

Fukushima Dreams - a quarterly publication of Fukushima City — April 2018

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 290,000 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.



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① Special Feature

The Iino Region flooded with flowers

② The Iino region, which lies to the southeast of Fukushima City, will celebrate 10 years since its amalgamation with Fukushima City in the summer of 2018. In this issue we introduce attractions of the Iino region, such as Hanayashiki Park, often called Hanamiyama Part 2, the UFO Fureaikan, filled with the mystery and excitement of outer space, and delicious things to eat.

③ A Utopia Handmade by Residents, Hanayashiki Park

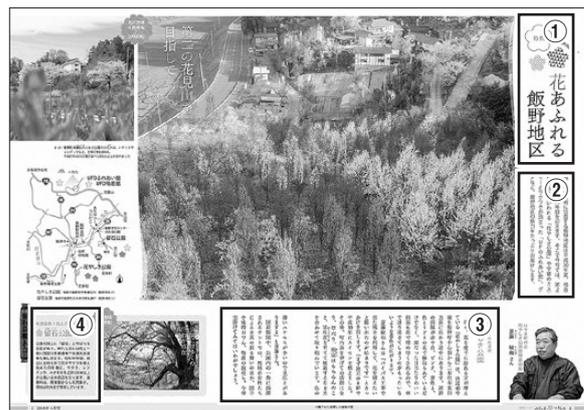
Hanayashiki Park, where the number of flower-loving visitors increases each year, is located along Prefectural Route 40 on the way from Iinomachi's central area heading towards Nihonmatsu City's Towa. Not only are both sides of the road edged with colorful flowers of red, white, pink, and yellow, the former sloped crop fields that receive plenty of light are now carpeted in flowers creating a landscape that is too beautiful to simply drive past.

“It began with the desire to use the waste soil from the construction of a bypass to plant flowers,” explains Toshikazu Saito. He continues, “First eight local families planted daffodils in 1998. It then became a neighborhood association project, and we all work together to cut the grass, prune, as well as raise and plant the seedlings. There are a large number of rich-colored flowering peaches that are truly something to see.”

During the blooming season a tent is set up in one corner of the park and local women serve tea. Dango (sweet dumplings), miso oden, and local goods are also available for purchase. Why not see it for yourself this spring?

④ The view is superb from Tomeishi Park, known for flowers and giant rocks

At the park's summit sits a giant rock called “Tomeishi,” and on sunny days you can enjoy a view of the Azuma and Adataro mountain ranges still slightly covered in snow along with the surrounding flowers. Around 1965, the landowner of the surrounding area started planting cherry blossom trees and that was the beginning of the more than 500 trees, including cherry blossoms, Forsythia, and flowering peach trees adorning the area around the low hill. When they are in full bloom, the sight attracts many visitors even from the Kanto region. It is now managed by the neighborhood association.



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① UFO-no-Sato, Full of Excitement and Surprise!

② UFO Fureaikan stands halfway up the slope of Senganmori

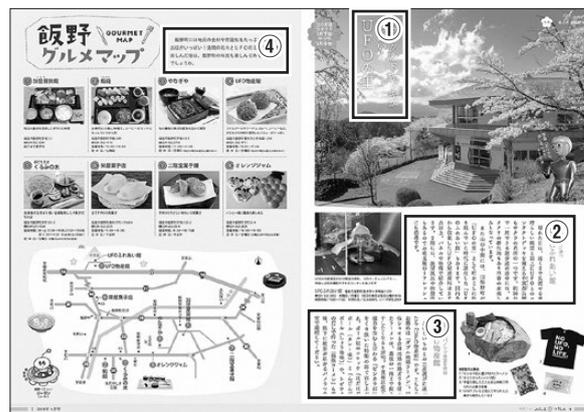
Senganmori Park, which offers amazing vistas on clear days and has a UFO contact deck at its summit, is another famous cherry blossom viewing spot. The Asian fawnlily colony found along the path, which can be circumnavigated in roughly 50 minutes, is one of the highlights of early spring.

In addition, the UFO Fureaikan is located halfway up the slope of the mountain. It was established in the days when the former town of Iino was working on town development by promoting the town as a home base for UFOs. There are more than 3000 items related to UFOs here collected from both Japan and overseas. They are displayed on panels and in videos. The second floor features a public bath with fantastic views and a rest area perfect for refreshing after a day of cherry blossom viewing.

③ UFO Bussankan featuring a cafeteria with gorgeous panoramic views

If you don't know what to eat or which souvenirs to buy, stop by the UFO Bussankan. Our recommendation is the “Double Jidori (chicken) Ramen.” This ramen that uses both Kawamata Shamo and Aizu Jidori chickens in their broth is known for being so delicious you'll want to finish the entire bowl down to the last droplet of broth. Enjoy it in a bowl made from a hallowed “Pinkara” stone found in Senganmori and said to have magnetic properties. The croquettes shaped like balls, “Hoda Hoda Ball (curry flavor)” and “Nda Nda Ball (soy sauce flavor)” along with the “Tobiuo Ramen,” made with flying fish broth, are also delicious. Don't forget to take in the beautiful panoramic scenery that expands before you at this cafeteria.

④ There are tons of restaurants in Iino where you can experience the true flavors of the local produce and atmosphere! After taking in the flowers in full bloom and the mysteries of UFOs, why not satisfy your palate with the tastes of Iino.



① Supporting Fukushima horseracing with jockey racing uniforms dyed and sewn at the hands of talented Fukushima craftsmen

② The only JRA horse racing track in Tohoku, Fukushima Racecourse will celebrate its 100th anniversary this year. Fukushima Racecourse, known for swift horses racing across the 2000 m lawn to win the major “Tanabata Sho” prize, has carved out its history alongside Kono Tailor located in Sakuragicho in Fukushima City. We visited 3rd generation proprietor, Masanori Kono, who after the Tohoku earthquake and disaster began making jockey racing uniforms for local race tracks in addition to the central races and asked him about the 100 years of history his business shares with Fukushima Racecourse and what the future holds.

③ His craftsman spirit still stubbornly follows the superstition that each uniform must be completed by the same person

The uniforms jockeys wear in a race are called “shobufuku” in Japanese. Kono Tailor, manufacturer of countless jockey uniforms, including the uniform for the owner of Deep Impact and the first JRA female jockey in 16 years, Nanako Fujita when she won her first Central Racing race at Fukushima Racecourse, will celebrate its 94th anniversary since opening its doors this year. They started manufacturing shobufuku, which can be considered the face of the horse owner, around 1945. When asked why they started, Masanori replied, “I heard that because the shop was a stone’s throw from Fukushima Racecourse someone asked if we could make jockey uniforms, not only riding pants.” He continued, “Nearby Kawamata Town was acclaimed for its fabric industry, and there was a dye shop across the street. We were able to fabricate 100% Fukushima-made jockey uniforms and these order-made shobufuku became our main product.”

Second generation proprietor, the late Masahei, was a jockey, and he was the inventor of “Aerofom,” an extremely elastic material with low air resistance created to satisfy a request from jockey Yutaka Take. Masanori, who did his training under the strict supervision of Masahei, faithfully maintains the Kono Tailor tradition of one jockey uniform being fabricated entirely by one craftsman, even today. It is said to be bad luck for the shobufuku if multiple people are involved. Masanori explains that if the single-mindedness of a craftsman can help make the difference between winning and losing in a tight race, then he must remain focused. “With such a background, when a jockey and horse win a race wearing our shobufuku, it makes me truly happy.”

With the hardship of the triple disaster, a heroic shobufuku print was developed

Masanori has been earnestly fabricating shobufuku since he was 27 years old. When the Tohoku Disaster happened, he was filled with uncertainty, pain, and the feeling that nothing could possibly be worse. “Fukushima Racecourse was closed. There was a radical drop off in orders. Just then, regional jockeys, who until that point hadn’t had any contact with us, reached out.” Going out and talking about the situation spread goodwill within the blink of an eye and soon orders were coming in even from the Kansai region. Masanori surprised even himself at the idea he came up with to fabricate blinker hoods and stable staff jackets with the same materials and colors as the shobufuku, which became very popular. Looking back, it is exactly because we undergo hardships that we connect to people and feel their warmth.

Masanori, who felt even more value in the connections he made to other people after the Tohoku disaster, really listens to his customers. To make things just a little bit easier for those jockeys who struggle with weight restrictions, shobufuku with printed patterns rather than embroidered was developed. With the cooperation of the dye shop that suffered alongside Masanori, he was meticulous about the thinness and color of the fabric they spent one year developing with very pleasing results.

“Even after 100 years, I’m not going to change the things I don’t want to change, but I’ll move along with the things that can be moved.” Masanori explains how he wants to continue to be a behind-the-scenes supporter of Fukushima Racecourse with the twin pillars of tradition and innovation. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Fukushima Racecourse. We hope he continues down this path alongside the racecourse far into the future.

④ Types of jockey uniforms

There are 13 colors that can be used in horse jockey uniforms. The brightness and intensity of the colors is strictly specified. Patterns must be circles, lines, or belts, and the torso and sleeves can only have one type of pattern. There are other detailed regulations as well.



① Instagram Photo Contest!

Exciting Fukushima Insta Grand Prize Spring 2018

Theme “Spring in Fukushima City”

Entry period ▶ Thur., March 15 - Thur., May 31

How to enter: Just post on Instagram with the information in ① and ②, that’s it!

① Hashtag “#wakufuku”#wakufuku18haru”#CJFukushima”

② Location information

*Limited to yet unpublished photos taken within Fukushima City.

*The posted photos may be used in the city’s PR media.

● Mayor’s Prize ● Hot Spring Resort Prize (3) ● City Joho Fukushima Prize

Prizes include accommodation vouchers at hot spring resorts in the city and local goods.

Please see the Fukushima City homepage for details.

Search for Wakufuku Taisho (Wakufuku Prize)

② On the cover

Senganmori covered in cherry blossoms

It is said UFOs visit Senganmori. This beautiful cone-shaped mountain is infused with the color of cherry blossoms in spring. Enjoy, not only the cherry blossoms, but also the spectacular views from its summit.

