

KOJIKI STORIES AROUND MT. MIWA



HOW MT. MIWA GOT ITS NAME

Lady Iku-tama-yori-bime was renowned for her beauty. One night, a mysterious man, handsome beyond compare, visited her room. The two fell in love instantly, and they started spending nights together. Soon, Lady Iku-tama-yori-bime became pregnant.

Her parents asked, “How did you become pregnant without a husband?” Iku-tama-yori-bime answered, “I don’t know his name, but a wonderful man has been visiting me. I’ve become pregnant quite naturally.”

Her parents wanted to find out who the man was. They said to Lady Iku-tama-yori-bime, “Spread red dirt around your bed (so that his footprints will be left behind) and tie a needle to a spool of hemp thread. Then attach the needle to the hem of his robe.”

Lady Iku-tama-yori-bime did as she was told. The next morning after her visitor left, there were no footprints on the floor. The hemp thread was found going out of her room through the door’s keyhole, with only three loops of thread left on the spool. It became clear that her visitor had left through the

keyhole.

Following the hemp thread, Lady Iku-tama-yori-bime found that it led to a divine dwelling on a sacred mountain. This is how they came to learn that her mysterious visitor was actually the Great Deity O-mono-nushi. Consequently, the sacred mountain became known as Mt. Miwa (Three Loops Mountain).

HOW EMPEROR SUJIN STOPPED AN EPIDEMIC

During the reign of Emperor Sujin, a horrible epidemic spread across the land, killing many people.

In despair, the Emperor went to his purified sleeping chamber, seeking divine guidance. The Great Deity O-mono-nushi appeared to the Emperor in a dream saying, “This epidemic is my will. However, if you find a man called O-tataneko and have him enshrine me, this epidemic will end. Then your country will be at peace.”

As soon as he woke from his dream, the Emperor sent people to search for O-tataneko. They found him in Minono Village in Kawachi (in present day Osaka Prefecture).

The Emperor asked O-tataneko, “Whose son are you?” O-tataneko answered, “I am the son of the Deity Takemikazuchi, who is the son of the Deity Iikatasumi, who was the son of the Deity Kushimikata, who was born of the union between the Great Deity O-mono-nushi and Lady Iku-tama-yori-bime.”

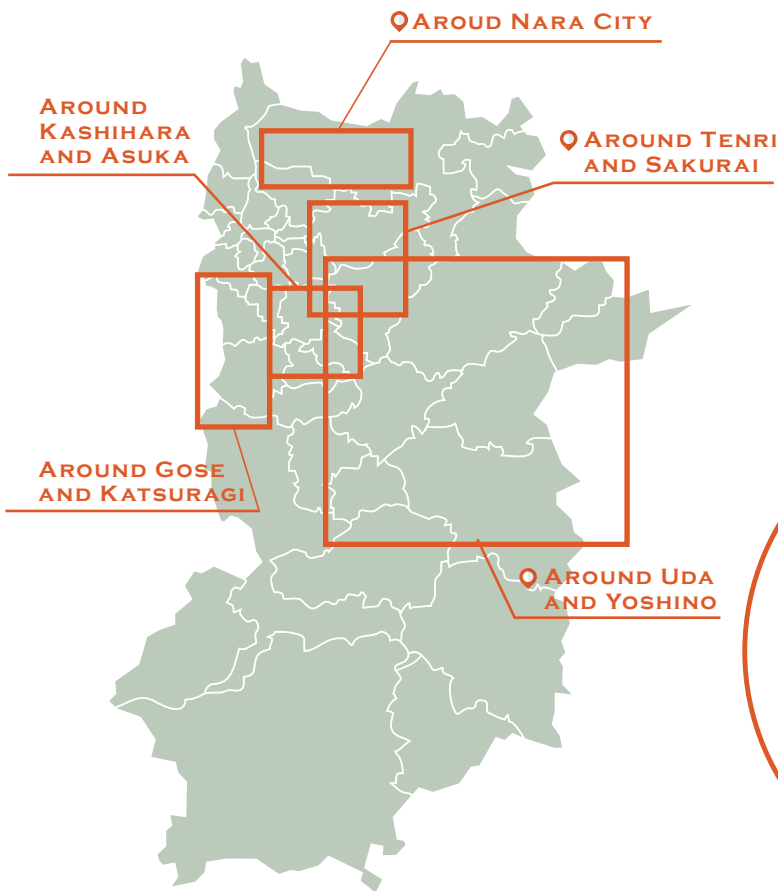
The Emperor was quite pleased to learn this as it meant that there would be peace in the land and that the people would flourish. He made O-tataneko a priest, and O-tataneko enshrined the Great Deity O-mono-nushi on Mt. Miwa.

The Emperor established shrines for the Deity of the Sky and the Deity of the Land and dedicated many ritual offerings.

Further, the Emperor dedicated red shields and red spears to the Deity of Sumisaka in Uda (in present day Nara Prefecture) and black shields and black spears to the Deity of Osaka. He even enshrined the Deity of the Mountain Ridges and the Deity of the River Rapids and made elaborate offerings to them.

The epidemic ended, and peaceful life returned to the land.

NARA AREA MAP



Getting Around IN nara

Nara is about a 30-minute train ride from Kyoto or Osaka, and getting around in Nara is easy. Major tourist destinations are connected by Nara's extensive public transportation system. Rental bicycles are also a popular way to find your way around.



Mt. Miwa

📍 AROUND TENRI AND SAKURAI

One of the most sacred mountains in Japan. The entire mountain is regarded as the embodiment of the Great Deity O-mono-nushi. (Sakurai City)

Miwa Myojin Shrine(Ohmiwa Jinja Shrine)

📍 AROUND TENRI AND SAKURAI

Since the entire mountain of Mt. Miwa is seen as the Great Deity O-mono-nushi, the shrine does not have a main hall to house its deity. (Sakurai City)

Hibara Jinja Shrine

📍 AROUND TENRI AND SAKURAI

This shrine is part of the Miwa Myojin Shrine(Ohmiwa Jinja Shrine) complex and is well known for its beautiful scenery and view of the sunset over Mt. Niho. The Supreme Sun Deity Amaterasu is enshrined as its main deity. (Sakurai City)

Mausoleum of Emperor Sujin

📍 AROUND TENRI AND SAKURAI

This 242-meter-long, keyhole-shaped burial mound (*kofun*) was built on the slope of Mt. Ryuo. It is widely regarded as the tomb of Emperor Sujin and was built in the early 4th century. (Tenri City)

Yamanobe-no-michi Road

📍 AROUND TENRI AND SAKURAI

This ancient road around Mt. Miwa connects many of the ancient shrines and burial mounds that appear in *Kojiki* stories. (Sakurai City)