

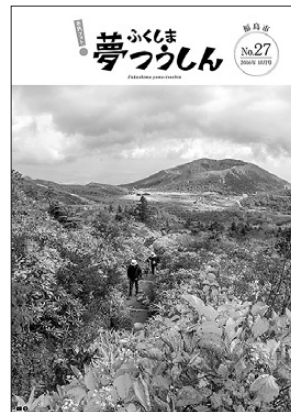
Fukushima Dreams - a quarterly publication of Fukushima City — October 2016

Thanks for picking up this "Fukushima Dreams - a quarterly publication of Fukushima City."

Through this issue, we hope that you will learn more about, and be moved by the various charms that Fukushima city has to offer.

Fukushima is a city of around 280,000 people, surrounded by the beauty of nature. Due to its location, the city has a characteristic basin climate, and is famous as a fruit-producing area, producing many varieties throughout the seasons, including cherries, peaches, Asian pears, grapes, and apples.

We hope that through this edition, you'll come to appreciate even a little what Fukushima City has to offer.



P. 2, 3 Fukushima Tourism

① A majestic panoramic view spreads before your eyes. Drive through the Bandai Azuma Skyline where autumn leaves stretch out in all directions.

② At every curve, breathtaking views await along this road that continues into the sky.

Its highest elevation at 1,622m, the Bandai Azuma Skyline is a mountain road with a total length of 28.7 km, tying Takayu Onsen and Tsuchiyu Pass in western Fukushima City. A magnificent view waiting behind every bend in this road, it was selected as one of "Japan's Best 100 Roads." It has also had the honor of being chosen as the No. 1 road by readers of a motorcycle enthusiast magazine. Why not step away from the hustle and bustle on an autumn holiday and let the depth of this great natural scenery embrace you?

③ The Azuma Hakkei is a treasure trove of photo opportunities.

Along this road in the sky whose colors become brilliant as the air gets chilly, there is a treasure trove of photo opportunities with amazing views, named the "Azuma Hakkei (Azuma's 8 Views)" by writer Yasushi Inoue. Legend has it the gods of open roads, called "Tengu" flew and played in the spot called "Tengu no Niwa (Tengu's Garden)." In the surrounding area, the contrast of green Kuma bamboo leaves, the white bark of the birch and rowan trees, and the yellows and reds of the various maples cover the mountain in a splendid brocade. We also recommend the area around the Fudosawa Bridge, which crosses the Tsubakuro Valley. The 80 meter walls of the gorge are covered in brilliant colors. If you plan on getting out of the car and walking around, aim for Okenuma Pond from the Jododaira Plateau. The red, yellow, orange, and green autumn leaves like carefully sewn thick embroidery and the beautiful mirror-like waters against the background of the stark Mt. Issaikyo await.



④ Bandai Azuma Skyline

As a level 2 eruption warning continues on Mt. Azuma, all sections (Takayu Gate - Tsuchiyu Gate) are closed to traffic at night (5:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m. the following day).

Open period: Early April - mid-November

*Closed for winter from mid-November until early April of the following year.

P. 4, 5, 6, 7 Special Feature

① Revived memories. A tour of old houses in Fukushima

② Former estates and old houses inviting feelings of nostalgia are the original landscape of the heart

It is no exaggeration to say that former estates and old houses, continuously loved for many, many years eventually becoming part of the landscape are the original landscapes of our hearts. A combination of "practicality and beauty," the old buildings that contain the history and culture of an area and communicate its memories each with its own unique personality, are the treasure chest of our ancestors wisdom for living. We visited carpentry craftsman Fujio Miura, who has worked on the restoration of important cultural properties and reformation construction on former estates and old houses for many years, and asked him about the appeal and importance of preserving the former estates and old houses that remain in Fukushima City.

③ Sukiya-zukuri construction is the ultimate method for house building.

Beginning his apprenticeship with a master carpenter at 16, and going independent in his 20's, Fujio Miura has 50 long years of experience as a carpenter. When asked how he came to work on the restoration of former estates and old houses in addition to general residences, he replied, "If you want to pursue good construction, eventually you will arrive at the Sukiya-zukuri construction method. When I was in my 30's, I sought to refine my skills even further and took part in a 'Japanese Architecture Seminar' that accepted students from around the country. This set the rest in motion." The lecturers were like an all-star line up from the world of Japanese architecture. He was able to observe with his own eyes the dismantling and repairs on a cultural property maintained by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. "The experience of attending lectures for roughly sixteen years and learning while watching the real thing has become my own legacy to pass on."



Construction techniques cannot be passed down without any work to perform.

Mr. Miura has worked on the restoration and repair of a variety of registered cultural properties. He says that dismantling restoration projects are filled with the essence of traditional methods. "I am inspired every time I see the precise techniques, such as fittings and joints, of the craftsmen and their superb work. Different types of timber are also used in all of the most appropriate places. Pine raised at the top of a mountain is tough and therefore used in the joists, chestnut raised in a swamp withstands moisture well therefore is good for the foundation, and cedar which grows in the middle is used for the pillars. The buildings are actually really well made."

He tells us how the dismantling restoration of the Jukken-gura storehouse on the former Horikiri estate was one such building brimming with the essence of tradition. "We dismantled and restored the first floor of the store house built approximately 270 years ago. We enhanced the portions of pillars that had gone bad with the netsugi technique, replaced the 14m long center joist, and recoated all of the clay walls. There were some difficult aspects, but the entire project was a learning experience. It was only possible because the original model still remained and I had skilled craftsmen to work with."

④Fujio Miura
Born in Fukushima City in 1946
Miura Artisan Shop (Ltd.) President
Vice-chairman of the Committee to Utilize Former Estates in Fukushima
Fukushima Heritage Manager

⑤Ancient carpentry tools belonging to Fujio Miura
From the left, 2 types of nokogiri (saw) (pit saw, crosscut saw), Omasakari (axe), 2 maechona (adze), 2 yari-ganna (arrow-shaped plane)
· The pit saw, crosscut saw, and axe are tools from the Meiji era.
· The axe is used to peel the bark from large beams.
· The adze is used in the naguri (rough planing) process.
· The arrow-shaped planes are tools from Heian era. They are used to finish after the adze is used.

⑥We asked Mr. Miura about the characteristics and points of interest in the remaining former estates and old houses in Fukushima City from an expert's point of view. Please do not miss the magnificent wisdom and skills of our ancestors we must leave for future generations through the historic buildings that have stood the test of time and still stand today.



⑦Fukushima City designated tangible cultural property
Kyu Horikiri-tei Jukken-gura (Earthen-wall storehouse of the former Horikiri estate)

The former Horikiri estate was the residence of a wealthy agricultural and business family continuing from the Edo period. The roof of the main house, which was rebuilt in 1881, uses the same Ogatsu-produced slate roofing tiles as Tokyo Station. Kumiki ranma dividers, metal fittings to hide nails in the shape of cranes and turtles, the Shoin-zukuri architectural style used in the back room, the curved ceiling tailored to the terrain of the next room are just a few of the many highlights. Within the estate grounds, the Jukken-gura storehouse built in the latter half of the Edo period and the oldest in the prefecture, still remains. It appears to have mostly been used as a storehouse for rice, and depending on the era, for sake as well. The 14-meter long center joist should not be missed. Pillars standing on foundation stones, "ishiba-date," a characteristic of traditional construction methods, and the 25 cm thick earthen walls made from bamboo grids plastered with straw combined with clay to form a mixture that is applied over and over best communicate the appeal of the craftsman's work made possible with finely-tuned skills.

⑧Nationally registered tangible cultural property
Senoue Shimanuki Honke Jutaku (Shimanuki head family residence of Senoue)

It is said that the Shimanuki head family moved to Fukushima as a vassal of the Uesugi clan. Their ancestors were engaged in the finance industry in Senoue, a busy post town along the Oshu Kaido Road in the Edo period. The merchant-style main building (groundbreaking in 1899, completed 8 years later) and the separate building built later as an extension to entertain guests (added in 1913) are both 2-storied and use precious woods such as Akita cedar and black persimmon. One must take their hats off to the highly-skilled technique and sensibility used in the 40-tatami mat (66 square meter) reception hall, the prestigious, high coffered ceiling, the beautiful reed ranma dividers, and the ceiling decoration finished with plaster relief in the Western-style room. "Shochikubai," the symbol of life events, peaches, the fruit of longevity, and wild boar eyes (gegyo) to protect against fire can be found sprinkled throughout telling the master and craftsman's sophisticated playfulness and devotion to his family. See if you can find them with your own eyes.

⑨Former residence of the Bank of Japan Fukushima branch General manager
Ogura-tei (Ogura residence)

Built in 1927, it was used as a boarding house for the Bank of Japan Fukushima branch during the war, and after the war the building experienced a takeover by the Occupation Army. Its exterior is hipped red tile. It has wood siding of cedar. There are 11 rooms in total, 8 Japanese style, and 3 Western. The wood used is all original from the era in which it was built. For example, the dividers and trim between the two connected Japanese rooms, and the pillars made of Aomori cypress. The ceiling of the tea room uses one panel of cedar in the kagami-tenjo style. The garden overlooked from the nekoma-shoji doors that open to the sides also has its own flavor. Wouldn't it be nice to feel intoxicated in the elegance of the Abukuma River and Mt.Benten, likened to the Kamo River and Mt.Higashiyama of Kyoto.

⑩Kyu Sakuma-tei (Former Sakuma residence)

It is believed to have been built by the 15th generation of Sakuma family as the village head's estate in the middle of the Edo period. The moat surrounding the Nagayamon (main gate), was built in the Taisho era in the Kikko-ishizumi style that does not allow the root of even one tree to pass through. One unique characteristic of the former Sakuma residence is the "Shikidai Genkan" entrance to greet guests in addition to the separate entrance for members of the household. In addition, there is a difference between the height of the hearth and the floor of the parlor indicating preferential status existed among family members. The building's interior, with its three continuous Japanese-style rooms, shoji (paper sliding doors) of black persimmon, main pillar, wood-panel doors, and earthen floors invite a sense of nostalgia filled with sentiment and warmth.

⑪Nationally designated important cultural property
Fukushima City Minka-en

Kyu Hirose-za (Former Hirose-za theater)

This theater, a nationally designated important cultural property, is one of only 6 in the country making the building extremely valuable. Built in 1887 (estimated) in Yanagawa Village (where Date City now stands) by volunteers, it was relocated and restored in 1994. The center of the stage is a rotating stage with a trap cellar beneath. It is also equipped with a runway, bamboo grid ceiling, and narrator's seat, everything a theater required at the time. The rotating stage was hand pushed and could easily be moved by about four adults. In the waiting room backstage, autographs and scribbles by the actors at the time remain on the walls. In addition, there are many other buildings reminiscent of the time that have been relocated to Minka-en, a park with old houses and buildings.

P8

①Looking out from the mountain trail to Kamanuma Pond
Mt. Azuma-kofuji

Cover photo explanation:

The colorful autumn leaves that spread across the mountain path to Kamanuma Pond are a pleasurable site for the mountain climbers at the height of autumn. Looking back in the direction you have climbed offers a view of Mt.Azuma-kofuji, the symbol of Jododaira Plateau, and the Fukushima basin.

