



Takigahara is a quaint farming village nestled between mountains. There are plenty of ways to experience its rich nature, culture and the lifestyles of our inhabitants. We have made deep connections with people not only in our region and the rest of Japan, but also with many people all over the world, so that we can learn from each other about how to continue to live peacefully and prosperously within our respective communities. Doing this is one of our greatest joys, and so we have decided to make this booklet.

Learning from the village, playing in the mountains

Come visit Takigahara and our villagers!

October 22nd, 2020

Satoyama Shizen Gakkō, Komatsu, Takigahara



Takigahara Quarry

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Introduction: Activities at Takigahara Satoyama Eco School

It's a little tricky to translate *satoyama* into a foreign language. The literal translation is *mountain village*, although there are many activities and notions that the Japanese word evokes which are not encapsulated by this.

Satoyama: The original landscape of Japan surrounded by abundant natural beauty, where history and beliefs have been handed down



Mt. Kurakake and its rural landscape

Satoyama – hands-on—
interaction

In Satoyama, learn and play, come into contact with nature and history, and strive to preserve the natural environment.

Satoyama – survey of—
living things

Interact with dragonflies and insects, and learn about symbiosis with nature.

Satoyama – animal
symbiosis

Seek symbiosis between residents and wild animals, such as wild boars and deer.

Satoyama – eco-
agriculture

Practice organic, chemical-free farming and other environmentally friendly forms of agriculture. Learn how to use biomass in agriculture.

Satoyama – cuisine
development
Satoyama Shokudo
Canteen

Develop products that incorporate abundant ingredients and food culture traditions. Provide food that utilizes locally produced ingredients, and make spot sales of farm products.

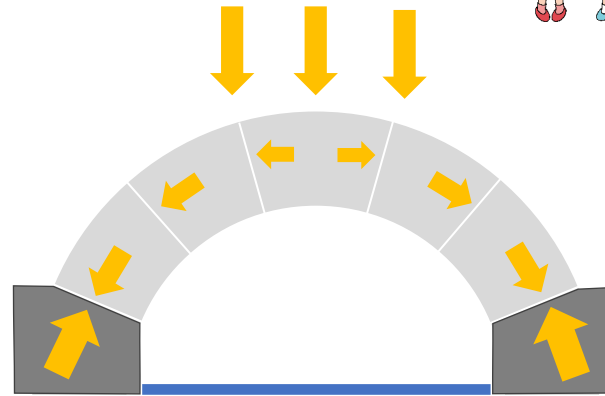
Other activities

Satoyama glocal promotion, Satoyama tourism support, Satoyama business creation, herb cultivation, etc.

1-1 Arched Stone Bridge – *Why don't stone bridges fall down?*

In Takigahara there are five stone bridges. Because they are extremely durable, they are still usable even after more than one-hundred years since they were built. They have improved the quality of people's lives, and they blend in so pleasantly with the nature, making for very picturesque scenery.

When you place something heavy on the stones, it generates pressure on the bridge. Because the stones push against each other, they create friction which prevents the stones from falling.



London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down, Falling down.
London Bridge is falling down,
My fair lady.

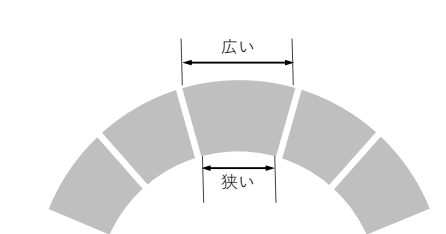
ロンドン橋落ちる 落ちる 落ちる
ロンドン橋落ちる さあどうしましょう



押されて曲がる
(曲げ)



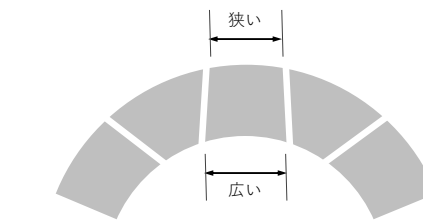
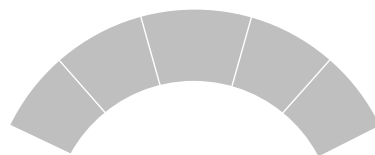
押されて縮む
(圧縮)



They won't
fall



Nice and
tight



They will fall!



Plop!



Enjoying a visit to a stone bridge
with visitors from overseas

2-1 The People who Love Mt. Kurakake



Mountain school, at the peak of Mt. Kurakake

We talked to Mr. and Mrs. Yamashita:

Playing around Mt. Kurakake since I was a child, and starting a youth group with the activity “my town, your town, getting back in touch with our home”, was what started it all, I reckon. There are three things that I’ve continued throughout my life: my gratitude to the mountains, my desire to contribute to society, and the forward-facing philosophy of “doing what feels right.”

Sixty years ago I used to make a living by making charcoal and cultivating mushrooms, but the years have started to take a toll on me now. I’ve come to treat Mt. Kurakake as a treasure of the land, and now I strive to protect it as such.

Moving forward, I hope to promote Green Tourism, environmental protection, along with all of the members of the community.



Our friends from abroad coming to climb the mountains.

Mt. Kurakake trivia. Can you answer these questions? (Questions by Yukata Yamashita)

What is the peak elevation of Mt. Kurakake?

634m 478m 328m 3193m

Across the country there are twenty-one mountains with the name Mt. Kurakake. The tallest one is in Yamanashi Prefecture at 2037m, and the smallest one is in Akita Prefecture at 89m. Is this true or false?

True False

Which of these dragonflies, which can be observed in Mt. Kurakake’s Dragonfly Paradise, is the world’s smallest species?

Golden-ringed dragonfly (oniyama)

Damselfly (itotonbo)

Scarlet dwarf (hacchōtonbo)

Wide-bellied skimmer (harabirotonbo)



Taking care of Mt. Kurakake – volunteer activities

2—2 The People from Ancient Generations Climbed the Mountains as a Place of Worship and Spiritual Training



Above, walking between the rice fields, with a beautiful view of Mt. Kurakake. Below, a rather sad scene disrupted by the shinkansen railway...

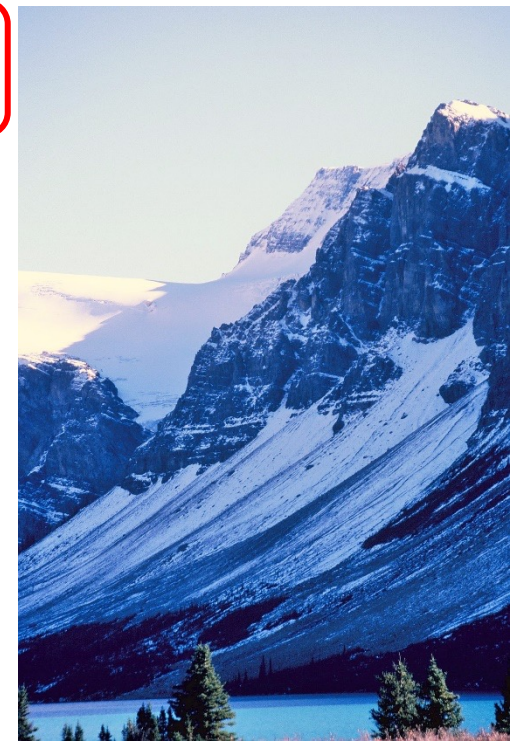


Mountain climber and doctor Michiko Imai, first woman to successfully climb the three great north face walls.
(NHK radio seminar)

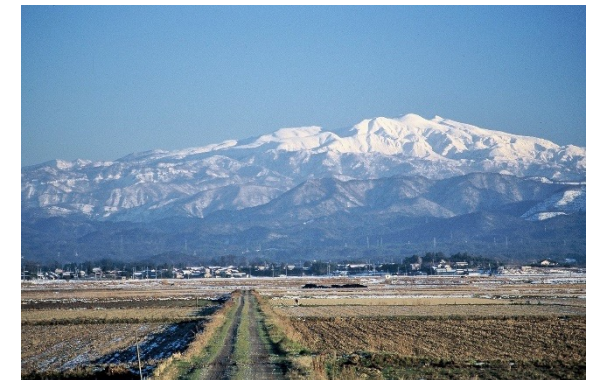
In Japan, September 11th is known as “Mountain Day.” Japan is the first country to recognise a day for mountains. We hope that other countries also celebrate Mountain Day, so that we can pass down our appreciation of our bountiful natural landscapes to next generations!

There are some differences between mountain climbing in Japan and in Europe. In Japan, mountains are seen as an object of worship, and people revere them. There is a practice of giving thanks to the blessings of the forests they bear. In Europe, mountain climbing is regarded as a sport, and places like Eiger and Everest are sites of perilous conquest.

No matter where you go, a mountain is a museum. They are filled with paintings and sculptures that nature endlessly creates all throughout the year. However, the environment of mountains are worsening. If we truly love mountains, we should pay attention to the disturbances affecting the natural world.



A trip to the Canadian Rockies in 2004
Due to climate change, the great glaciers have melted, and are much smaller than before.



Beautiful white mountains, a site of worship.

3-1 The Origin of Japanese Food, and Enjoying Homely Food at Satoyama Shokudō

It's been nine years since we started Satoyama Shokudō. We found a dilapidated nursery school, gathered up some local housewives, and started making curry using locally grown vegetables. That's how we started.

The foundation of our meals is three kinds of vegetables in one broth. It depends on the season. In the mountains we have warabi, senmai, and in the fields we have kabura, cabbage, and myōga. In autumn we have chestnuts, ginkgo seeds, and mushrooms. There are so many delights from nature with which we are blessed! One time we made kaki sushi with a group of foreigner youths. We used the local seasonal vegetables, and everyone said the food was good. We are also selling local produce and vegetables from the mountains.



Persimmon leaves, which contain Vitamin C, tannin, and rutin, are effective in stabilizing blood pressure. The leaves have been used to wrap rice and side dishes for carrying on trips or to do farm work. They are a traditional food packed with ancestral wisdom.



In accordance with each season, we are holding events for enjoyable food learning experiences. Some example are rice field trimming, mushroom observations, mountain vegetable walks, food swaps, and mochitsuki parties.

3-2 Planting in Spring, Harvesting in Autumn – *Flower Viewing and Autumn Festivals*



Elementary school students working in the fields.



Foreign people living in Komatsu are also giving a hand.

The national flower of Japan is the cherry blossom. What are the national flowers of your countries?

Cherry blossoms in spring descend from the mountains, and within them reside the gods of the rice fields. When the cherry blossoms bloom, we harvest the crops planted in the previous year, and sow the seeds for the coming season. The Japanese name is sakura, with sa meaning the rice field gods, and kura meaning the place in which the gods reside. Beneath the cherry blossom trees we greet the gods, wishing for bountiful produce. We drink and eat in abundance with our friends. This is the true meaning of cherry blossom viewing.



An ukiyo-e painting of a flower-viewing banquet by Hiroshige Utagawa, completed in 1834



さくら さくら やよいの空は 見わたすかぎり・・・(楽譜別紙)
sakura sakura yayoi-no sora-ha miwatasukagiri...

どんどんひやらら どんひやらら 朝から聞こえる笛太鼓・・・
dondonhyarara donbyarara asa-kara kikoeru fuetaiko

4-1 Our Dragonfly Paradise and the Animals in it



Scarlet dwarf dragonfly Takigahara
Resource Archive

A story about the Dragonfly Paradise

25 years ago (1996), it all started with the larvae of scarlet dwarf dragonflies, which were on the brink of extinction.

What with looking after the fresh water, reeds, grass and so on, and defending the land from the wild boars that seek to wreck it, everyone is hard at work, all to protect the Dragonfly Paradise.



Stone Bridge and Golden-ringed Dragonfly

Nishimura Eito's masterpiece. He was in the Fourth Grade of Yokohama Municipal Ushikubo Elementary School at the time of painting



Because Eito was unavailable due to studying hard for a test, we asked his grandfather Hiroshi:

Ever since Eito was in nursery school, he spent time in Takigahara, come summer or come winter. He seemed to enjoy doing things like watch the insects or paint pictures. The dragonflies must have left a lasting impression on all the nature-loving schoolboys.

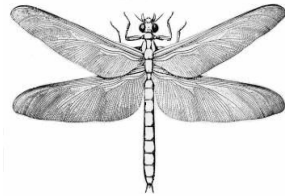
He said that this painting also taught children to love dragonflies, and so he gifted it to Takigahara.

4-2 The World of Dragonflies: Biodiversity and Co-existence

Q1: Is the scarlet dwarf dragonfly the smallest in the world?



Adult size:
17-21 mm
(Akira Ōda photography
archive)



Q2: What is the largest dragonfly?
(from Wikipedia)
Meganeurawas a primitive dragonfly
which lived in forests 3 billion years
ago. It is the largest insect ever at
70 cm.

Q3: In ancient times, Japan was called Akitsushima, or the
Island of Dragonflies.

(From an ancient compilation of songs from thirteen-
hundred years ago called The Ten Thousand Leaves)

Nakamura Keiko Life Magazine Researcher

NHK Seminar from *The Society we can Learn from Living Things*

It is only humans who have the luxury of believing that nature is something to be manipulated, and now we are getting our just desserts. With machinery (take a car, for example) there is a blueprint, and you can assemble it all together, repair the bad parts. Soon enough you will have a splendidly perfect object. Conversely, with rice, you have to wait from spring until autumn in order to harvest it.

Life has been on this planet for three-hundred and eighty million years. They are big and they are small, they are fast and they are slow. Humans are a part of nature. There are many ways of living we can do. It's more interesting if we're doing different things. Let's enjoy the cultures of the world and its diversity. We can live as friends, together.

4-3 Biotopes, the Dragonfly Paradise, and the Story of the Grandchild and the Uncle

Grandchild: What's a 'biotope'?

Grandfather: I wasn't really sure either, so I checked. It means a place in which organisms live.

Grandchild: I see. When was the Dragonfly Paradise made?

Grandfather: The people of Takigahara made it about twenty-five years ago. At that time, lots of people were moving to the city, and the people who made the Dragonfly Paradise became fewer as time went on. We made all of the rice fields that were no longer being used into homes for the scarlet dwarf dragonfly – Japan's smallest. Everyone helped out with cutting the grass and making ponds.

Grandchild: Wearing wellies and thrusting hoes... It must have been tough work. Did it go well?

Grandfather: Yeah. Loads of dragonfly eggs were laid. When I was a kid, there were loads of eels, water beetles and fireflies too. But as people started to use pesticides, they disappeared...

Grandchild: Lots of grown-ups are talking about us children, aren't they?

Grandfather: That's right. For you kids, people are making observation parties for dragonflies, fireflies and the like, three times a year. Volunteers are cutting the grass and tending to the land. We also need to stop the boars from wrecking the banks of the ponds. The dragonfly larvae can't grow properly if we don't do that, you see. The boars and deer are such a bother. I wish we could live peacefully together...

Grandchild: It's important that we all work together in harmony, isn't it?

Grandfather: That's right. The prefectural offices, the schools, the universities, companies; everyone in the community is working together. The 22nd of May has been designated by the UN as the day of befriending all living things.



Working the fields (above), and an observation party (below)



4-4 Love to all the Little Souls

A message from Maori Tanaka of the Ishikawa Prefectural University Biotope Research Seminar

A rural village like Takigahara is a habitat for lots of living creatures. Areas like mountains, forests, agricultural land, grasslands and ponds have lots of symbiotic ecosystems existing within them. A lot of rural villages in Japan have been on the decline as a result of becoming depopulated. Amidst all of this, the people of Takigahara have been working with various people to preserve the environment. Although we have little power, we are trying our best to improve Takigahara.



A handmade dragonfly by Hiroshi Nishimura



A map of organisms created in collaboration with Ishikawa Prefectural University

A message from the US

In 1872, Yellowstone was established as the country's first public park. In 1903, president Theodore Roosevelt became the first to visit the park, and an inscription of his words wishing for peace and prosperity was made on a gate to the entrance of a town called Gardiner:

For the benefit and enjoyment of the people



In national parks in the US, there are signs for the preservation of animals and their natural environment. They also have the signs in badge form, which we thought were a nice memento of the American people's sentiment towards nature.

5-1 The Joys of Our Hometown, and “What is Your Idea of Slow Life?”

Making a folksong – *memories from Shigeru Shōzu*

Sixty-five years ago, there was a song loved by the local people, but as the time has gone by, it has been forgotten. It was thought deplorable by the residents that the song, which depicted the mood of the time, should be left to perish by the sands of time, so they held a song workshop, and made a recording of the song on CD. The CD was edited and produced by a local teacher.

The original document has the date 1945, December 17th inscribed on it. It was only four months after the end of the second world war. In order to fill their stomachs, people would turn the vines of sweet potatoes into stew, and dry out butterbur sprouts picked from arid riverbeds. It was a tumultuous time. The teacher, whose heart was overwhelmed with sorrow, rekindled their spirit and strived hard to make the song, as a means to revitalise the village.

The folksongs of Takigahara that have continued to be sung are a treasure of extreme importance to us. The CD cover, which depicts the beautiful landscape of our village, was produced by Shōko Katō.

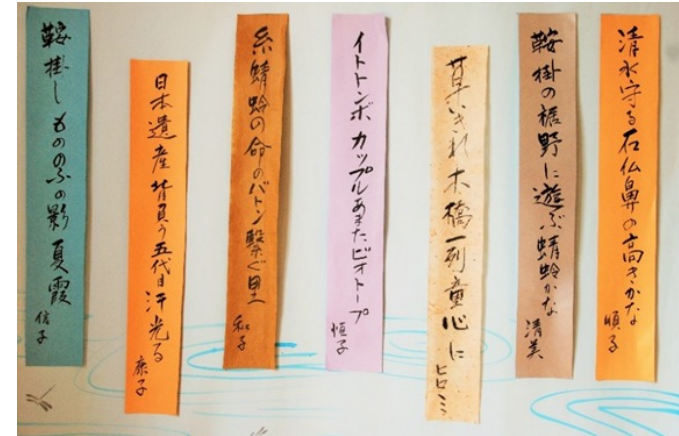


Schoolchildren singing the folksong



The beloved landscape of our home

Enriching our lives by doing the hobbies we love



Haiku Meeting - a message from Nobuko Takegawa

At the Shizen Gakkō, the haiku everyone recited and the paintings and photographs of living creatures were displayed for exhibition. Within the four seasons of the mountain villages is the original landscape of Japan. It is enjoyable to walk around Takigahara, discovering all the inspirations for the haiku that people have created.

Art archives - A message from Shōko Katō

My idea of “slow life” is to live amidst the nature of Takigahara, engaging with all the art one loves. Actually, I am showing the wonders of this land to children from Tokyo who come to stay in my house. It is my joy to see them realise these wonders, and I am forever grateful!

At the entrance of Takigahara, an origin inscription for the Mt. Kurakake arched stone bridge has been installed. Our motto is: "We wish to protect the planet by taking care of our water, our environment and our scenery."



Opening Ceremony 2012 July 14th



Inscription (English translation)

Right side: *The water that comes from Mt. Kurakake and Mt. Sandōji flows under the arched stone bridges and into the Japan Sea, connecting itself to the whole planet. In Takigahara, we respect the environment and our sceneries. This inscription has been erected in order to proclaim our co-habitation and symbiosis with nature to the whole world.*



What are your region's treasures?

Please tell us what reminds you of your hometown. Friends and mountains, rivers and oceans, songs and festivals, dragonflies and frogs...

We are delighted to be visited by the following organisations, who came to our events whereby we share our regional treasures such as the natural landscapes, rural villages and traditional stone culture.

Hotaru Observation Group
Rice-planting Experience
Wagashi Experience
Stone Carving Experience

Sansai Walk Experience
Mt. Kurakake Observation Group
Constellation Observation Group
Stone Culture Walk

A message from Naiki-san – An Introduction to Slow Life

In the Spring of 2016, Takigahara Farm was born. It is a farming community furnished with a cafe and lodgings. In the cafe, vegetables grown organically within the grounds are used in the food, and lots of people come on the weekends. In August 2020, the hostel was refurbished, and we continue to grow our farming community with the hopes of representing Japanese culture.



Young people, the elderly, families, and foreigners all come together and enjoy the atmosphere of Takigahara Farm.

Getting In-touch with Satoyama

To get in touch with Takigahara's people and communities, we publish a bimonthly newsletter called *Satoyama Tsūshin*. Here, we share the topics and activities of the area, and distribute them to all the residences within Takigahara.

里山通信 -自然学校の取組み- 発行日: R2.4.1
-里山自然学校こまつ滝ヶ原- VOL.1

-発刊に当たって- 学校長挨拶

里山自然学校長の川島です。この度、滝ヶ原集落在住の皆さん向けにほぼ隔月のペースで私たち自然学校のスタッフが「地域に少しでも役立てたい」と考えるさまざまな情報を発信したいと考え、本誌を発行することになりました。前・町内会長（滝口さん）の提案でもあり、地域の方々の身近な情報交流が始まる切掛けになることも願っている試みでもあります。

私たちは、皆さん方が色々と思い出に残る「那谷小・旧滝ヶ原分校」や「保育園」等を拠点に現在、取り組んでいる主な活動をご紹介しますとともに、これからの小松の里山・里川などを活かす地域活性化の取り組みを加速できればとの願いを込める「身近な情報誌」としてご愛読頂きたいと存じます。

-昨年度の実施報告-

2019年5月～12月にかけて「苗代児童館」の子供達が本町で「ひやくまん穀」の苗植え～刈り取りと水田・トンボの家庭での生き物観察を通して、同様に刈り取ったお米を食べたり、餅つき体験をしました。この体験活動は、「自然と共生する先人の暮らしと持続可能な社会」を実現する体験を通して問題解決に向けた実践的思考力を養うために開催されました。

子供達は、体験を通して普段体験できない経験をし、この滝ヶ原に残る地域資源に感動した様子で活動を終えました。

4月～5月までの開催表

開催日	題名 プログラム名	内容
4月11日	里山体験交流活動 【米と石のレガ ン・数珠ウォーク と食事交流会】	農家の町と楽しく ウォーキングしません か?? 料金:1,200円(食事付)
5月9日	里山体験交流活動 【山道ウォーク と食事交流会】	山道歩きを通して大自然 の中を一緒にウォーキング しませんか? 料金:1,200円(食事付)
5月23日	里山体験交流活動 【食事交流会と石 文化ウォーク】	「石の壁」裏の歴史を学 びながら一緒にウォー キングしませんか? 料金:1,200円(食事付)
4月11日 4月25日 5月9日 5月23日	里山食堂	毎な地産野菜を使用した おいしいお弁当を準備 します! 料金:1,700円/食

【参加申込】 里山自然学校こまつ滝ヶ原 担当 山下 090-5680-1548

滝ヶ原クイズ

次に挙げる、滝ヶ原にかかっている5つの石橋の中で最も新しく架けられた橋はどれでしょう。

1. 東口橋 2. 丸竹橋 3. 大門橋
4. 西山橋 5. 我山橋

さて、答えは?

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