

Nishiharima Information

Printed here are articles from the Kobe Shimbun that relate to the history, culture, and goings on of the Nishi-Harima area. The Nishi-Harima refers to the four cities and three towns under the jurisdiction of the Nishi-Harima District Administration Office, Hyogo Prefectural Government: Aioi City, Tatsuno City, Ako City, Shiso City, Taishi Town, Kamigori Town, and Sayo Town.



Ema (votive tablet) vending machine near the correct hanging place at trailhead to the impenetrable castle 'Shirahata Castle' Ruins on Mt. Shirahata to pray for exam success



Ema that says, "The Impenetrable Shirahata Castle" (also in English and Korean).

Kamigori The Shirahata Castle Ruins (Akamatsu, Kamigori Town) promoted by Kamigori Town and Hyogo Prefecture as the 'impenetrable castle' is a national historical site. At the entrance to the trail to the castle remains on Mt. Shirahata (440 meters) there is an unmanned vending machine for Ema (votive tablets) for prayers to pass exams. Previously the ema were sold in front of JR Kamigori Station, but it was far from the trailhead and the summit where the Ema Kakesho (place for hanging the ema) is located. The local residents' group that set up the ema vending machine spoke of how 'Ema could be hung soon after buying them, making using them more attractive'. (Daisuke Ito)

Shirahata Castle is a mountain castle that is said to have been built by Harima Samurai General Enshin Akamatsu on Mt. Shirahata in the first half of the 14th century. There is an anecdote about how the castle survived an attack by a large enemy army that lasted over 50 days.

Kamigori Town and Hyogo Prefecture decided to focus on this point as a tourism resource, and to promote the castle as "The Impenetrable Shirahata Castle". The Akamatsu District Murazukuri Promotion Committee made up of local residents took this meaning of impenetrable, and also made a prayer ema to be "undefeated (in exams)", and sold them at the tourist information center in front of JR Kamigori Station and the Akamatsu Community Center near Chizu Express Kokenawa Station.

However, the places where the Ema were sold were all far from Mt. Shirahata, and there was dissatisfaction that even if you bought an Ema, you would have to go to great lengths that you would

have to go to hang it up.

To resolve this, the Akamatsu District Murazukuri Promotion Committee installed an unmanned vending machine at the trailhead where the Ema Kakesho is located, with the support of Hyogo Prefecture. The vending machine works like a coin locker. The door opens when you insert five 100-yen coins, and you will find Ema inside. The Ema inside is replenished each time it is sold. Ema in English and Korean have also been prepared in anticipation of use by visitors of other nationalities.

According to the committee, as this vending machine that does not require electricity, it could even be installed higher up in the mountains. Chairman Yoshiharu Furumasa (age 73) said, "I would be happy if more people came here to pray for success in their exams."



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Yoshiharu Furumasa, Chairman of the Akamatsu District Murazukuri Promotion Committee, which installed unmanned vending machines for Ema (Akamatsu, Kamigori Town)

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Caution!

Articles printed in this paper may include those from **last year** or **earlier still**. For dates of events and opening hours of the various facilities outlined in these articles, **please inquire** with each facility and/or related party for the latest information.

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Taishi

White flowers draping across huge trees Ikarugadera Temple's Wind Orchids



Wind Orchids at peak of bloom=Taishi Town, Ikaruga

The wind orchids which grow naturally along the camphor trees in the precincts of Ikarugadera Temple in Ikaruga, Taishi Town, are in full bloom. The dainty white petals swaying in the shadow of the large tree stand out against the rainy season's sky in the backdrop. The wind orchid is an evergreen perennial of the orchid family, and grows on three camphor trees in the precincts of Ikarugadera Temple. Flowering this year was confirmed on the 26th of last month; almost the same as every year.

There are currently which flowers blooming in about 10 clusters about 8 to 10 meters high on the trunk and branches of these large trees that are over 100 years old. This season there are so many flowers in

bloom that they can be seen from a distance, and all the plants in bloom can be enjoyed as a group.

Mrs. Masami Kuwata (age 49), a temple clerk, shared that "people who are fond of flowers pay a visit to the temple from places far away such as Osaka". The best time to see the flowers that are a well know attraction at the temple now is until the middle of this month. The temple also lends binoculars to those who want to use them. (Ikarugadera Temple Tel. 079-276-0022) (Shigenori Matsu-moto)



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