

Folk Stories of Kofu

The Little Fox of Anko-kuji Temple

Long ago, a tame little fox befriended a high Buddhist priest named Kiyohiko of Anko-kuji Temple. The little fox worked hard as a monk and even learned how to turn himself into a human. Kiyohiko gave the little fox the name Zeon. A little later Kiyohiko moved to a temple in the next prefecture and Zeon also moved and lived with him.

One day Kiyohiko asked Zeon to deliver a letter to Anko-kuji Temple. He wanted Zeon to stay at the hunter's house on the way. Zeon jumped with joy and turned to Anko-kuji Temple in the next village. But as the sun went down, he became tired and hungry and asked a nearby inn house to stay the night. Little did he know, it was the hunter's home. Zeon was asked to stay the night. The hunter was angry that he had been tricked by the fox. He pulled his trigger but when he saw the letter in the hunter's pocket, he saw a fox. Anyday that he had been tricked by the fox, he pulled his trigger but when he saw the letter in the hunter's pocket, he saw a fox. Anyday that he had been tricked by the fox, he pulled his trigger but when he saw the letter in the hunter's pocket, he saw a fox.

The hunter could not believe his eyes. He thought the fox was a demon. He shot at the fox with his gun. The fox was hit and fell to the ground. The hunter was angry that he had been tricked by the fox. He pulled his trigger but when he saw the letter in the hunter's pocket, he saw a fox. Anyday that he had been tricked by the fox, he pulled his trigger but when he saw the letter in the hunter's pocket, he saw a fox.

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The Giant Snake and Shijukabataki

Long ago, in the village of Utsue, a man named Yasochichi lived with his mother. One day, he was off to catch fish to provide for his family. As he wandered into the mountains, he came across a deep pond. The people of the village warned him not to go near it. They said that a giant snake lived there. Yasochichi was curious and decided to go. He walked towards the pond and saw a giant snake. The snake was as long as a mountain and as wide as a river. Yasochichi was terrified and ran away. The snake followed him and caught up with him. The snake was angry that he had been tricked by the fox. He pulled his trigger but when he saw the letter in the hunter's pocket, he saw a fox. Anyday that he had been tricked by the fox, he pulled his trigger but when he saw the letter in the hunter's pocket, he saw a fox.

Access to Kofu

*Times are approximate.

Train (JR Takayama Line)

Nagoya Takayama Hida-Kokufu
 [Limited Express 2 hours 30 min.] [Local Train 16 min.]

Toyama Hida-Furukawa Hida-Kokufu
 [Limited Express 1 hour 15 min.] [Local Train 5 min.]

Express Bus

Nagoya Takayama Matsumoto Takayama
 Shinjuku Takayama Shirakawa-go Takayama
 Osaka / Kyoto Takayama Toyama Shirakawa-go Takayama

Route Bus

Nagoya Takayama Hida-Kokufu 20 min.

Car

From Nagoya: Ichinomiya Junction Takayama Interchange Hida-Kokufu
 [Tokai-Hokuriku Expressway] [Route 41]

From Toyama: Toyama Hida-Kokufu
 [Route 41]

From Matsumoto: Matsumoto Takayama Hida-Kokufu
 [Route 158] [Route 41]

Contact Us

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History of Master Woodworkers

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Hida Kokufu Guide Map

The Whispers of the Ancient Master Woodworkers are Calling You!

Hida Kokufu-Town of Japan Heritage

What is Japan Heritage?

The stories that tell our regional histories.

Japanese regional histories, traditions and customs, have been passed down for generations through story-telling. These stories have been designated as "Japan Heritage" by the Agency of Cultural Affairs. In April 2017 a story in Takayama was also designated. Many temples, shrines and remains in the Kofuku Basin tell the history of Hida Master Woodworkers.

Hida Master Woodworkers Seen in the poems in the 7th-8th century.

Ancient people composed Japanese poems describing the Hida woodworkers. They are seen in "Manyoshu" the oldest collection of poems.

One poem tells how a Hida woodworker put his heart into creating a straight line on wood using Indian ink and thread. Ancient people must have been impressed at the sight of the Hida woodworker devoting himself to this work.

Today's traditional wooden crafts convey the skill and spirit of past Hida masters who have lived in the deep forest for the last 1300 years.

Story of Hida Master Woodworkers

1300 years ago

Woodworkers of the Hida region have been highly recognized for their skills since ancient times. Long ago a law existed that provided some tax relief under a special condition; 10 woodworkers per village would be required to travel to the capital for one year of duty.

And now

The tradition has been passed down to this day. The exceptional skill and heart of a Hida artisan can be seen in the festival floats in the spring and autumn Takayama festivals, the old private houses, temples and shrines. Their influence is felt in the locally made furniture, Hida Shunkei lacquerware, ichi ittoori wood carving and more.

Roughly 100 Woodworkers per year from Hida region travelled to the ancient capital to construct palaces, temples and shrines. The capital was relocated about 20 times over 500 years. They worked more than 330 days a year. And their food was provided by their home villages.

And now

There were many highly skilled Woodworkers who remained in the capital as they became more popular, while others took the risk of escaping from the hard labor.

The Araki-jinja Kanouchi and Shishi

Kinzo-jishi is a traditional Japanese performing art called Shishi-mai (Lion Dance) that serves as offering to the deities in a shrine.

Kinzo-jishi is a unique type of performance passed down through the ages. It is a mythical creature that is similar to a lion, cooperated with a female deity to defeat the evil spirits and protect the village from its attack. The dance is performed in Kanoeke, Hirose and Kanishiro villages.

Kinzo-jishi performed in these three villages in Kofuku has high artistic value and are designated as an important intangible folk-culture asset of Gifu prefecture.

●Annual Festival
 May 1st - Fujii Shrine (Kanoeke) May 1st - Hirose Shrine (Hirose) May 1st - Kanishiro Shrine (Kanishiro)

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