

## Ancient Trails Transporting Culture and Cuisine

Shiga, historically known as Omi, long served as an essential junction point for a number of old trails, or *kaido*, connecting various key pre-modern regions of Japan such as Edo (old Tokyo) and imperial Kyoto. Such trails gave rise to many *shukuba-machi*, known in English as post towns or lodging towns, including Otsu-juku, Kusatsu-juku and Kinomoto-juku. Merchant shops and industries such as breweries thrived in some such towns, adding their own local products into the wide array of goods moving around Japan along these routes.

### 食・文化を運んだいにしへの旅路

かつて近江と呼ばれた滋賀県は、江戸と京を中心に全国に伸びる交通路「街道」が数多く通る交通の要所でした。木之本宿や草津宿、大津宿など旅の拠点となる「宿場町」では、日本中の人や物、情報が行き交い、様々な文化が形作られました。醤油蔵、酒蔵などの商家が栄え、近江の地を通じて全国に運ばれていきました。



Traditional townscape of Kinomoto, Nagahama, a former *shukuba-machi* post town.  
長浜市木之本町 | 宿場町として栄えた情緒ある町並み。



# KINOMOTO-JUKU

## Brewery Town that Thrived on the Kaido

街道沿いで栄えた醸造の宿場町「木之本宿」



## Shoyu

### The Foundation of Japanese Cuisine

Kinomoto-juku is one of the aforementioned shukuba-machi, along the Hokkoku Kaido route in Nagahama, Shiga. Breweries for sake and soy sauce particularly thrived here thanks to the abundant source of pure underground water from the Ibuki Mountain Range, as well as long cold winters ideal for brewing and the trade hub providing ready access to local ingredients.

*Shoyu*, or soy sauce, is the seasoning base for dipping sauces, broths, cooking and much more. The only ingredients for shoyu are soy beans, wheat, and salt, which are then fermented and brewed from active cultures such as *koji*.

Even today, annual preparations begin every winter in the *kura* warehouses of this historic town's local breweries.

### 日本食に欠かせない調味料「醤油」

滋賀県長浜市にある木之本宿。ここは、伊吹山系からの伏流水に恵まれた地です。冬の寒さが厳しく、街道沿いで原料が手に入りやすかったことなどから、古くから酒蔵や醤油蔵などの醸造業が栄えてきました。

日本の伝統調味料である醤油は、付け、かけ、煮炊き全てに使える万能調味料。大豆、小麦、塩を原料とする発酵食品で麹菌などのさまざまな微生物たちの働きによって熟成されます。情緒ある街並みの中、歴史ある蔵の奥で、醤油の仕込みが始まります。



## OMI SHONIN

### A National Legacy of Local Merchants

Omi Shonin were a group of Shiga-based merchants who traded and traveled throughout Japan from medieval to modern times. One iconic trade practice was tying goods to both ends of a long pole, which was then balanced and carried from place to place. Many of the merchants made fortunes running stores in big cities such as Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto. Several of Japan's large corporations have roots in the Omi Shonin.

### 街道を知り尽くした「近江商人」

中世から近代にかけて、滋賀県から全国各地に通じる街道を縦横無尽に行き来し活躍したのが「近江商人」。天秤棒の両端に特産品を下げて売り歩くのが典型的な行商スタイルで、江戸、大阪、京都などに進出し、大商店を経営するほどの成功を収めました。現代日本を代表する大企業の中には、近江商人をルーツとするものも数多くあります。

## OTSU-E

### Souvenir Art of the Tokaido

*Otsu-e* is a type of folk art from Otsu originating about 400 years ago. Beginning as Buddhist art, the practice started as paintings of the Buddha which used printmaking techniques for mass production, making them more available to common people. As they were durable and easy to pack, they soon became popular souvenirs for travelers along the historic Tokaido trail.



### 街道のお土産「大津絵」

大津絵は、今からおよそ400年前に滋賀県大津市で生まれた民俗絵画。当時、高価で庶民が手にすることのできなかった仏像の代わりに、簡易な仏画を描いて売るようになったのが大津絵の始まりです。腐らず壊れずかさばらない大津絵は、旅のお土産に最適でした。

# SAKE IN SHIGA

## A Reflection of Nature's Bounty

Shiga has historically been an important hub of Japan for both land and water transportation. Thanks to abundant clear water and an ideal rice-growing environment, many sake breweries also thrived here in lakeside towns and along the historic trails, Tokaido and Nakasendo. Some of the breweries still running today within Shiga have an operational history between 100 and 300 years long.

### 豊かな自然が育む近江の酒

滋賀県は、水陸の交通の要所でもありました。日本酒の主成分は「水」と「米」。古くより湖岸の町や東海道、中山道沿いの宿場周辺に多くの造り酒屋が栄え、現在でも100~300年もの歴史を紡ぐ酒蔵が点在しています。





## Sustainable Living Blessed by Pure Water

Cooling vegetables in a Harie District household kabata.  
針江地区にて、かばたで冷やされている野菜。



Waterways fed by mountain waters, and shared by the Harie community.  
山脈からの湧き水が流れる川。針江ではこの水が共同で利用されている。

## The Harie District of Takashima

水への感謝から生まれた究極にエコな暮らし  
— 高島市針江地区 —

This *satoyama* environment of life in harmony with nature offers a tranquil atmosphere and scenic views of traditional village life as you stroll down the street admiring the traditional *yakisugi* charred cedar siding, or the contrast of red *bengara* stained beams against white plaster walls. Clear channels of spring water flow through the town in a system designed for sustainable balance with the local ecosystem that has lasted centuries. The waterways also connect to each house with a *kabata*, or a basin for everyday household use which is fed by spring water supply and overflows back into the channels. The water keeps a steady year-round temperature of about 13 degrees. Residents use *kabata* for cooking, doing dishes, and cooling their farm vegetables. In the *kabata* overflow area, you will meet the other residents, the local carp. They play a part in keeping the water clear by eating algae and food residue.

スギの焼き板張りの黒い外壁、漆喰の白壁にベンガラ塗りの赤い柱が映える古い町並みが今も残される高島市の針江地区。透明な水で満ちた水路が町中を巡るこの地域には、湧き水を生活用水として使う「かばた」という昔ながらの文化があります。湧き水の温度は年間を通して13度。各家に一つずつあるかばたで、野菜を冷やしたり、調理をしたり、食器を洗ったりするのがこの町の日常です。飼われているコイは、食器を洗って出る残飯や水中の藻を食べしてくれるかばたの掃除係。

People believe the deity of water resides in *kabata*, so the New Year begins by gathering fresh water from the *kabata*, offering it at their family altar, and then making the New Year's *ozoni* dish, a soup with mochi and vegetables. The outer portion of *kabata* connect to the water channels shared by all the households, so everyone is careful to keep the water clean for each other, especially those who are further upstream. The mutual trust and care between residents help to ensure a pure sustainable ecosystem. Residents in this village strive to preserve traditional lifestyles by coexisting with nature, which includes sharing the waterways, not only with each other but also with the fishes and creatures as the water connects with surrounding streams and rice fields. Therefore, washing in *kabata* is done only with environmentally-friendly detergents made from recycled biodegradable oils. Keeping the environmental balance sustainable for all life ensures preservation of other local traditions as well, such as making *funazushi* every year. Utilizing water and nature within the community while carefully ensuring a healthy local environment enables a sustainable balance for the people, and moreover, for all of the life in the area's surrounding ecosystem.

かばたには水神様が祀られており、毎年元旦には若水をここからいただいて、まず神仏に供え、お雑煮を作って1年が始まります。各家のかばたは水路で繋がっているため、上流の人は次の人のことを思ってきれいな水を流す、下流の人は上流の人を信頼して流れてきた水を使うという、お互いを思いやる暮らしが昔から変わらず続けられています。針江で暮らす人々は、田んぼや水路に魚の通り道を作り、天ぷら油を再利用した生きものに安全な洗剤を使い、人間とさまざまな動植物が共生できる場を作ることで鮎寿司のような伝統的な食文化も絶やさずに守り続けてきました。美しい水や自然を守りながら利用し、そこで生きる命をつなぎ、自らもその循環の一部として暮らす。そんな人々の営みが、昔から今も変わらず続けられています。