

## Fukushima Dreams - a quarterly publication of Fukushima City — July 2017

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.

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### ① Yoshitsune and the Sato clan ~Following Sato country~

② Even now the story of the brothers of the Sato clan (Tsugunobu and Tadanobu), who used to rule Shinobu and who fought together with Yoshitsune in the feudal wars, still fascinates people.

*The Yoshitune, Yoichi, Benkei, Shizuka, Tsugunobu and Tadanobu Summit* will be held in Fukushima City, in September. The history of the Sato clan and of Sato country, which is now called Iizaka, will be introduced.

### ③ Sato clan and the Fujiwara clan from Oushu

At the end of Heian Era, the Fujiwara clan held great power in the Tohoku region centered around Hiraizumi. The Sato clan ruled the area (currently centered around Fukushima City) which was called “Shinobunoshō” for a long time. The Sato clan was a highly trusted vassal of the Fujiwara clan. It is said that the surname “Sato” comes from “Saemonnojo” which is a one of government position. “Sato” is a shorter version of “Saemonnojo Fujiwara”.

### The brothers who followed master's commands and protected Yoshitsune to the end

In 1180, Shinobushoji, Tsugunobu, and Tadanobu attended Yoshitsune Minamoto to join Yoritomo Minamoto's camp in subjugating the Taira Clan under the command of Hidehira Fujiwara. During a battle in Yashima, Kagawa, the elder brother, Tsugunobu, tried to cover Yoshitsune from arrows and was killed. After the Taira Clan collapsed, the younger brother, Tadanobu let Yoshitsune party escape from Mt. Yoshino in Nara. Later, Tadanobu was driven into a corner and committed suicide.

This story of the Sato brothers was passed down from generation to generation as a legend all over the country. Later, this story appears in “Azumakagami,” “Heikemonogatari” and is widely known.

### ④ After story of the Sato family

In 1189 Motoharu, the father of the Sato brothers, ambushed a force from Yoritomo. However he was defeated and caught. Later Motoharu was allowed to go back to Shinobu.

The Sato family stayed in Shinobu throughout the Kamakura era and a lot of descendants held important positions in Shinobu.

Around Mt. Tatenoyama in Iizaka, there was a residence of the Sato family which is called “Ohtorijo.” Currently, the top of the mountain has become a park and the only thing you can find is a stone monument, but you can get the whole view of Shinobu - the same view that those who lived in the era of battle probably looked upon.

Why don't you visit Shinobu and think of their family history?

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### ① Ioji Temple and *Otowa's Camellia*

There is a camellia tree which has never bloomed at Ioji(Sato family Temple), in Iizaka-machi.

Called *Otowa's Camellia*, it is the basis of a story about family love from Japan's feudal wars.

② Rurikoan Ioji was founded 1200 years ago to worship Yakushi-nyorai and was made by Kobo-daishi. As you pass through the Temple gate, the camellia is behind the last Yakushi-do hall.

Otowa, in *Otowa's Camellia*, is mother of the brothers Tsugunobu and Tadanobu Sato.

As if the tree shares the deep sorrow of Otowa, who lost her two sons in war, each spring the buds of the camellia tree fall before they can bloom.

The priest of Ioji, Mr. Hashimoto says, “There is not only Otowa's sorrow but also the brothers' regrets and sorrow behind *Otowa's Camellia*.”

Tsugunobu's wife, Wakazakura, and Tadanobu's wife, Kaede, holding back their sorrow, tried to comfort Otowa. They wore their husbands' armor (yoroi) and acted triumphant. Perhaps, because it was a dangerous age full of fighting and death, they cared more deeply about each other.

The story of the Sato brothers, Otowa, Wakazakura, and Kaede has fascinated people since that time, including the Japanese poet Matsuo Basho.

“A lot of visitors from outside Fukushima come to visit, but I want people from Fukushima to know the story of the Sato family.”

③ There are not only Ioji but also many historical places in Iizaka. Why don't you visit and feel the spirit of historic adventure?

### ④ “Kyu Horikiri-tei”, The former Horikiri estate

This is an old estate of a wealthy farmer and merchant from the Edo period. There are historically valuable buildings including the oldest storehouse (kura) in Fukushima and the main house (restored). There is also a popular free-flowing foot and hand spa.

### ⑤ “Sabako-Jinja”, Sabako Shrine

At Sabako Shrine there is a monument which says “The origin of Iizaka Onsen” and also slabs engraved with haiku, written by Masaoka Shiki and other haiku poets. Also, people say if you pour the waters of the fountain onto the body of the *Oyukake Yakushi-nyorai* figure, your body will also be healed.

### ⑥ Nakano Fudon

This is one of three famous Fudo in Japan. Since its foundation on the mountain more than 800 years ago, a holy light has been eternally lit in the innermost temple. The god, Ofudo-sama, will make your wishes come true if you pray to him sincerely.



① As I gain strength from the audience, they will experience opera to its “full extent”.

② Residents of Fukushima Prefecture will perform a full scale opera called *Otowano Tsubaki* to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the founding of Fukushima City. The opera was originally written and performed in 1995 during the same year that the National Sports Festival was held in Fukushima Prefecture. Mr. Keizo Takahashi, an opera singer from Fukushima City, will reprise his role as Motoharu Sato, the father of two boys named Tsugunobu and Tadanobu, whom he played with great emotion in Fukushima city and Tokyo. Mr. Takahashi shares with us his attraction for this work and the charm of the opera.

③ Throughout his musical career he met many wonderful people.

Mr. Takahashi got into music because he enjoyed listening to classical music on his brother’s stereo when he was a child. He had been taking violin lessons since junior high school because of a former teacher. Though he was refused entry to university, he met a teacher who discovered his potential as a vocalist so he decided to change his major. “It was not a difficult decision to change my major because I love to sing and express myself.” One year after changing his major, he was accepted into the Tokyo University of the Arts and he says it was a pivotal moment. He was selected as the head soloist after joining the Fujiwara Opera Company as a vocalist. “This inspired me to move towards opera. Also, I wanted to introduce opera to my home community in Fukushima.” While he was a student of Tokyo University of the Arts, he started the [Fukushima Opera Group]. This group disbanded after only two performances at the Fukushima City Auditorium. However, at that time the teachers and people he met collaborated on *Otowano Tsubaki*. His music career is supported by the connections between his teachers and friends he has met over the years.”

**The Opera *Otowano Tsubaki* is the pride of Fukushima.**

Mr. Takahashi said that the opera *Otowano Tsubaki* is the story of deep family bonds and human empathy. For example, in the scene of Wakazakura and Kaede who are trying to comfort Otowa, their mother-in-law, they are dressed in the armor of the two deceased brothers, Tsugunobu and Tadanobu. There is also the scene of the Yoshitsune party discussing their great successes. The great libretto and music is echoed through the audience. “It makes me very happy that Fukushima’s anecdote has become this wonderful opera, and I want more people to know about this opera and this story,” adds Mr. Takahashi. At the end of *Otowano Tsubaki*, Motoharu sings, “I was born and raised in Shinobu. I bought land, learnt the ways of the local people, and lived with a righteous heart. I want people to remember me long after I am gone!” Having been born and raised in Shinobu like the character Motoharu and being supported by so many local people in this effort, Mr. Takahashi finds it difficult not to cry as he sings the finale.

Mr. Takahashi believes that although the opera’s music and libretto is fictional, the soloists, conductors, stage directors, choir, orchestra, lighting, etc., all work together on the various aspects for creating the ‘BEST’ vision of the story. The audience’s breath and applause will all come together in the auditorium. When this opera reaches its ‘full height’ everyone will experience the enchantment of opera.

In September, the opera *Otowano Tsubaki* will be performed to commemorate the 110th year since Fukushima City’s was founded. Please come and join us.



④ Keizo Takahashi, opera singer

Born in Fukushima City. Graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts. Placed 2nd at the 44th Music Competition of Japan. Received the 10th and 17th Giraud Opera Prizes in 1982 and 1989. Debut, while at Tokyo University of the Arts, in “Tosca” directed by Yuzo Toyama. Member of the Fujiwara Opera Company and NHK Lirica Italian Opera Company. Professor emeritus at Tokyo College of Music. Former instructor at Tokyo University of the Arts. Member of the Tokyo NIKIKAI Opera Foundation. Board and Nisseikai board member. CEO of Keiseikai.

① Fukushima PR video contest 2017

“Let’s go to Fukushima city! Let’s return home!”  
Looking for videos from people who feel that way!  
Make and send us a video featuring Fukushima’s history, nature, hot spring, fruit, dialect, etc.  
Videos are due no later than Thursday November 30.

② Awards

Grand Prize	1	200,000 yen
2nd Place	2	50,000yen
Honorable mention	5	10,000yen

③ Application Eligibility

- The contest is open to everyone who wants to promote the appeal of Fukushima City - it does not matter whether they are professional or amateur. Residents and non-residents of any nationality can apply.
- One submission per group, please
  - An organization can be divided into multiple groups and each group can submit a video.

④ Inquiry Method

Fukushima city government office  
Policy promotion Public Relations

Address: 3-1 Gorouchi-machi Fukushima-city  
Zip code: 960-8601

