

1

Article :

Best Cherry Blossom Viewing Spots Await at Takayama Inari Shrine

Directions: Read the following article aloud.

You'll be fascinated by the mystique of the brilliantly colored torii gates against surrounded by cherry blossoms laying in the mountains of Mt. Takayama.

Takayama Inari Shrine sits on a small hill overlooking the Sea of Japan in Tsugaru City, Aomori Prefecture. It is said to have been founded by the Ando clan, a powerful family that ruled the surrounding area from the Kamakura (1185-1333) to the Muromachi (1333-1573) period in Japan's history.

Since ancient times the shrine has been a popular place for local people who pray for a good harvest, safety at sea, and prosperity in business. Osamu Dazai, a famous Japanese author who is from neighboring Goshogawara City, in his novel, Return to Tsugaru (1944, in English 1988 by Kodansha), recounts visiting the shrine during his elementary school excursion to Mt. Takayama.

He likens the sight of the shrine's traditional thousand gates lined up in a row to a dragon ascending to heaven.

Hitoshi Kudo, the sixth-generation chief priest of the shrine, says, "I heard that it all started about 40 years ago, when farmers dedicated torii gates to express their gratitude for the harvest."

Since then, the number of gates has gradually increased, and now there are a total of 202 gates, each about two meters high.

The temple was featured on a poster by the Japan Railway Group when the Hokkaido Shinkansen bullet train started service in 2016, attracting worshippers from all over Japan. The beautiful Japanese-style scenery is very popular overseas, and, before the pandemic, foreign tourists and people from nearby American military facilities often visited the area.

The area around the senbon torii gates is also a famous cherry blossom viewing spot, with many double-layered cherry blossom trees.

The shrine is currently in the process of rebuilding the torii gates, which have become worn due to exposure to snow and wind.

"Some people are refraining from visiting the shrine or praying. I hope that the pandemic will end soon and we will be able to welcome you at the new torii gates," Mr. Kudo said.

Source: Best Cherry Blossom Viewing Spots Await at Takayama Inari Shrine

<https://japan-forward.com/hidden-wonders-of-japan-best-cherry-blossom-viewing-spots-await-at-takayama-inari-shrine/>

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テキストの無断転載・無断使用を固く禁じます。

2 Key phrases and vocabulary

Directions: First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. ancient 古代の

Paper and ink were invented by ancient Egyptians.

2. during～ ～の期間の間に、～の期間を通してずっと

I am going to join some art workshops during the summer vacation.

3. dedicate 捧げる、奉納する、献身する、専念する、打ち込む

She has dedicated her life to scientific research over the last 30 years.

4. exposure to ～ (自然環境・社会など)にさらされる、 (ウィルスなど体に害を与える物質等)に接する・さらされる

You should always limit your exposure to the sun.

3 Questions

Directions: Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What do people pray for at this shrine?
2. Besides the torii gates, what does the area attract people?
3. On what occasion do you visit shrines?
4. Is there any famous place that has a great view in your town?

4

日本語関連記事：

化粧直しの「千本鳥居」 春を待つ昇り竜 青森「高山稲荷神社」

山あいになり積もった雪。連なる鳥居がうねるような朱色の流れとなって銀世界に映える。

青森県つがる市の日本海を望む小高い丘に鎮座する「高山稲荷神社」。鎌倉から室町時代にかけて周囲を統治していた豪族、安藤氏が創建したと言われている。

古くから五穀豊穡や海上安全、商売繁盛を願う住民の信仰を集め、地元にとっては身近な存在だった。隣の五所川原市出身の太宰治も小説「津軽」の中で、小学生のときの遠足の「高山行き」にふれ「お稲荷さんは有名なものだそうであるが」と記している。

神社が誇る「千本鳥居」。ずらりと並ぶその姿は竜が天に昇る姿にも例えられる。6代目宮司の工藤均(ひとし)さん(69)は「約40年前、農家が収穫への感謝を込めて奉納したのが始まりと聞いています」と話す。以来、徐々に数を増やし、現在は高さ約2メートルの鳥居が計202基並んでいる。

平成28年の北海道新幹線開業時にJR東日本のポスターに取り上げられ、全国から参拝客が集まるようになった。日本的な美しい景観は海外でも人気が高く、外国人観光客や近くの米軍施設の関係者がよく訪れていたという。

だが、そうした姿もコロナ禍ですっかり見られなくなってしまった。

そんななか、神社では現在、雪や風にさらされ老朽化した鳥居の建て替え作業を進めている。工藤さんは「参拝や祈禱(きとう)をひかえている方もいる。新型コロナの流行が終息に向かい、新たな鳥居でまたお迎えできるようになれば」と話す。

千本鳥居周辺は八重桜が群生する桜の名所でもある。神社に再び多くの人に戻ってくる「春、が待ち遠しい。

出典：化粧直しの「千本鳥居」 春を待つ昇り竜 青森「高山稲荷神社」

<https://japan-forward.com/japanese/%e5%8c%96%e7%b2%a7%e7%9b%b4%e3%81%97%e3%81%ae%e3%80%8c%e5%8d%83%e6%9c%ac%e9%b3%a5%e5%b1%85%e3%80%8d-%e6%98%a5%e3%82%92%e5%be%85%e3%81%a4%e6%98%87%e3%82%8a%e7%ab%9c%e3%80%80%e9%9d%92%e6%a3%ae%e3%80%8c/>