

# YAGYU FOLKTALE WALKING MAP





# USING THE NUMBERS FROM THE MAP, ENJOY READING EACH SPOT’S FOLKTALE.

## ① Yagyu Sekishusai and the single slash stone

Long ago, it is said that Yagyu Sekishusai used to practice sword-fighting every day around the Iwadate Shrine in the mountains.

One night, a *tengu* (long-nosed goblin) appeared and attacked him. Sekishusai killed the *tengu* by cutting him in half with a slash. Well, Sekishusai returned there next day, but he found no trace of the *tengu* - only a huge stone cut into two pieces.

Since then, the stone came to be called “Ittoseki” (the single slash stone).

You can still see scratches on the stone scored by the *tengu*.

## ③ Jubei Sugi (Jubei Cedar)

The family tomb of Yagyu used to be in Chugu-ji Temple.

Once Yagyu Jubei decided to go to Edo for sword training. As he had no idea when he could come home or what would happen to him, he visited his ancestor’s tomb before he set off. He planted a cedar tree and prayed there.

The cedar tree grew into a tall tree and came to be called ‘Jubei Sugi’. However, it is said that once the cedar was struck by a bolt of lightning and died.

## ④ Koshiita Jizo of Hirooka

A long time ago, there used to be a temple called Fuko-ji in Hirooka-cho. There were six stone statues of Jizo and they were called Koshiita (backache) Jizo. It is said that if you pray at Koshiita Jizo, your backache will be cured. So, in olden times, people often visited there.

Once, an old woman, with a pouch into which she put a little bit of rice as an offering, visited there walking with a stick. She visited Jizo day after day but her backache wouldn’t go away.

One day she prayed saying, “I have been suffering from backache for a long long time and now I can find no reason to live any longer. Please take me to Paradise as soon as possible.” Then, six figures of Jizo appeared in front of her and said to her, “All right, we will take you to Paradise tomorrow.” She was shocked and said, “Oh, you could come to pick me up the day after the day after tomorrow.” To this they replied to her, “All right, we will take you to Paradise the day after the day after tomorrow.” To this, she hastily said, “Please come to me the day after the day after the day after the day . . . . long after tomorrow.” She prayed for them again and again and went home.

Well, people say these six statues of Jizo respond very well.

## ⑦ Jizo of Mima-toge Pass

Long ago, when fishermen from Sakai were fishing in the night, they saw a light radiant from the east. The light was so bright that they couldn’t catch any fish. Besides, the radiant light was seen every night. The fishermen were puzzled and decided to trace the light to find out where and what was irradiating light. They traced it to Mima-toge Pass. There is a little stone statue of Jizo on the top of the pass and it radiated.

The fishermen from Sakai asked the villagers, “Please move the statue of Jizo to the lower place. Since the light from Jizo reaches the sea of Sakai, we cannot fish at all. If you do it for us, we will bring you fish every year.”

After the villagers of Mima placed the statue of Jizo in a much lower place, the fishermen was able to fish again. It is said the people of Sakai used to bring sardines to Mima Village every year.

## ⑧ Stone fight between two *tengu*

Once, a *tengu* of Mt. Kono-san teased and greatly angered a *tengu* of Mt. Aoba-yama. So, they began to fight and started to throw stones at each other.

The *tengu* of Mt. Aoba-yama threw a great amount of huge stones and grasses again and again toward Mt. Kono-san. Then, the stones were piled up and became Nabekura Ravine.

The *tengu* of Mt. Kono-san, pretending to be a weakling, didn’t throw so many stones. Accordingly, Mt. Aoba-yama became a bald mountain without stones or grasses. By contrast, Mt. Kono-san has a lot of grasses growing on the crest.

## ② Ofuji-ido Well

Yagyu Munenori often visited the chief priest of Kasuga Grand Shrine to play the game of go with him.

One day when Munenori, riding a horse as usual, crossed Kaeribasa-toge Pass and came to Sakahara-mura Village, he saw a girl washing at a roadside well by herself. He stopped his horse suddenly and addressed her. “Hello, Miss, how many waves (*nami*) are there in your wash tub?” To this the girl immediately replied, “Oh, there are twenty-one waves.” *Na* (seven) and *Mi* (three), that is, seven-times three makes twenty-one. So she answered that the number of *nami* (waves) was twenty-one. In turn she asked him: “Then, my lord, how many foot-prints of your horse are there from Yagyu to Nara?” Munenori couldn’t answer her question and was very impressed by her cleverness.

This girl was Ofuji-no-kata who became his mistress and the mother of Retsudo Osho, the priest of Hotoku-ji Temple which is the Yagyu family’s temple. The villagers call the well ‘Ofuji-ido’ and water still gushes from the well.

When Ofuji left her home on horseback to wed Munenori, her mother came along with her as far as the pass between Sakahara-mura Village and Yagyu-mura Village to say farewell to her dear daughter. The pass is still called ‘Kaeribasa-toge’ (Pass on the old mother’s way home).

## ⑤ Origin of the place name of Myoga

A long time ago, there were a priest and a novice in a Buddhist temple. The novice had an extremely bad memory. He was taught Sutra and other things but he could not memorize anything at all.

In the course of time the novice took ill and died. Then, a lot of shoots of some plant grew around his tomb stone. The villagers said “Something *myo* (strange) has grown” and hence, they named the shoots ‘Myoga’. That is why when you eat them you become forgetful.

This town was named ‘Myoga-cho’ as it produces a lot of *myoga* (Japanese ginger).

## ⑥ Monkey’s liver

One day, Princess Otohime of Ryugu-jo Palace (Dragon Palace under the sea) said, “I want to try the taste of monkey’s liver”. All her attendants were puzzled about where to find a monkey. Then, a flatfish who came from Sakahara-mura Village to serve her said, “There is a fine monkey called Ichikubo-zaru Monkey in my village”.

Then, they made a Miyabuchi (rock pool) of Ryugu-jo in Sakahara-mura Village and constructed a road to connect Sakahara-mura Village and Ryugu-jo Palace. An old turtle was ordered to bring the monkey to the palace.

The old turtle, thanks to the new road, arrived at the village in a flash. A tortoise in the river showed him the way to Mt. Ichikubo-yama and the turtle climbed the mountain. He found there Ichikubo-zaru Monkey having a nap on a tall persimmon tree. The turtle said to him, “Tonight, we are having a party celebrating the construction of our new road in Ryugu-jo Palace. Please come along with me.” The monkey was delighted and went to Ryugu-jo Palace on the back of the turtle.

When the monkey arrived at the palace, the flatfish cautiously came to him and whispered, “Your liver will be eaten by Princess Otohime tonight.”

On hearing that Ichikubo-zaru Monkey, when he came in front of the main hall of the palace, said, “I made a big mistake. As it was such a fine day today, I washed my liver and dried it on the persimmon tree. I left my liver there!”

The turtle, in haste, returned to Sakahara-mura Village with the monkey on his back to get the liver. When they arrived at the village and came to the persimmon tree, the monkey quickly climbed the tree. The turtle waited for him under the tree. He waited and waited but the monkey never came down.

When the turtle went back to Ryugu-jo Palace, he was severely scolded. The flatfish was never allowed to go home to the river again.

## ⑨ The story of Princess Sonou

It was when Emperor Godaigo was expelled from Kyoto and came to the temporary palace in Kasagi, that he brought his beautiful daughter, Princess Sonou, with him. When they were attacked by the enemy, this princess was separated from her attendants. She ran away all alone to the mountains but had nothing to eat. She eventually collapsed in the forest and couldn’t rise any more.

In the morning a villager from Oyama Village who came into the forest to gather firewood found her lying there. He took her home and looked after her. She decided to live in Oyama.

One day, when the princess visited Tenjin God for prayer, she found an *ume* (Japanese apricots) tree loaded with fruit. She gathered the fruits and went home. She smoked the fruits with charcoal fire all the night through and dried them under the sun thus making black *ume*. Then she said to the villager, “These are medicine called *ubai* and can be used for dyeing. Take them to Kyoto and you may sell them there.” The villager thought, “Can we really sell such black *ume*?” but they made a lot of *ubai* and took them to the capital Kyoto as they were told. The *ubai* sold at an extremely high price. The villagers were amazed.

“It’s wonderful!”

“It is true we can sell such black *ume* at a high price.”

Since then, a lot of *ume* trees have been planted not only in Oyama but also in the neighboring village. This is Tsukigase Bairin Woods. The forest in which the villager from Oyama found Princess Sonou is called ‘Sonou-no-mori Forest’ and there is a good hot spring there.

English Version:

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