

Listen for the footsteps of the great swordsmen...

# YAGYU ROMANTIC ROAD

What were these great swordsmen such as Yagyu Sekishusai, Munenori, Jubei, and Mataemon Araki, thinking when they were walking along this road?

Various stone Buddhist images, graven during the eras of Heian, Kamakura, Muromachi and Edo, usher you into the village nestled in the folds of the hills-Yagyu!

This mountain village, spotlighted as the stage for the novel 'Miyamoto Musashi' by Eiji Yoshikawa as well as 'Haruno Sakamichii', a saga drama by NHK, is where you can hear the voices of the great swordsmen, coming out from the surrounding nature which hasn't changed since those days.



## The Former Karo House for the Yagyu Clan

(karo: the principal retainer of the feudal lord's house)

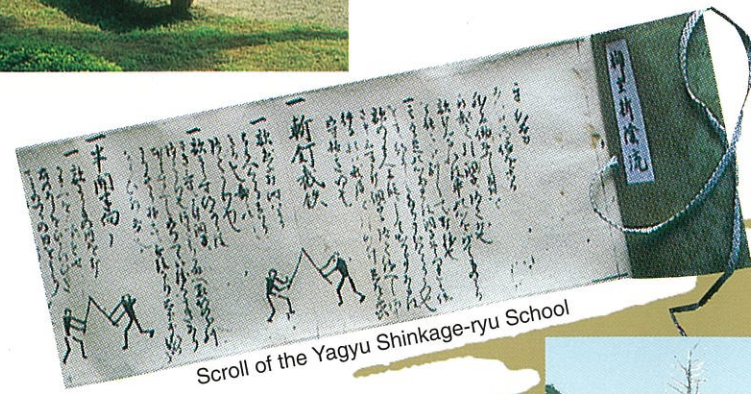
The stone wall you see on the west side of the path belongs to the residential house of the Oyamada clan, the principal retainers of the feudal lord, who rehabilitated the finances of the Yagyu Clan. It is inscribed on the stone wall that it was constructed by Owari stone-masons from Nagoya in 1841 (12th year of the Tenpo Era).

This valuable data tells you more about the Yagyu Clan.

The House was given to someone in the 31st year of the Showa Era, but the writer, Sohachi Yamaoka obtained possession of it in the 39th year of Showa. The general concept for 'Haruno Sakamichi', an NHK saga drama which was broadcast in the 46th year of Showa, was formulated here. This residential house was donated, according to the will of the late Sohachi Yamaoka, to Nara City in the 55th year of Showa by Mr. and Mrs. Kenji Yamaoka, his bereaved family. Nara City then repaired it in the 56th year of Showa and exhibited for the general public the historical materials in a section of the main house.

## The Yagyu Shinkage-ryu School

Sekishusai Muneyoshi was privately tutored in the secrets of Shinkage-ryu by Kamiizumi, the Lord of Ise, and further mastered the style of 'Mutono Jutsu', founding the Yagyu Shinkage-ryu School. Being their close associate, Munenori, the Lord of Tajima and Muneyoshi's 5th son, served the shogunates Hidetada and Iemitsu as their strategy instructor, teaching them the Yagyu Shinkage-ryu style. He then joined in the rank of daimyoes (feudatory) holding a fief yielding more than 10,000 koku of rice, and afterward served in an important position as major superintendent. Munenori then received Zen training from the Zen master, Takuan, and opened up a new path in the sublime art of the sword, by combining Zen and the sword arts. Jubei, the oldest son of Munenori is one of the greatest swordsmen of the day who was a master in the arts of pen and sword. After spending 10 years traversing the whole country visiting various places, Jubei returned to Yagyu and opened a fencing hall teaching some 13,600 disciples from all over the nation. He wrote 'Tsukino-sho', a mystery of the Yagyu Shinkage-ryu School.



Scroll of the Yagyu Shinkage-ryu School

## Jubei Sugi (cedar)

An old cedar, called Jubei Sugi, used to stand high at the foot of a hill of Yagyu. This cedar was said to have been planted by Yagyu Jubei, the one-eyed hero, who came to pay a visit to his ancestor's grave on the onset of his travels around the country in the 3rd year of the Kanei Era. The tree was struck by a lightning and withered when it was about 350 years old.



## Encountering Old Temples and Old Images of Buddha... A Romance with History

### Itto-seki (the great stone)

This great stone, approximately 7 meters in all directions, can be found cut apart in the middle at Toiwadani valley. According to legend, Yagyu Muneyoshi went to this valley during his training period, and met with a long-nosed goblin. They had a match during which Muneyoshi cut the goblin down in one swing of his sword, but his sword at the same time also cut the great stone open into two big pieces. This is how this stone received its name of 'Itto-seki', the stone cut by one swing of a sword.



### Hoso Jizo (a stone guardian deity which cures smallpox)

An epitaph at the right foot of Hoso Jizo reads that from the year 1428 (the first year of the Seicho Era) forth, there shall be a cancellation of debts for the 4 districts of Kanbe. This is considered to be a rare epitaph of benevolence.



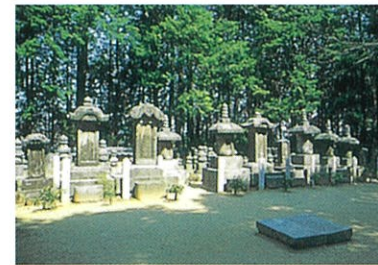
## Hotokuzen-ji Temple

Through the generations this temple, Shingo-zan Hotokuzen-ji, has been the family temple for the Yagyu family and was constructed by Yagyu Munenori, the Lord of Tajima in the 15th year of the Kanei Era, in honor of his deceased father, Sekishusai. It was founded by Takuan, a master of Zen and friend of Munenori, located on top of Sanjo-dai from where one can see a bird's eye view of the whole village of Yagyu. This is said to be the residential castle for the Yagyu family, and the vestiges of the heaved-up castle still linger to this day in the stone stairway, waterway and watch-house, etc. Sanjo-dai is a watchtower built by nature.

For keeping an eye on the development of civil wars during the times of disturbance this was the most ideal place to be, due to its location on the borders of the provinces of Yamato, Yamashiro and Iga.



The Approach to Hotokuzen-ji Temple



## The Burial Ground for the Yagyu Family

The Yagyu family burial ground can be found in the pine forest on the hill 50m northward from the Hotokuzen-ji Temple.

There are approximately 80 some moss covered grave-stones standing in rows, including the gravestone of Yagyu Munerori, the Lord of Tajima, in the middle, and then of Sekishusai Muneyoshi, Jubei Mitsuyoshi, Munefuyu, the Lord of Hida, etc. Amongst all the gravestones, the ones of Yagyu Toshimitsu Bosai (the second son of the 8th feudal lord) referred to as the sake barrel base, the sake bottle tower and the sedge hat of a sake cup, attract the most attention.



Masakizaka Fencing Hall



## The Manor House Ruins of the Former Yagyu Clan

According to the Chronicles of the Yagyu Clan, the house of Yagyu Muneyoshi was located around Momiji-bashi Bridge. It says that in 1738 (15th year of the Kanei Era) Yagyu Munenori, the Lord of Tajima, constructed the Hotokuzen-ji Temple in memorial of his deceased father, Muneyoshi, and then began construction on the manor house on top of Masaki-zaka hill which was completed in 1742 (19th year of the Kanei Era) after 3 years. Afterwards, Munefuyu built an annex and equipped accommodations.

This manor house was burned to the ground in 1747 (4th year of the Enkyo Era). It was still a temporary house when the Meiji Restoration came around and then became a government house for the Yagyu clan, and was afterwards put to public sale. Presently it is maintained as a historic relic park, reminiscent of the manor house during those times, and a place of recreation and relaxation where people can rest and stroll.



Grand Panorama of 800,000 Japanese Irises in the Large Flower Garden, the size of 10,000m<sup>2</sup>

## YAGYU HANA-SHOBU-EN

(JAPANESE IRIS FLOWER GARDEN)

The "Yagyu Japanese Iris Flower Garden" where Japanese irises grow gregariously full of lovely color, is found here in Yagyu Village. Enjoy yourself on this leisurely tour of Yagyu Village on early summer days, beginning from this flower garden, going to the manor house ruins, Hotokuzen-ji Temple and on to the Karo House.

● The Japanese Irises are at their best during the beginning of the month of June to the middle.

Inquiries:  
YAGYU HANA-SHOBU-EN  
(THE JAPANESE IRIS FLOWER GARDEN)  
0742-94-0858  
(only during the season)



**Nanmyo-ji Temple**

Makiyama Senbo was constructed here at the same time as Buddhism was introduced to Japan. The inner temple of this construction is said to have remained as Nanmyo-ji Temple.



**Yagyu Road (The Ancient Road)**

This Yagyu road runs from Takabatake Town in Nara City to Yagyu. Old images of Buddha can be found along the Takisakano-michi path made out of stone pavement, going by the Noto-gawa River.



**Enjo-ji Temple**

The main temple modeled after a rare style reminds us of the Kasuga-zukuri style, enshrining Dainichi Buddha, a work which Unkei did when he was 20 years old.

**Mountain Village of Romance [Map in and around Yagyu]**



**Bus Schedule**

To Yagyu (leaving from JR Nara Station)	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	■	28	26	31					1		46	46	21 51
To Kintetsu/JR Nara Station (leaving from Yagyu)	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	8	8			■	1					21 30	5	49

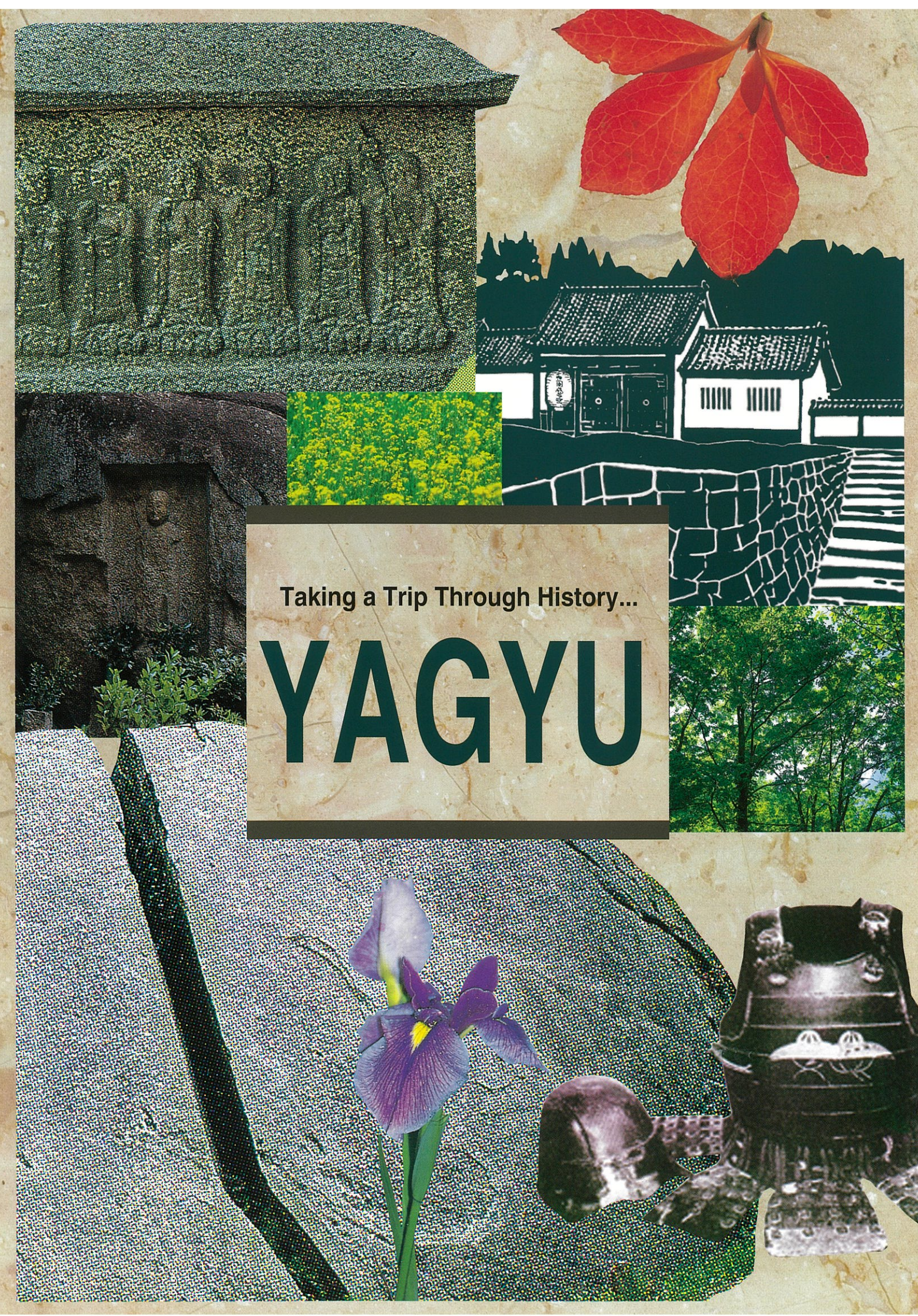
■ indicates that this particular bus is canceled on Sundays and holidays as well as school holidays.  
 □ indicates that this particular bus runs only on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays as well as school holidays.  
 ○ indicates that this particular bus is canceled on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays as well as school holidays.

**On Foot from Yagyu Bus Stop**

- \* Masaki-zaka Dojo Fencing Hall ...15 minutes
- \* Hotoku-ji Temple ...15 minutes
- \* Itto-seki Stone ...30 minutes
- \* Hosojizo ...20 minutes
- \* Karo Yashiki ...5 minutes
- \* Yagyu Tourist Information Center ...5 minutes
- \* Jubei Sugi Cedar ...10 minutes
- \* Hana-shobu-en Flower Garden ...15 minutes

**Access to Yagyu**

- \* 50 minutes by bus from Kintetsu/JR Nara station
- Approximately 5 hours on foot through Takisakano-michi Path (walk along Yagyu Road)
- \* Approximately 15 minutes by taxi from JR Kasagi station
- Approximately 1 hour on foot
- \* 18 km from Hari Interchange on Meihan National Highway (Approximately 30 minutes by car)



Taking a Trip Through History...

**YAGYU**