

山梨グレープヴァイン

The Yamanashi Grapevine

Spring 2005

勝沼 / リニア・ライン / 上野原 / インタビュー / ほうとう

The Grapevine is changing!

New topics, new columns, a new layout and interviews have been added to make the Grapevine more attractive than ever. I hope you enjoy the new features included in this edition. This issue is a prototype, so please don't hesitate to give your opinion. You will find contact information on page 11. All your comments and questions are welcome.

The harsh winter season is finally gone. It is now time to crawl out from the *kotatsu* (electrically heated table) and go outside to watch the first cherry blossoms of spring.

-Sebastien Noel-

CONTENTS

- 2 Travel: Katsunuma
- 4 Additional feature: Linear Line
- 6 Travel: Uenohara
- 8 Interview: Sato Mitsumasa
- 10 News
- 11 Meet the Authors
- 12 Japanese Culture: Houtou

目次

Katsunuma... ぶどうとワインの故郷



The source of Katsunuma's fame...

The town of Katsunuma lies 90 kilometres, and roughly 90 minutes by train, west of Tokyo. Nestled against the eastern mountains which form part of the boundary of the Kofu Basin, half of the town ascends the slopes of the mountains and half spreads out along the plain beneath. Here the soil is rich and fertile, the climate is almost temperate, and the combination ideally suited to cultivation. While Yamanashi as a prefecture is noted for its excellent fruits, Katsunuma is synonymous throughout the region, and indeed the country, with grapes—in particular their close cousin, wine.

A Brief History of Wine-making in Katsunuma

Wine-making in Japan dates back to the Meiji period, or the 19th century. Although Japanese people probably encountered wine as early as the 16th century it was first produced domestically in Katsunuma. The then governor of Yamanashi, Shiro Fujimura, initiated the first wine-making, which led to the establishment of the Dainihon Winery Company in Katsunuma in 1877.

Soon afterwards, two local men were sent by the company to France to study grape growing and wine-making skills. They returned in 1879 and had soon produced 27 kilolitres of wine. Although their employer disbanded a few years later, already the foundations were laid for wine-making in Katsunuma. Today, Katsunuma wines account for over a quarter of Japan's domestic wine production.

Nowadays, Katsunuma is famed for its grapes and wines. However, long before it became the Bordeaux of Japan, Katsunuma already established itself as an important town on the Koshu Road (one of the five major roads in Japan and a major vein for trade and transport during the Edo period). Koshu is the historical name for Yamanashi Prefecture and for anyone following the Koshu Road westwards out of Edo (modern-day Tokyo) Katsunuma was the next major town they would reach after Hachioji. Prior to this the town had been involved in a number of industries, including silk production; it was during the Edo period, though, that the Koshu Grape, as the variety grown in Katsunuma has come to be known, developed into the town's main product. As one of the major stages on the Koshu Road, the name "Katsunuma", associated with the Koshu Grape, spread throughout the country.



...also available in bottles.

Where Did the Grapes Come From?

The real origins of the Koshu Grape are unknown, however a number of legends do exist. One of these is set in the year 718 and tells of the monk Gyoki, who was leading an ascetic life by the Nikkawa River. One day, Yakushi Nyorai (a Bodhisattva connected with medicine) appeared to Gyoki in a vision. In the Bodhisattva's right hand was a bunch of grapes and in his left hand an amulet. Gyoki was so inspired that he rushed to carve the vision in wood. He then enshrined the statue at Daizenji Temple and taught the people of Katsunuma how to grow grapes, which were believed to have medicinal properties.



Daizenji Temple

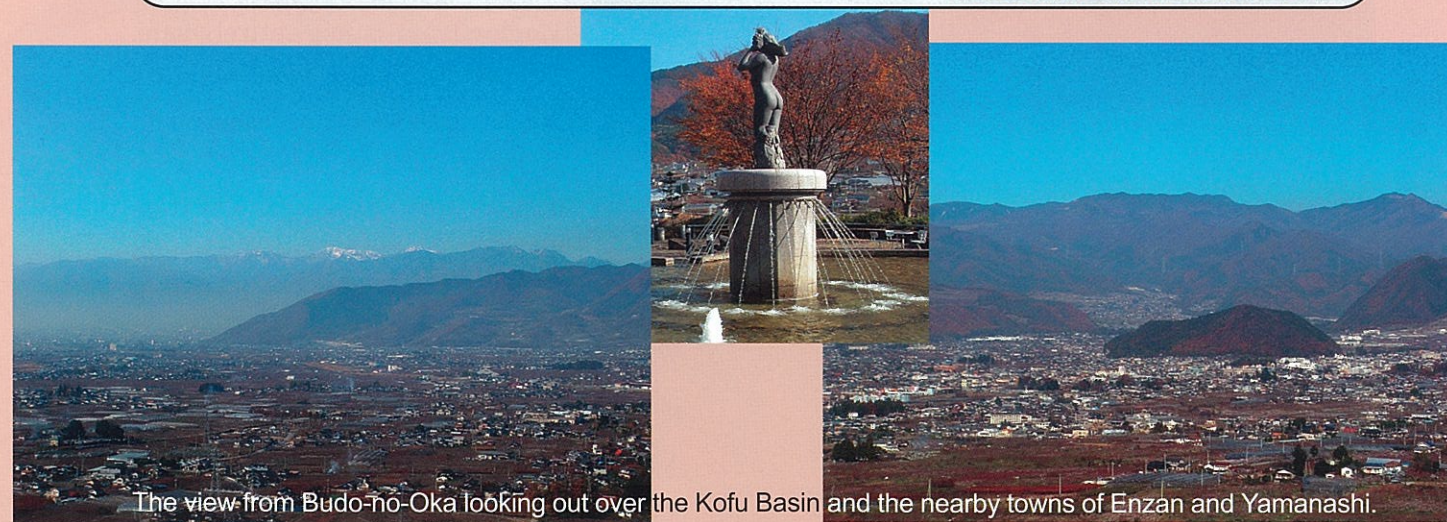
The importance of wine and grapes to the people of Katsunuma is reflected in the town's event calendar. Annual events include the famous 'Grape Festival' held on the first Sunday in October, when people come from far and wide to sample the year's crop and wines. In fact, people usually start coming to Katsunuma in large numbers from the end of July, when the grapes begin to ripen. Around 130 vineyards in Katsunuma allow you to wander among the vines and choose your own grapes. For real wine devotees there is also the annual 'New Wine Festival' at which nine major wineries present their new vintage for the year.



Necessity and Invention

When the citizens of Katsunuma first began cultivating grapes they encountered a few problems. The Koshu Grape grows on a large vine, and Katsunuma's climate encouraged the vines to grow even larger. This, coupled with trying to build traditional upright vineyards on a mountainside, led to the development of the characteristic trellis system on which the Koshu Grape is grown. Rather than extending vertically from the ground, these

structures spread across the fields, suspended horizontally at around head height. When seen from above during the peak of grape season (July - November), it seems as though great swathes of the town are covered in a rich, green blanket. If seen from below, at one of the 130 vineyards where grape-picking is possible in Katsunuma, it is as though you have entered a secluded shelter where grapes dangle enticingly from the ceiling.



The view from Budo-no-Oka looking out over the Kofu Basin and the nearby towns of Enzan and Yamanashi.

No visit to Katsunuma would be complete without a trip to Budo-no-Oka (literally, 'Hill of Grapes'). Sitting appropriately atop a hill it overlooks Katsunuma and the rest of the Kofu Basin, and was established as a sanctuary for Katsunuma wine. Surrounded on all sides by vineyards, here you can peruse the various wines on sale, sample many of them in the cellars and have a relaxing lunch whilst taking in the view around you. If you are searching for that perfect bottle of wine, it may very well be sitting in the cellars waiting for you. If not, 22 of the 31 wineries in the town can also be toured.

Katsunuma is not solely a town for wine aficionados. However, its reputation has grown on the vines that characterise the area and has been cultivated by the townsfolk who cherish them. If you were to visit, it would be a shame not to pay homage to the fruits of their labours.

勝沼町...Home of Grapes and Wine

列車が参ります。

Need for speed

Japan's tremendously famous *shinkansen* (bullet trains) appeared in the 1960s, instilling in Japanese engineers a dream to create a train which could travel at speeds between those of airplanes and *shinkansen*.

Magnetic levitation (Maglev) for trains, a concept thought up by Americans in 1966, was exactly what was necessary to turn this dream into reality.

Since the 1970s, testing has been underway on Japan's Maglev train, リニアモーターカー, or, the Linear Motor Car.



In December of 2003, after decades of testing, the Linear Motor Car—located in Yamanashi—reached the record-breaking speed of 581 km (361 miles) per hour. Once complete, the Linear Motor Car will take passengers from Tokyo to Osaka in roughly one hour (a journey that currently takes around 2.5-3 hours by *shinkansen*).

How it's done

Maglev trains levitate through a balance created by the constant pulling and connecting of extremely powerful magnets. Trains run on a guide way lined with magnetic coils which supply the repulsive and attractive forces necessary for Maglev.

Technology involved in a superconducting, magnetically levitated vehicle is hardly small talk.

Still, anyone can appreciate the greatness involved in such an advanced transportation system.

What's the risk?

Some claim that taking a ride on a Maglev train is not entirely safe. Twenty years ago, when Japan's Maglev train was being tested out in Miyazaki, Japan, magnets were located below passenger seats; no health risks were noted, though passengers' wristwatches were stopping due to the close proximity of the magnet.

Years later, Japanese Maglev trains have moved to Yamanashi and so have the magnets within. Now located between passenger cars, magnets will no longer be stopping time.

Where it's being done

Although German, the world's first commercial Maglev train runs in Shanghai. Anyone who has traveled to Shanghai recently has probably noticed a speedy train traveling the roughly 30 km route between airport and city. Using Germany's Maglev



The Train is Coming!

train techniques this airport 'shuttle' moves with an impressive velocity of more than 400 km (approx 250 miles) per hour.

Germany also has its own Maglev trains up and running. A big difference between German and Japanese Maglev trains is the magnet used. Japan's Maglev trains use super-cooled, superconducting electromagnets; German

Maglevs operate with more conventional magnets.

Another difference is the gap between the trains and the guide way. Keeping in mind that Japan is prone to earthquakes, Linear Motor Car engineers have left a wider gap, eliminating the risk of shaking trains colliding with the guide ways.

On the other side of the tracks

Tucked away in one of Tokyo's wards is the Railway Technical Research Institute. Japan has a history of train use going back more than 130 years; the RTRI is comprised of various departments working on improving and maintaining an already flawless-seeming system.

Within the RTRI many employees are working on projects related to the Linear Motor Car. E-mails from around the world are received on a weekly basis, filled with inquiries about the record-breaking train.

Creating reliable, low-cost, attractive and environmentally-friendly railways is the RTRI's objective. Aside from Maglev technology, employees are currently working on an audio-activated cane equipped with audio guidance for the visually impaired.

Go for a ride

The Yamanashi Maglev Test Line (18.4 km/ 11.4 miles) located near Otsuki, tests the three Linear Motor Car test models regularly. Test runs started in April, 1997, and records have been set and broken several times since. Prior to achieving its current record-breaking speed, a record of 552 km (343 miles) per hour was set at the YMTL in April, 1999.

Open to the public, more than 80,000 people have experienced a trial ride (as of August, 2004).

Going public

As for when Yamanashi's Linear Motor Car will complete tests and go commercial, the answer is as of now unknown. When it does though, expect long lines of passengers eager to experience this lightning speed adventure.

Special thanks to the RTRI for providing both the photographs and diagram featured in this article and on the cover.



Blast from the past: the very first Linear Motor Car

-Dilek Dogruyusever

A New City in Yamanashi: UENOHARA

Uenohara Town merged with Akiyama Village and became Uenohara City on February 13th of this year.

Localization and Geographical Features

Uenohara City is located in the eastern-most part of Yamanashi and is next to Tokyo, a mere 60-70 km from the metropolitan capital city. In the vicinity of Uenohara is Kanagawa Prefecture to the southeast, Doshi Village in the south, Tsuru and Otsuki to the west and Nishi Tama in the north (part of the District of Tokyo).

A highway connecting Tokyo and Yamanashi is located in Uenohara. Indeed, Uenohara's Chuo Jidosha-do (Central Expressway) acts as a gateway, providing easy and direct access between Tokyo and the greater Kanto Region on the one hand, and the more rural Yamanashi on the other. Uenohara Station and Shiotsu Station are the main stations used by those who are faced with a daily commute to and from Tokyo.

Another distinctive feature of this 'new' city is that the tributaries of the Katsura, Akiyama, Tsuru and Nakamagawa rivers form the multi-layered terrace upon which the town is built. The mountains, terrace and rivers together form a spectacular natural setting. Also, the Katsura and Akiyama rivers flow together into the Sagami River which snakes through and nourishes Kanagawa Prefecture, providing them with an important source of water.

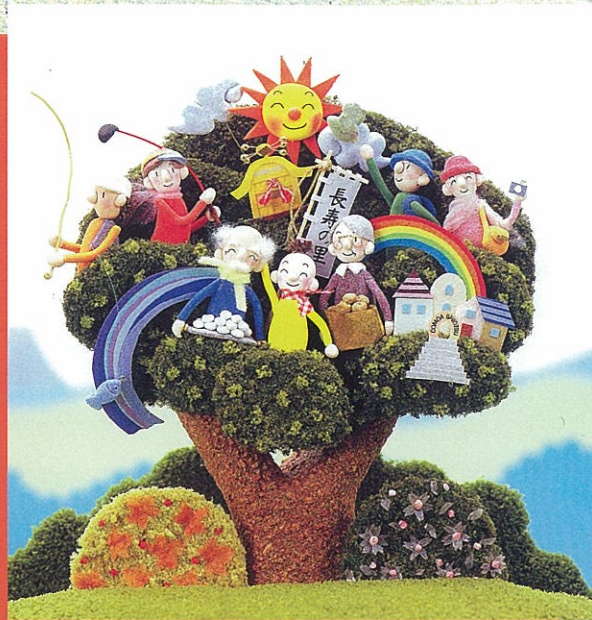
Area and Population

Former Uenohara Town was 125.514 km² and Akiyama Village was 45.14 km². The amalgamation of the two creates a total area of 170.65 km², 3.8% of Yamanashi Prefecture's area.

The combined population of Uenohara town and Akiyama Village is registered as 30,157 people (as of 2000).

Yuzurihara: 'A Place of Longevity'

In the south part of Uenohara exists a place called Yuzurihara, where Tokyo fishermen travel to enjoy fishing, especially during Yamame (freshwater fish) and Trout seasons, when these fish are abundant in the Tsuru River. A simple village, Yuzurihara is surrounded by beautiful nature, and is also known as the 'Hometown of Longevity.' Twenty or thirty years ago, the long lifespan of its citizens attracted media attention. It is believed that the fresh vegetables, buckwheat noodles, millet, wheat, potatoes, and *konyaku* produced in this lovely area, along with clean and delicious water, are key players in the longevity of Uenohara's people.

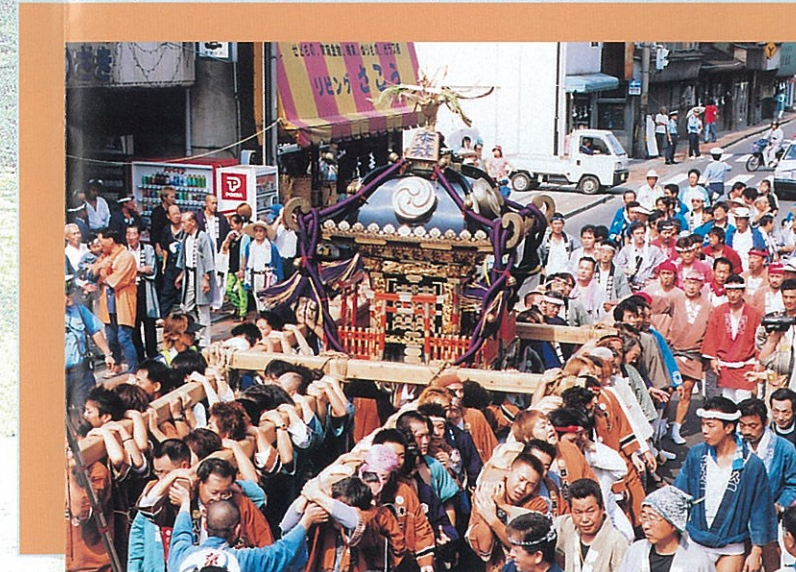
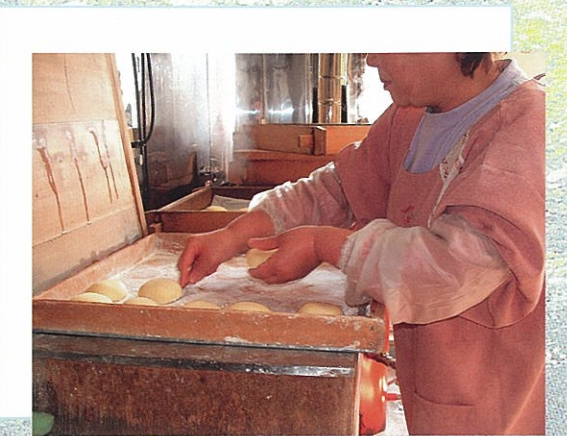


Chokubai sho (Farmers' Market) and Tokusanbutsu (Special Local Products)

In this region, people can buy fresh produce directly from the stands of farmers where, normally, fresh vegetables and mountain plants are set out in stalls according to season. Visitors are sure to make a stop at Yuzurihara's farmers' market when passing through or even staying in this area of Uenohara.

Yuzurihara's markets exude kindness, accurately reflecting the warmth of its citizens. Yuzurihara's local products include Yuzu Wine, *miso* (soybean paste) and potatoes, all of which are usually sent by 'Hometown Delivery Service' to various places throughout Japan. Also, when discussing the local specialties of the region, one must not forget to mention *sakamanjyu*. *Sakamanjyu*, steamed buns filled with red bean paste and fermented rice wine, are considered by some to be Uenohara's pride and joy.

In the past, women made these delicacies in their homes, for festivals, celebrations and other special events. Since then, the surprisingly simple recipe has been passed down from generation-to-generation and has become a staple of Uenohara. Today, the locals are not the only ones enjoying these steamed buns; visitors frequently buy them as souvenirs. When visiting Uenohara, experiencing the delicious flavor of *sakamanjyu* is a must!



The Most Celebrated Festival in Uenohara: Ushikura Jinja Matsuri (September 4th - 6th)

This festival, noted as one of the three biggest festivals within Yamanashi Prefecture, consists of three days of celebration. One part of the festival involves participants carrying *omikoshi* (a portable shrine) along Uenohara's main street. Little children look incredibly adorable as they struggle to carry the weight.

Ushikura Jinja Matsuri is a chance for people to gather and give thanks to the five gods of agriculture for an abundant autumnal harvest. This *matsuri*, or festival, has been strengthening the faith of local residents for a long time.

More Info

To find out more about Uenohara, visit

<http://www.city.uenohara.yamanashi.jp/>
(Website available only in Japanese.) Many thanks to Mr. Yasufumi Ochiai and Mr. Norio Ishii for providing information about Uenohara used in this article.



by Deysi Lika Kamiji

Interview with Sato Mitsumasa



Sometimes considered as a philosophy, sometimes as a religion, Buddhism has had a great impact on Japanese history and still influences Japanese society. However, when asked about it, Japanese people often have a hard time explaining Buddhism, and many questions go unanswered. In order to highlight part of the mystery, the Grapevine interviewed Mr. Sato Mitsumasa, a Shingon monk who practices at Entaku Temple in Yamanashi.

How was Buddhism introduced to Japan?

First of all, it is important to understand that Buddhism is a very diverse religion. In Japan, the basics of Buddha's teachings were imported during the 6th century from China and South Korea. Then, some of Buddha's followers created several Buddhist sects with different philosophies.

The Shingon sect, which I belong to, is one of them. It comes originally from China, but was completed in Japan by Kukai, a Japanese monk. The Shingon sect isn't what you would call 'standard Buddhism'.

What is different in the Shingon sect, when compared to 'standard Buddhism'?

In the Shingon sect, we practice the *goma* ritual. Actually, this ritual is not specific to the Shingon sect, as you can also find *goma* in some parts of India.

The word *goma* comes from the Sanskrit word *homa*, which means 'to burn'. The *goma* ritual is aimed at helping people get rid of their worldly desires. During *goma*, we write peoples' wishes or desires on pieces of wood called *fuda*, which we then place into a fire to burn.

In which circumstances do people ask for your help?

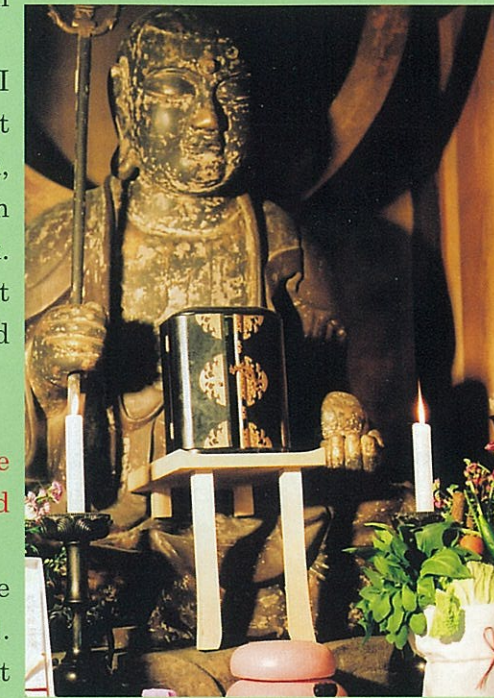
People come for various reasons: to stay healthy, to avoid traffic accidents, to be successful in business . . . I have also encountered a few exorcism cases.

You said *goma* helps people to get rid of their worldly desires. However, they seem to visit you for the same reason. Why?

This is quite complex. We believe that diseases and desires lead to unhappiness, and our sect wants to bring happiness to people. Naturally, then, in Shingon, we help people get rid of the

root of their unhappiness.

Moreover, desires are one of the barriers preventing us from reaching enlightenment. By burning *fuda* in fire (a manifestation of Buddha) people can purify themselves and also start to find Buddha.



How often do you practice *goma*?

I should practice everyday, in accordance with Shingon teachings. However, [Enraku Temple] is a national treasure, so I only practice *goma* here once a year, during the temple's festival in February.

Why did you decide to become a Buddhist monk?

My father was a Shingon monk; I naturally followed his path. In Japan, it is quite common for sons of

Buddhist monks to become monks themselves. This is not to say I had to become a monk; it was my personal decision.

As for choosing the Shingon sect, sons of monks must belong to the same sect as their fathers, while people with no specific affiliation may choose any Buddhist sect.

Is it difficult to become a Buddhist monk?

Yes; the pathway to become a Shingon monk is basically divided into three stages and takes at least three years. Each stage teaches us various types of meditation, prayers and rituals.

In Shingon, one part of the process consists of praying 3,000 times a day for 2 weeks. In other sects, apprentice monks might have to meditate for an entire day in the lotus position, or live in the mountains alone for 2 or 3 weeks.

Each Buddhist sect has different training for monks. All demanding, but necessary to help find yourself and the path to enlightenment.

Japan

Sneezes in Spring

Itchy eyes, a runny nose and non-stop sneezing. Although not thought of as traditional images of spring in Japan, this is the reality for roughly 16-percent of the population, or some 20 million people, who suffer with hay fever each spring. Japan's hay fever problem is the result an early postwar reforestation program that saw cedar saplings planted in wide areas of the country. Decades later, these trees are now beginning to reach maturity in terms of pollen release. Due to the long, hot summer last year, this year is set to see a far greater amount of pollen released -- up to thirty times greater than in 2004.

An array of preventative medicines, masks and goggles are already on sale in the shops, which aim to reduce exposure to the pollen as well as fight the symptoms of hay fever.

An alternative remedy has been suggested by the Agriculture Ministry, which says it has developed a new

strain of rice that can help make the body immune to hay fever.

Electrical friend for the elderly

It has been predicted that, in ten years, 26-percent of Japan's population will be 65 years or older. To address this problem, the Intelligent System Research Institute of the Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology has come up with a solution.

The ISRI is developing a robot to care and provide companionship for the elderly. This robot will be able to recognize ten different faces and address those people by name, hold simple conversations, shrug while giving its predicted weather forecast, pose riddles and even tell jokes.

Equipped with a slight 'belly' the robot has REDs which light up its cheeks when anyone comments on its weight. After the robot 'blushes,' it is programmed to say, "Oh, you shouldn't tell me that. Let's talk about something else."

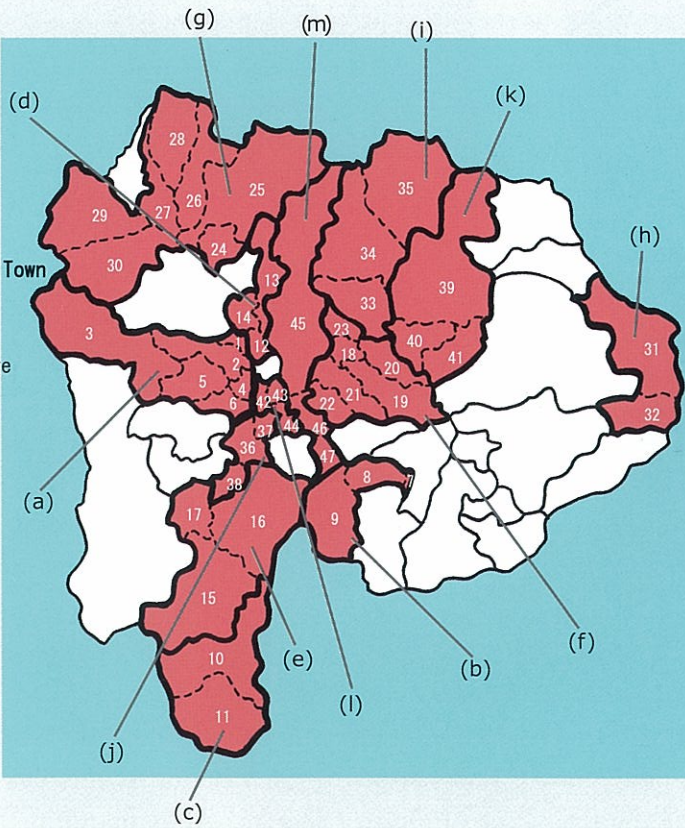
山梨

The changing face of Yamanashi, or just a change of address?

Yamanashi

With the deadline for the current round of merger (*gappei*) applications set for the end of March 2005, most decisions on which borders to redraw in Yamanashi have been made. Although many of the mergers themselves have yet to happen, it is possible to see how the post-*gappei* map of Yamanashi will look. The aim of the *gappei* program is to streamline local governments, making them more cost-effective. However, one of the biggest fears and potential demerits of the program is that small towns and villages will lose their heritage and character when amalgamated into a larger urban sprawl. Whether the *gappei* program does result in the loss of local flavour, or whether its effects are purely administrative, remains to be seen.

- 1. 4. 2003; (a) Minami Alps City
- 1. Hatta Village
- 2. Shirane Town
- 3. Ashiyasu Village
- 4. Wakakusa Town
- 5. Kushigata Town
- 6. Kosai Town
- 1. 11. 2003; (b) Fujikawaguchiko Town
- 7. Katsuyama Village
- 8. Ashiwada Village
- 9. (part of) Kamikuishiki Village
- 1. 3. 2003; (c) Nambu Town
- 10. Nambu Town
- 11. Tomizawa Town
- 1. 9. 2004; (d) Kai City
- 12. Ryuo Town
- 13. Shikishima Town
- 14. Futaba Town
- 13. 9. 2004; (e) Minobu Town
- 15. Minobu Town
- 16. Shimobe Town
- 17. Nakatomi Town
- 12. 10. 2004; (f) Fuefuki City
- 18. Isawa Town
- 19. Misaka Town
- 20. Ichinomiya Town
- 21. Yatsushiro Town
- 22. Sakaigawa Village
- 23. Kasugai Town



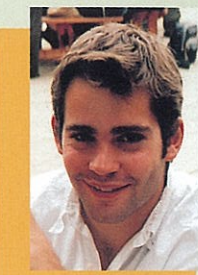
Mergers in Yamanashi Prefecture (future dates may change)

- 1. 11. 2004; (g) Hokuto City
- 24. Akeno Village
- 25. Sutama Town
- 26. Takane Town
- 27. Nagasaka Town
- 28. Oizumi Village
- 29. Hakushu Town
- 30. Mukawa Village
- 13. 2. 2005; (h) Uenohara City
- 31. Uenohara Town
- 32. Akiyama Village
- 22. 3. 2005; (i) Yamanashi City
- 33. Yamanashi City
- 34. Makioka Town
- 35. Mitomi Village
- 1. 10. 2005; (j) Ichikawa-misato Town
- 36. Ichikawadaimon Town
- 37. Mitama Town
- 38. Rokugo Town
- 1. 11. 2005; (k) Koshu City
- 39. Enzan City
- 40. Katsunuma Town
- 41. Yamato Village
- 20. 2. 2006; (l) Chuo City
- 42. Tatomi Town
- 43. Tamaho Town
- 44. Toyotomi Village
- TBA; (m) Kofu City
- 45. Kofu City
- 46. Nakamichi Town
- 47. (part of) Kamikuishiki Village

Meet The Authors



After a white winter spent at the ski resorts of the Japanese Alps, Sebastien Noel, from France, is now looking forward the *hanami* (flower viewing) season. Although he says he is only interested in *hanami* from an esthetical point of view, his colleagues think the sake served during *hanami* also contributes to his interest.



Ben Morris is currently in his second year as a Coordinator for International Relations at the Yamanashi International Association. When not exploring Yamanashi and tasting wine for the Grapevine, he practices aikido and regularly soaks himself in the many *onsen* around the prefecture.



Four sumo bashos later, Iowan Dilek Dogruyusever feels closer to Japanese culture than ever! Leaving in August, 2005, Dilek hopes to conquer Fuji and witness a sumo *rikishi* become *Yokozuna*. Life in Yamanashi has been good for Dilek; leaving will be harder to swallow than *natto*.



Deysi Lika Kamiji, from Brazil, (seen here biting into a *sakaman*) is in her third and last year as a CIR in Yamanashi Prefecture. This is her final contribution to the Grapevine. Here are some words from her: "Thank you for everything. I wish all the best for each person I've met here in Yamanashi!"

The Osano Memorial Foundation Website and Readers' Corner



www.osano-memorial.or.jp

The Osano Memorial Foundation -our sponsor- has renewed its website. All the activities the foundation is currently carrying out are displayed on the website, as well as former issues of the Grapevine. You can also find miscellaneous information about Yamanashi and Japan. The site is available in Japanese and English (French is coming soon).

We will start a *Reader's Corner* in the next Grapevine issue (July 2005). We hope that with this new corner, we can get to know you better and improve the Grapevine based on your opinions and ideas. All your questions and comments are welcome.

Please send your questions and comments to the address below or send e-mails through the Osano Memorial Foundation website, listed above.

The Grapevine Editor
International Affairs Division
Yamanashi Prefectural Government
1-6-1 Marunouchi, Kofu-shi
Yamanashi-ken 400-8501
JAPAN

ほうとう Houtou



中国から日本にもたらされたものは漢字だけではありません。山梨県に来ると、土地の人達が元々は中国からもたらされたものですが今ではすっかり郷土の名物となったものを頼張っているのを見かけることができます。それは「ほうとう」という料理です。

「ほうとう」というのは非常に厚い麺、野菜（特にカボチャ、ジャガイモ、人参、ネギ、椎茸）や肉からなる鍋物の一種です。

年中食べることができますが、山梨県の厳しい冬の間にこのホカホカな料理を食べるのはこたえられません。

一人で食べられないほど量が多いほうとうは武田信玄が非常に好きだったと言われています。山梨県出身の誰かに尋ねると信玄公は戦いの前に配下の武士と一緒にほうとうを大いに楽しんだという話を説明してくれるかも知れません。

山梨の土地から戦いがなくなって随分たちますが、ほうとうを楽しむ人はまだ沢山います。山梨に来たらほうとうレストランに行くのがよいでしょう。是非、お楽しみください。

Written characters (kanji) are not all the Japanese derived from the Chinese. Within Yamanashi, one can find locals enjoying a dish which, although originating from China, they have made their own.

Houtou, a dish comprised of thick, flat noodles, vegetables (especially pumpkin, potato, carrot, spring onion and shiitake mushroom) and usually meat, is often served in a cauldron-like bowl.

Although houtou is eaten year-round, the piping hot meal is best in the severe cold of Yamanashi's winter months.

The dish, which is often more food than one can handle, is said to have been a favorite of Yamanashi's feudal lord Shingen Takeda. Ask any Yamanashi native and you will learn how Takeda and his samurai used to feast on houtou prior to battle!

Battles are no longer fought on Yamanashi soil; the love for houtou, however, still remains. When visiting Yamanashi, stopping at a houtou restaurant is a must! Although houtou does have its own kanji, hiragana is used most. Next time you are in Yamanashi, look for signs that read ほうとう. Enjoy!