

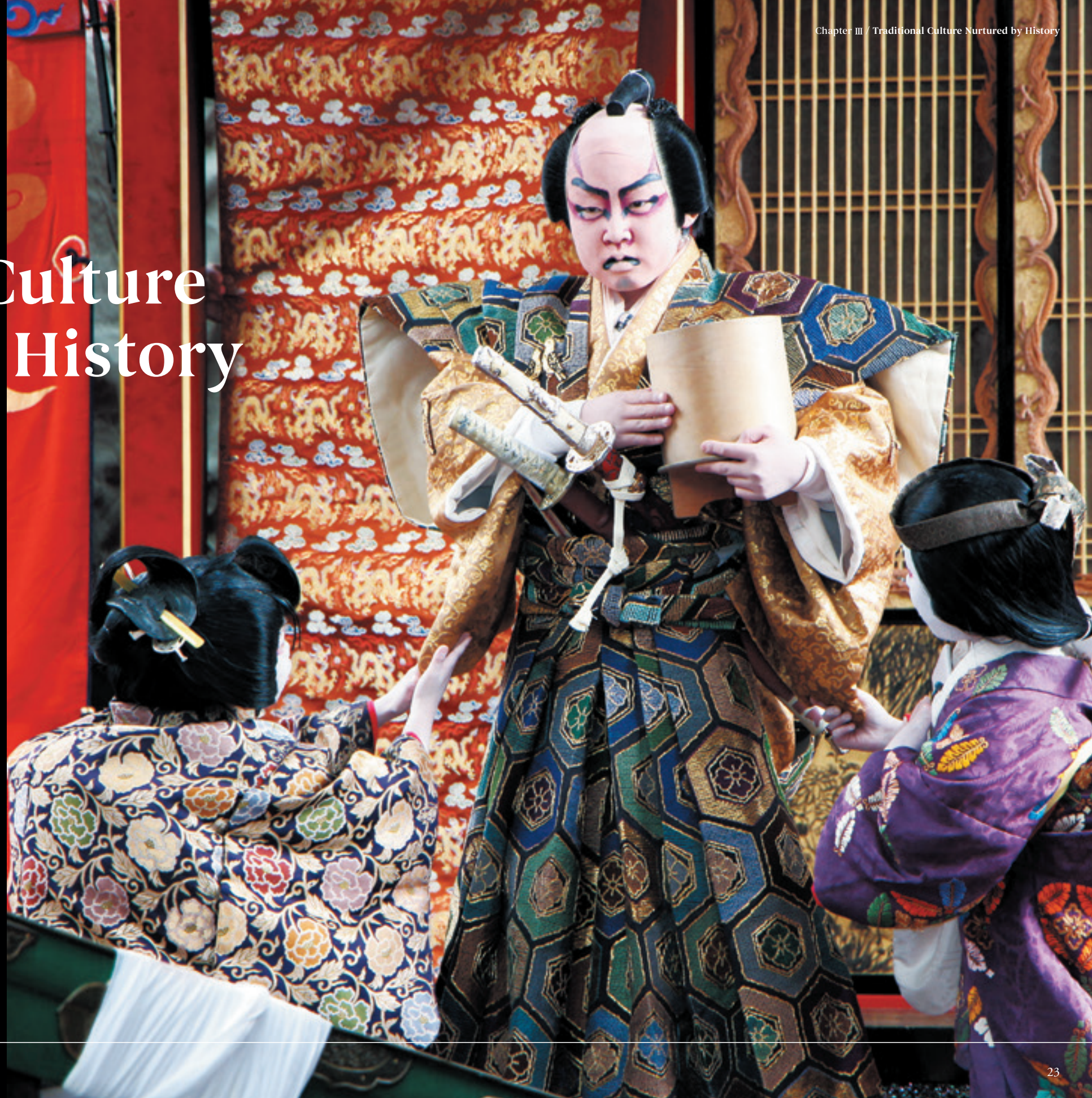
# Traditional Culture Nurtured by History

## Nagahama Hikiyama Festival of Children's Kabuki

Among Shiga's many ancient festivals, one of the oldest and largest is the Nagahama Hikiyama Festival which has been held in Nagahama City for over 450 years. It takes place every April at Nagahama Hachimangu Shrine, which enshrines the community's guardian deities. The ornate floats of the festival have been called "moving museums" as they showcase stunning Japanese craftsmanship through ornamental metalwork, wood carving and sculpture, and other traditional handcrafts. The highlight of the festival is seen on the float stages, where kabuki is performed by children aged 5 to 12.

### 滋賀の伝統文化「長浜曳山祭 子ども歌舞伎」

古くからの祭礼行事が多数残る滋賀の中でも、有数の歴史と規模を誇る行事の一つ、長浜曳山祭。長浜市の氏神である長濱八幡宮の春の祭礼に合わせて毎年4月に行われ、曳山と呼ばれる車輪付きの出し物が街を練り歩きます。飾金具や彫刻など日本の伝統工芸の技が結集され「動く美術館」と称される曳山と、5～12歳位の男児が演じる「子ども狂言（歌舞伎）」が見どころです。





Kuroda Kannon-ji Temple Hall, Nagahama.  
長浜市「黒田観音寺」。



Nyoirin Kannon / Ishiyama-dera Temple.  
如意輪観音半跏像（前立尊）石山寺所蔵。

## THE VILLAGES OF KANNON

### A Life with the Deity of Mercy

Bordering both Kyoto and Nara, the historic centers of Japanese Buddhism, Shiga is home to many Buddhist sites and relics. The Kohoku (lit. “lake north”) region of the prefecture in particular is known as the “Villages of Kannon.” These numerous small village communities have preserved their local Kannon statues depicting the Buddhist deity of mercy since ancient times. While monks are usually the ones acting as primary caretakers for Japanese temples, in these villages, that task has been taken on by the local residents themselves for centuries. An example of the region’s unique culture of Kannon devotion is seen in the medieval Warring States period, when the villagers removed their temples’ Kannon statues and hid them in river beds or underground to protect them from fires and looting.

#### 滋賀の人々と仏「観音の里」

滋賀県には仏像が多数あり、中でも「観音の里」と呼ばれる湖北エリアは人々の生活の中に当たり前前に神仏が存在する全国でも珍しい地域。かつて戦乱の焼き討ちにあった際には、住職と村人たちが観音像を守るため川底に沈めたり、地中に埋めるなどして難を逃れてきたと伝わるほど、人々と仏との距離が密接です。



The Eleven-Headed Kannon statue at Shakudo-ji Temple, Ishimichi Village of Nagahama.  
長浜市「石道寺」の十一面観音立像。



Children walking home outside the Kannon hall of Okamoto Shrine, Odani Yono Village of Nagahama.  
長浜市「岡本神社」。人々の暮らしに信仰が根付く。

## ISHIYAMA-DERA TEMPLE

### Sacred Home to a Statue Seen Only Once Every 33 Years

Among over 3,000 temples in Shiga, Ishiyama-dera Temple is one of the oldest, having been constructed during the reign of Emperor Shomu (701-749). The temple’s principal deity, Nyoirin Kannon, is the only Buddhist statue to feature a *chokufu*, an imperial seal which requires permission from the Emperor before any public unveilings. The figure is an impressive 5-meter-tall statue housed in a small *zushi* shrine within the main temple hall. Public viewing only takes place once every 33 years, or in the year following a new emperor’s ascendance.

#### 33年に一度しか見られない石山寺の秘仏

滋賀県には3,000を超す寺院がありますが、中でも大津市にある「石山寺」は、聖武天皇（701-749）の時代に開創した歴史ある寺院。御本尊の如意輪観世音菩薩は、像高約5mある巨大な厨子の中に納められた秘仏で、日本唯一の勅封のため、開帳には天皇の許可が必要。33年に一度、または新天皇即位の翌年にのみ開帳されています。



Todaimon (East Main Gate) of Ishiyama-dera Temple, Otsu.  
大津市「石山寺」の東大門。



The temple is located along the Seta River, the only outlet of Lake Biwa.  
琵琶湖から唯一外へ流れ出る瀬田川沿いに建つ。

# HIKONE CASTLE

## A Cultural Asset Boasting 400 Years of History

Hikone Castle has around 400 years of history since its construction to serve as the residence of the Ii clan, the daimyo feudal lords who governed the Hikone region during the Edo period (1603-1867). Although many Japanese castles were burned down in battles or dismantled, this castle is one of just a few that remain as they stood at their construction centuries ago. The *tenshu* (castle tower), *tsuke-yagura* (connecting tower), and *tamon-yagura* (hall turrets) are important cultural assets listed as National Treasures of especially high cultural and academic value. Together with other castles such as the World Heritage Himeji Castle, it is known as one of the five National Treasure castles of Japan.

### 400年の歴史を誇る文化財「彦根城」

江戸時代に彦根を治めた大名・井伊家の居城として築城され約400年の歴史を持つ彦根城。戦で焼け落ち、解体される城が多い日本で、築城当時の姿を留める数少ない城。中でも、天守、附櫓と多聞櫓は、国宝に指定され、世界遺産の姫路城などと合わせて「日本の国宝五城」と呼ばれています。



## A Castle Remaining from Ancient Scenery

### Tracing the History of Hikone Castle

彦根城の歴史を辿る



Genkyu-en Garden of Hikone Castle.  
彦根城「玄宮楽々園」。

In addition to elements shared by many Japanese castles, the construction of Hikone Castle is also replete with unique ingenious features to keep enemies out, such as *nobori-ishigaki* (vertical stone walls) and *ohorikiri* (dry moat). Down below the main keep is an annex to the castle, the Keyaki Goten Palace, once the residence of the daimyo, as well as the magnificent Genkyuen Japanese Garden, where you can be transported back in time to an enchanting life of daimyo luxury that came with the newfound peace of a unified Japan in the Edo period.

彦根城の造りは、日本の近世城郭の基本的な構造に加え、登り石垣や大堀切など敵の侵入を阻む工夫を随所に取り入れた秀逸なものです。また、下屋敷・榎御殿と広大な日本庭園・玄宮園を有する「玄宮楽々園」では、戦のない時代を迎えた藩主たちの優雅な暮らしぶりに触れることもできます。



10-meter-high castle wall.  
10m以上に及ぶ石垣の上に築かれている。



Genkyu-en Garden tea house.  
彦根城「鳳翔台」。



## 鎧 AKAZONAE

### The Valor of the Ii Clan's Red Armor

武勇を誇る「井伊の赤備え」

*Kacchu* refers to the set of armor and helmet worn to protect oneself in battle. The Ii clan troops are known for their characteristic vermilion red armor, worn by all of the clan from the head down to the retainers. The uniform of red armor is known as "Ii no Akazonae" (lit. Ii clan's red armor). It continued unchanged through the Edo period (1603-1867), and the fully red Akazonae style was handed down to future ages as a symbol of strong troops.

敵から身を守るために着ける鎧や兜などの「甲冑」。井伊家の部隊は、当主から家臣まで軍装を朱色で統一した「井伊の赤備え」と呼ばれる特徴があります。江戸時代を通じて変わらず、後世に武勇の善れの象徴として語り継がれました。

## NINJA

—Masters of Skill and Knowledge—

忍者 — 技術と知識を備えたプロ集団 —

The basis of the modern *ninja* interpretation is the people called *shinobi* who operated in the villages of Koka in Shiga prefecture and Iga in Mie prefecture from the Muromachi period (1336-1573) into the Edo period (1603-1867). Their primary missions were to safely gather and retrieve information. Their true missions were to return home safely with information. They were elite groups, possessing skills and information-gathering techniques that far exceeded the everyday knowledge of the time. The villages were surrounded by highways that brought in information and goods, leading to cultural development, and many temples of Tendai-shu and Shugendō religion that taught reading and writing. This allowed the villages to produce many people well versed in the pen and the sword, and the legends that they were active on battlefields near and far are still passed down today.

忍者の元となったのは、室町から江戸時代頃にかけて活躍した滋賀県甲賀と三重県伊賀の里の“忍”と呼ばれた人々。常識を超越した技術や情報力を持つ精鋭集団で、彼らの目的は情報を持ち帰ることでした。里の周辺が、街道を経て情報や物資が集まる文化的に進んだ地であり、読み書きを教える寺院が多数あったことで、文武ともに優れた人材が多く育ち、各地の戦などで活躍したと語り継がれます。





# A Sacred World Heritage Site Watching Over Lake Biwa

## Hieizan Enryaku-ji Temple

Hieizan, or Mt. Hiei, covers vast slopes overlooking Lake Biwa to the east, and the city of Kyoto to the west. Atop this sacred mountain sits Enryaku-ji Temple, an important cornerstone of Japanese Buddhism. The temple's history dates back to 788, when Saicho, the historic monk and founder of Buddhism's Tendai Sect, built a thatched hut for his ascetic practices there.

The main temple building still houses the holy flame, or "eternal light," which was lit by Saicho about 1,200 years ago, and has burned continuously without ever being extinguished. The temple and monastery encompass over 100 buildings and facilities around the entire mountain. Most of Japan's modern Buddhist sects branched off from the Tendai Sect, and many notable monks who founded such sects had first trained here. This is how the temple became known as the "mother mountain of Japanese Buddhism." In 1994, it was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### 琵琶湖を見守る世界遺産「比叡山延暦寺」

東には琵琶湖、西には京都の町並みを一望できる広大な山、比叡山。その山全域を境内とするのが日本仏教の聖地・比叡山延暦寺です。788年に天台宗祖の最澄が自身の修行の場として比叡山に草庵を結んだことから始まりました。本堂では、約1,200年前に最澄が灯して以来一度も消えない「不滅の法灯」が現在も大切に守り伝えられています。山の中には修行と折りの場である寺院やお堂が100棟以上も点在し、かつては日本仏教各宗派の開祖達もここで修行に励んだことから、延暦寺は「日本仏教の母山」と呼ばれるようになりました。1994年、延暦寺はユネスコ世界文化遺産に登録されました。



At this historic sanctuary of Japanese Buddhism, a variety of monastic practices are still observed today. We interviewed Saiyu Hoshino, a senior monk at Enryaku-ji Temple, about one of their key practices, *zazen shikan* (lit. sitting meditation to stop and observe), which has continued for 1,200 years.

歴史と伝統が色濃く残る延暦寺では、現在でも様々な形の修行が続けられています。その中でも1,200年続く「坐禅止観（ざぜんしかん）」について延暦寺の住職・星野最宥（さいゆう）さんにお話を伺いました。

- What is *zazen shikan*?

坐禅止観とはどういった修行法でしょうか？

**Hoshino:** Zazen shikan is a type of Buddhist meditation practice in which the flux of your emotions is halted as you look inward to balance your posture, breathing, and mind.

星野：身（姿勢）・息（呼吸）・心の3つを調えるため、浮き沈みする心を止めて、自分自身を見つめなおす瞑想法のひとつです。

- What exactly is the meditative state?

瞑想とはどのような状態でしょうか？

**Hoshino:** Imagine, for example, that you have a glass of muddy water. If you leave it for a while, the mud sinks down to the bottom and the water on top becomes clear. This is the image that we aim to achieve with *zazen shikan* meditation. To stabilize the sway of emotions, we sit with proper posture, stop the body's motion, and breathe smoothly.

星野：例えば、泥水はしばらく置いておくと下に泥の層ができて、上の方がだんだん澄んできます。そのようなイメージを目指すのが坐禅止観の瞑想です。心の揺れを止めるために、滑らかな呼吸で体そのものの動きを止め、理想的なフォームで座ります。

- How long does a meditation session last?

修行はどのくらいの期間おこなうのでしょうか？

**Hoshino:** Sessions for visitors last about 20 minutes, but as monks, we continue this practice for 90 consecutive days in solitude. We sit for the entire day, breaking only for meals and bathing.

星野：一般の方の坐禅体験は20分ほどですが、私たちはひとつの修行として90日間、お堂の中で一人っきりで取り組みます。食事とお風呂のとき以外はずっと座っています。



- And, this practice has continued for 1,200 years.

それが1,200年続く修行法なのですね。

**Hoshino:** Our sect has a saying, "place over endeavor." This means that endeavor is important for practice, but the environment is even more important. Our temple is on top of a mountain, so it can take half an hour just to get down. I think that this environment has allowed the practice to continue for 1,200 years.

星野：心を依り所にするための一つの手段として、場所や環境も大事と言う意味の「依心（えしん）より、依所（えしょ）」という言葉がありますが、延暦寺は比叡山の上で、下に駆け降りても20、30分はかかるお山です。そんな場所だからこそ、修行法として1,200年も守られてきたのではないのでしょうか。

Meditation may not be something that tangibly alters or improves your life. Rather, it may even be called unproductive; yet, it polishes your spirit by helping you devote time for yourself. According to Saiyu Hoshino, this simple goal may be the true essence of *zazen shikan*. Zazen meditation is considered to be the root of mindfulness, which has become a popular practice for refreshing the mind or improving concentration.

坐禅したからといって仕事が進むわけでもなくカタチがあるものでもない。坐禅とは非生産的なもの。しかし、「自分のためだけ」という非常に贅沢な時間を使って自分を磨いていく。そういう一つのきっかけが坐禅止観ではないかと話す延暦寺の住職・星野最宥さん。仏教の座禅はマインドフルネスの起源ともいわれ、現在ではリフレッシュや、集中力向上のために実践する人も増えています。

