any would-be burglars.) The second floor height of the homes in Narai was also an uncommon site in the Edo period, and once inside, the homes have a surprising amount of depth. This can be traced back to the Edo-period system of taxation, whereby a residence was taxed based off its width, not length.

Ochatsubo-douchuu Matsuri お茶壺道中祭り
("Journey of the Tea Leaf Jar Festival")

The largest matsuri festival in Narai is the "Ochatsubo-douchuu" お茶壺道中, or the "Journey of the Tea Leaf Jar". Held every year on the first Friday, Saturday and Sunday of June, this festival reenacts a procession that would have accompanied the jar used to carry the year's newly harvested tea from Kyoto to the Tokugawa shogun in Tokyo. Green tea from the Uji district of Kyoto is still considered some of the finest in Japan, and the journey of this tea was no light matter. The shogun's tea leaf jar itself had a higher rank than any of the daimyo lords passing through Narai. In the Edo Period, when a samurai could cut down a lower-ranked villager for not showing proper respect, an impediment to the jar's journey could threaten the entire town. As such, villagers would breathe a sigh of relief when it's procession had continued out of sight. Chozenji Temple, of the Soto Zen sect, was used as a lodge for the Ochatsubo jar when it stayed the night in Narai.

There is also a children's song, famous throughout Japan, that recounts the journey of the Ochatsubo through the town. Called "Zuizuzu-korobashi" the lyrics are as follows:

ずいずいずっころばし ごまみそずい ZUIZUIZU-
KOROBASHI GOMAMISOZUI

"ZUIZUIZU-KOROBASHI (the sound of grinding/
milling) Grinding sesame paste"

茶壺に追われて とっぴんしゃん CHATSUBO NI
OWARETE TO-PINSHAN

"The tea leaf jar is coming TO-PINSHAN (the sound
of slamming the door shut)

抜けたら どんどこしょ NUKETARA DONDOKOSHO
"When it passes DONDOKOSHO (*sigh* the sound of
sitting back in relief)"

More on Narai (continued)

俵のねずみが 米食ってちゅう TAWARA NO NEZUMI
GA KOMI KUTTECHUU

"The straw bale mouse eats the rice SQUEAK"
ちゅうちゅうちゅう CHUU CHUU CHUU "SQUEAK
SQUEAK SQUEAK"

おっとさんがよんでも おっかさんがよんでも OTTOSAN
GA YONDEMO OKKASAN GA YONDEMO

"Even if your father calls, even if your mother calls"
行きっこなしよ IKIKKO NASHI YO

"Don't go out"

井戸のまわりで IDO NO MAWARI DE

"Around the water well"

お茶碗欠いたのだから OCHAWAN KAITA NO DAARE
"Who broke the tea cup?"



MEANING

The song tells of the shogun's tea leaf jar coming into town while the locals are grinding sesame paste (possibly a euphemism for busily flattering guests visiting the town). They then notice that the yearly tea leaf jar procession is coming and quickly run inside, slamming the door shut behind them. When it passes, they are able to breathe a sigh of relief, but as they wait tensely in the house, they can hear the sound of a mouse eating the family rice. The song teaches children not to go outside when the tea leaf jar passes through, even if their father or mother calls them. In the heavy silence, they can also hear a tea cup breaking somewhere near the family well and wonder who made the sound (which might sound eerily similar to the tea leaf jar breaking, and thus be a source of panic).

T18 / Photo



T19 / Photo



T20 / Photo



T21 / Photo



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