

NARA~KYOTO

ASUKA - ARASHIYAMA

AREA GUIDE

A beautiful world of four seasons from the Heian period

Arashiyama

Arashiyama is the last stop on the northern cycling route. Known for its picturesque scenery, this was the resort area for noble families during the Heian period and was also mentioned in many Japanese poems and literature.

Tourists from all over the country visit Arashiyama for the beautiful cherry blossoms in the spring and autumn leaves in the fall. Enjoy biking around souvenir shops near Togetsu-kyo Bridge, temples and paths in Sagano, etc.




A town with old inns lined up along the Saigoku Kaido Road

Otokuni



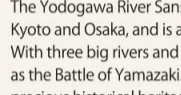
With beautiful bamboo groves spread throughout the hills on the western side of the Otokuni area, this area is famous for production area of bamboo shoots. There are many bamboo mountains and historical places such as the Site of Nagasaki Palace, castle ruins from the Sengoku period, and so on. Saigoku Kaido Road stretches from this area to the west, and it runs from Togeuchi in Kyoto Pref. to Nishinomiya in Hyogo Pref. The old town remains along the Old Saigoku Road.




An area rich with history

Yawata/Oyamazaki

The Yodogawa River Sango Gorge area is between Mt. Tennozan and Mt. Okoyama in the middle of Kyoto and Osaka, and is also the area where the Katagawa, Ujigawa, and Kuzugawa Rivers come together. With three big rivers and beautiful mountains, this area was the battlefield of important battles in history, such as the Battle of Yamazaki. The beautiful nature of this area is still preserved to this day, along with a lot of precious historical heritages. Furthermore, the Sewai-ten (separation levees) are famous for cherry blossoms and the rows of cherry blossom trees along the levees are spectacular. Kazusa Bridge (commonly known as Nagase Bridge) crossing bridge is the wooden bridge across the Kuzugawa River. It is not located at the bottom, which means the foot plants come away when the water level rises, and spans around 350m. This bridge is famous as a filming location for Japanese historical films. On the left bank, a place called "Shikokuan" operates a restaurant, a bath, and accommodation.

The midpoint of cultures in Kyoto and Nara

Kyotanabe

The red arched bridge over the Katagawa River is the Yamashiro-Ohashi Bridge. Kyotanabe City, which is located on the left bank of Katagawa River, is home to Kan'ei Temple, which has a National Treasure 11-headed Standing Kannon Statue (Tenpo-period), and Shion-in (Kofuji Temple), which is associated with Master Ikkyu, is also in this city.

Acacia (Acacia plum) grove in Jojo City, which is on the right side of the Katagawa River, has beautiful acacia blossoms bloom in the spring. If you go just a little south of the Old Nara-Kaido Road, you will find the no-Tamagawa which was mentioned in waka poems. It is famous for cherry blossoms and Yamabuki (Japanese Rose).

Tachibana no-Mori's vacation home was also said to be here. It was one of the authors of Manyo-shu, and was also known as "Ise-no-Sadafusa (Minister of the Left)".





The site where a variety of cultures fuse together

Souraku

Around this area was the main port for transporting supplies (such as stone and lumber) to Nara. The Kamo area has Ganmyo Temple, Juroji Temple, and the First Kajiya Temple, while the Tonto area has stone Buddhist images by the roadside. This place was the Kurokiyo in the past, and today, it is an area known for the cutting-edge Kansai Science City, mixed with its historical scenery.







A peaceful place with many World Heritage Sites

Nara-Nishinokyo

The Site of Heijo Palace was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (cultural heritage) under the name of "Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara". Today the Suzaku-iron Gate, the main gate to the palace, Ton Teien Garden, and the First Daigokuden hall (the central audience hall) have been restored, allowing visitors to imagine what the ancient capital looked like in those days. Other sites include Heijo Temple and three-storied pagoda, one of the Kango Sato (three pagoda in Kango). Chugyo Temple with its UNESCO-registered Buddhist statue known as the "Gyokko" and the Tachibana-hara, a famous spot for viewing the leaves and colors autumn.

This area is also famous for the Tachibana Shrine, the guardian of Mount Tenno, the Fujiwara-dera, and Kofukudoji Temple, a well-known "sakaki-dera" where elderly women pray for a peaceful death.






The "Goldfish Town" associated with Prince Shotoku

Yamato Koriyama and Ikaruga

Yamato Koriyama city is well known for its goldfish, and the many goldfish ponds that surround the city. Yamato Koriyama Castle, the center of the city, was founded in 1380, and the Shirogane-gate, the Sanyo-gate, and the Tenno-gate are still standing. This was designated as one of Japan's Top 100 Historical Sites, making it a popular place for both to visit. The old palace site is now a goldfish pond for both to visit.




Nishio-cho and Zakkai-cho are an old roadside, and create an old historical atmosphere. In the Kango area, there are many temples which are associated with Prince Shotoku, among which are fascinating places such as Horyu Temple and Haki Temple, which became the first UNESCO-registered World Heritage Site in Japan. Other sites include Heijo Temple and three-storied pagoda, one of the Kango Sato (three pagoda in Kango). Chugyo Temple with its UNESCO-registered Buddhist statue known as the "Gyokko" and the Tachibana-hara, a famous spot for viewing the leaves and colors autumn.

Experience the culture of the Yayoi period

Umami and Tawaramoto





Villages during the Yayoi period were largely established in the central area of the Nara Basin, where the Karako-Kagi Historical Site is located. This area is where enormous moated settlements were located, and is thought to have been the epicenter of the Yayoi period and culture. From Koyu-cho, Kawa-cho, and Yamato-kawachi City southwest of the Nara Basin to Umami Hill, many major historical sites can be found in the area, and you can experience and imagine the past as you walk over the historical ground beneath your feet.

The origin of nation-building in Japan

Asuka

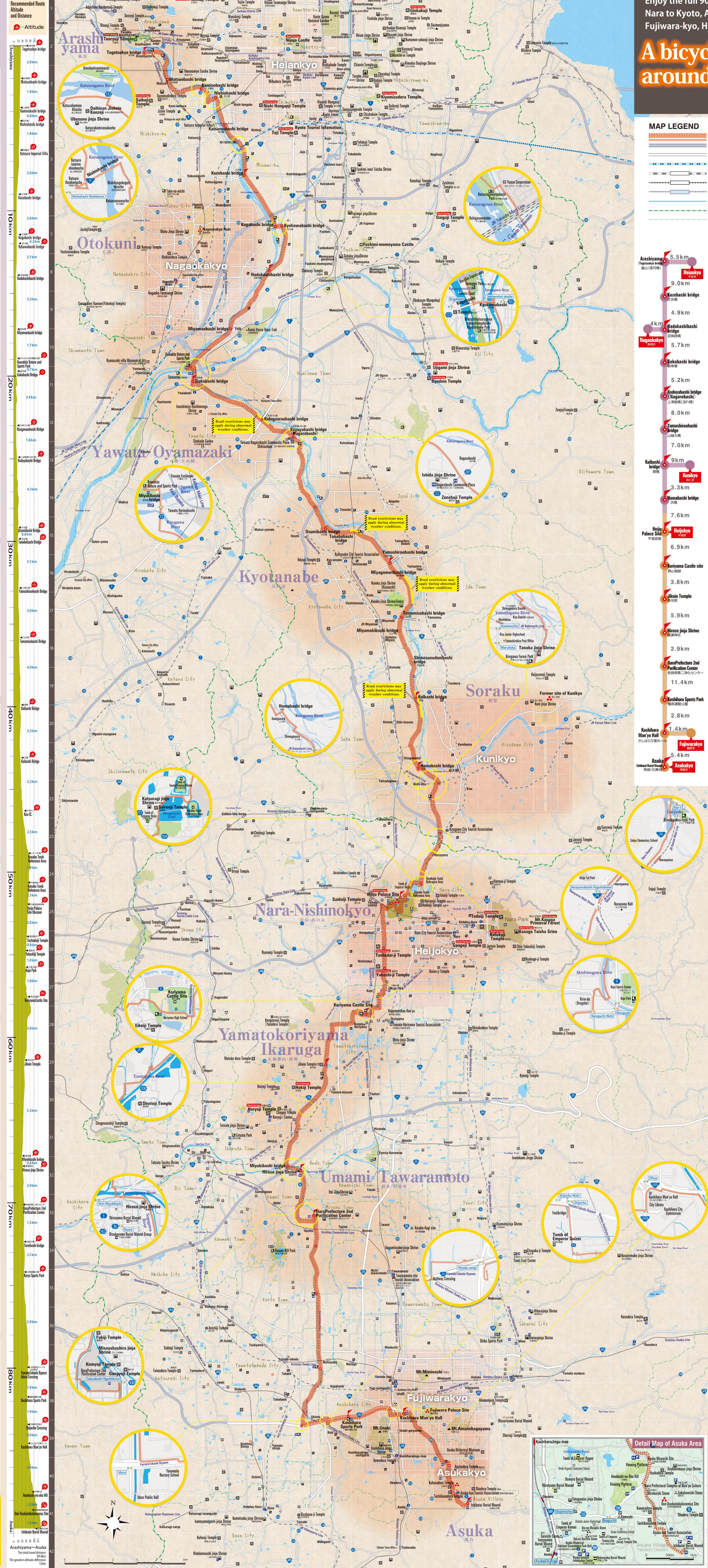
Asuka area is located at the southern end of this cycling route, and is the place where the history of ancient Japan began. Many historical sites such as the palace site of the Asuka period were discovered in the peaceful countryside. This area fascinates many visitors because of the ancient historical sites which lie beneath the ground. The countryside scenery, and perhaps the thought that this was the place where the nation started, also make visitors feel nostalgic.

Please follow the safety rules below.

- As a general rule, bicycles must be ridden on the roadways.
- Keep to the left hand side of the road.
- When you ride on sidewalks, give way to pedestrians and ride slowly, close to the road.
- Ride for safety.
- Do not drink driving with another person on the same bicycle, and riding side by side with another person and their bicycle are all prohibited.
- Do not ride on private roads at night.
- Obey and obey traffic signals, and stop temporarily to make sure crossroads are safe.
- Do not ride on private roads under the influence of alcohol.

Parents are responsible for making their children under 13 wear helmets when riding. (Article 63-10 of Road Traffic Law)



Enjoy the full 90-km road which connects Asuka, Nara to Kyoto, Arashiyama, while walking through Asuka-kyo, Fujiwara-kyo, Heijo-kyo, Kuni-kyo, Nagaoka-kyo, and Heian-kyo

A bicycle tour around the Ancient Capital

MAP LEGEND

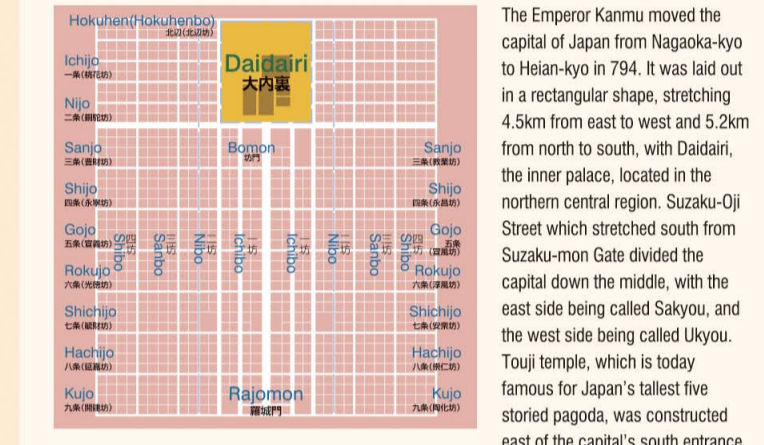
	Recommended Route		Information Office
	Toll Road		Parking
	Road		Toilets
	Japan Railway		Convenience Store
	Private Railway		Bicycle Shop
	River		National Highway Route No.
	Subway		Prefectural Road No.
	Prefectural Border		Hospital
	Municipality Border		Post Office
			Temple
			Shrine
			Historical monument
			Park
			Old tomb
			Museum
			Garden
			Rail Station / Police Box



A capital filled with hope of eternal peace. 794~1180

Heiankyo - 平安京

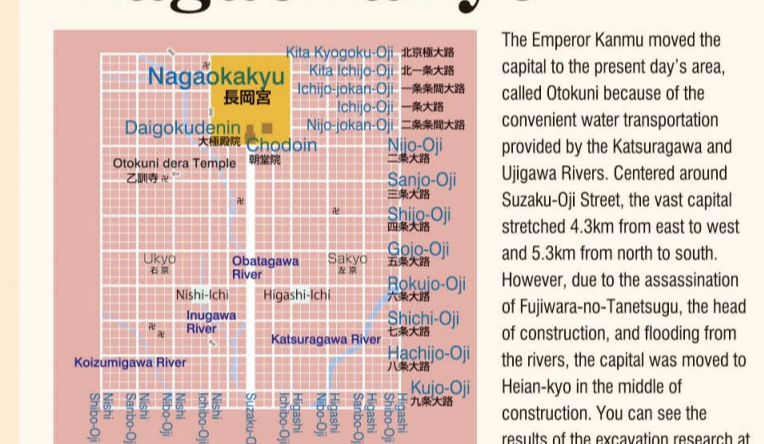
The Emperor Kanmu moved the capital of Japan from Nagaoka-kyo to Heian-kyo in 794. It was laid out in a rectangular shape, stretching 4.5km from east to west and 5.2km from north to south, with Daibutsu, the inner palace, located in the northern central region. Suzaku-Oji Street which stretched south from Suzaku-mon Gate divided the capital down the middle, with the east side being called Sakaya, and the west side being called Ukyu. Touji Temple, which is today famous for Japan's tallest five-storied pagoda, was constructed west of the capital's south entrance. The names of Ojiman Avenue and Kojijeyles from the past still remain as street names.



A capital full of mystery 784~794

Nagaokakyo - 長岡京

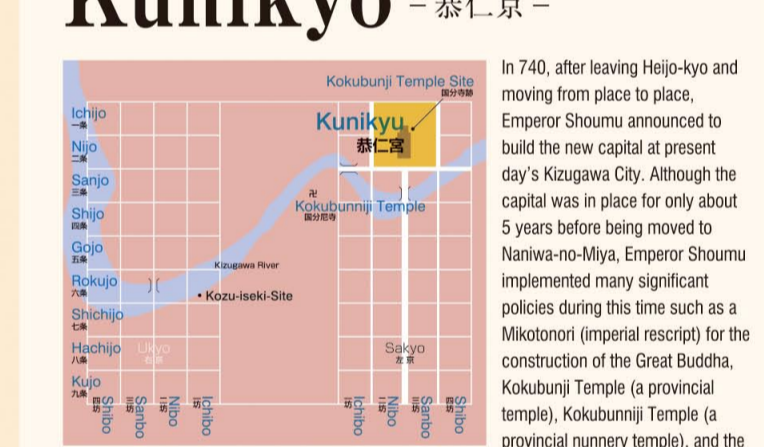
The Emperor Kanmu moved the capital to the present day's area, called Otokuni because of the convenient water transportation provided by the Katagawa and Ujigawa Rivers. Centered around Suzaku-Oji Street, the vast capital stretched 4.3km from east to west and 5.5km from north to south. However, due to the assassination of Fujiwara-no-Tenetsugu, the head of construction, and flooding from the river, the capital was moved to Heian-kyo in the middle of construction. You can see the results of the excavation research at the Museum of Nagaoka-kyo (10-year-long capital's history).



A phantom capital wrapped in mysteries 740~743

Kunikyō - 恭仁京

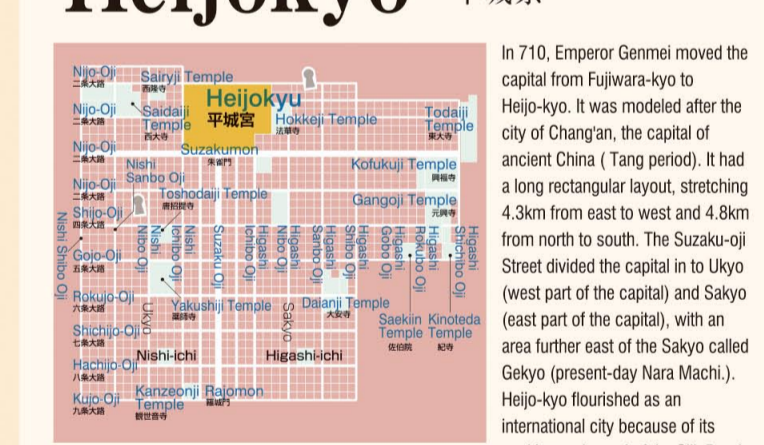
In 740, after leaving Heijo-kyo and moving from place to place, Emperor Shomu announced to build the new capital at present day's Kuzugawa City. Although the capital was in place for only about 5 years before being moved to Naniwa-no-Miya, Emperor Shomu implemented many significant policies during this time such as a Mikotoiri (imperial respect) for the construction of the Great Buddha, Kokuji Temple (provincial temple), Kokuji Temple (provincial nursery temple), and the establishment of Konden Eien Shizu Law (the Law Permitting Permanent Ownership of Newly Cultivated Lands) and so on. Yamashiro Kofukudoji Temple was constructed at the imperial palace of Kunikyō, with the foundation stones of the imperial palace (Kunikyō-dera) and a seven-story pagoda remaining to this day. The site of Kunikyō was designated as a National Historical Site in 1957. From the end of summer to fall, cosmos flowers and spider lilies bloom in the area.



The international capital at the end of the Silk Road. 710~740 745~784

Heijokyo - 平城京

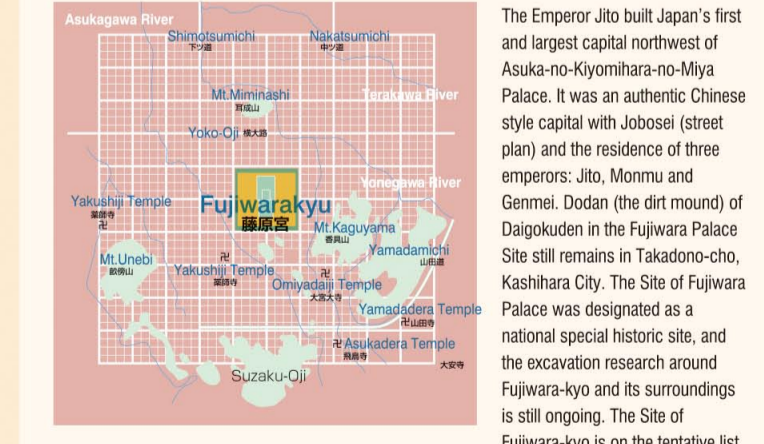
In 710, Emperor Genmei moved the capital from Fujiwara-kyo to Heijo-kyo. It was modeled after the city of Chang'an, the capital of ancient China (Tang period). It had a long rectangular layout, stretching 4.3km from east to west and 4.8km from north to south. The Suzaku-Oji Street divided the capital in to Ukyo (west part of the capital) and Sakyo (east part of the capital), with an area further east of the Sakyo called Kango (present-day Nara Machi). Heijo-kyo flourished as an international city because of its position at the end of the Silk Road and the various cultures that came through from the continent. The Site of Heijo Palace, as well as many temples and shrines nearby, were registered as World Heritage Sites under the name of "Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara". Suzaku-mon Gate and Daigokuden were reconstructed.



Fujiwara-kyo was Japan's first formal capital. 694~710

Fujiwarakyo - 藤原京

The Emperor Jito built Japan's first and largest capital northwest of Asuka-no-Kiyomihara-no-Miya Palace. It was an authentic Chinese style capital with Jossei (street plan) and the residence of three emperors: Jito, Monmu and Genmei. Under the direction of Daigokuden in the Fujiwara Palace Site still remains in Takadono-cho, Kasahara City. The Site of Fujiwara Palace was designated as a national special historic site, and the excavation research around Fujiwara-kyo and its surroundings is still ongoing. The Site of Fujiwara-kyo is on tentative list of nominees for UNESCO World Heritage registrations as "Asuka-Fujiwara: Archaeological sites of Japan's Ancient Capitals and Related Properties".



Beginning of the capital before Jossei(street plan) was established. 643~694

Asukakyo - 飛鳥京

A general form for the capitals that were located in the Asuka area in Ancient Times is Asuka-kyo. This is one of the constructive properties on the tentative list of nominees for UNESCO World Heritage registrations as "Asuka-Fujiwara: Archaeological sites of Japan's Ancient Capitals and Related Properties". Through excavation and research, we know that the Asuka Kofukudoji Temple is the legendary site of Asuka Kofukudoji Temple. It had 4 palaces, such as Asuka Okamoto-no-Miya (an ancient Imperial Palace where Emperor Jomei lived), Asuka-no-Kawachi-no-Miya, Nishi-no-Asuka Okamoto-no-Miya, and Nakano-ko-Kamatai associated Soga-no-Iruka and carried out a reform called the Taka Reform. Also, during the period of Asuka Kiyomihara-no-Miya Palace, two generations of emperors, Tenmu and Jito, advanced the project that forms the foundations of the Japanese nation, under the Hatakeyama Iga code.

