

Nara: a Cultural and Spiritual Capital

An aerial photograph of Nara, Japan, showing a dense urban landscape with traditional Japanese architecture. A large, white, conical stupa (pagoda) is prominent in the center. The image is overlaid with a green tint.

Adarsh Sharma

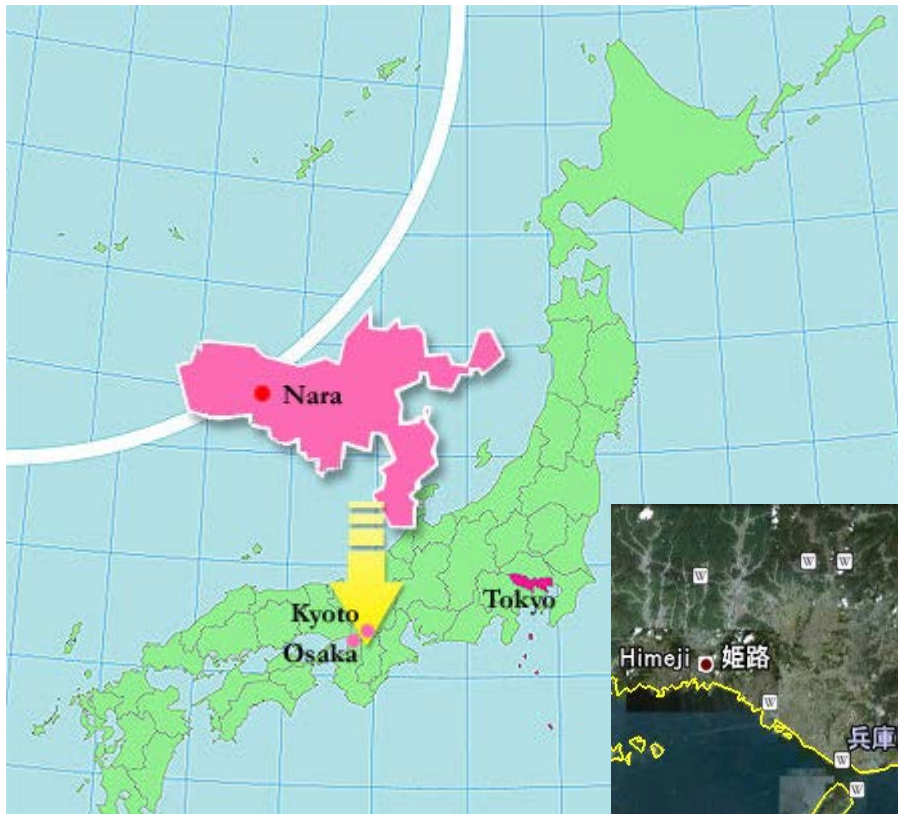
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Japan is a land of modest geographic size, but it is one of the large countries of the world in population. Though in culture it is a daughter of ancient China, just as the countries of northern Europe are offshoots of the Mediterranean civilizations of Greece and Rome, Japan has developed one of the most distinctive cultures in the world. (Reischauer (1978))

Nara: a Cultural and Spiritual Capital

- Location of Nara (map)
- Facts and Figures
- Prefectural Symbols
- A Chronology of Japanese History
- A Brief History of Nara
- Nara's World Cultural Heritage
- The Beauty of Nara in Four Seasons (DVD)

Map



1 Nara Park(Deer Park) and the area around it

2 Nishinokyo/ Saho/ Sakiji Area

3 Yamatokoriyama/Ikaruga and Mt. Shigi Area

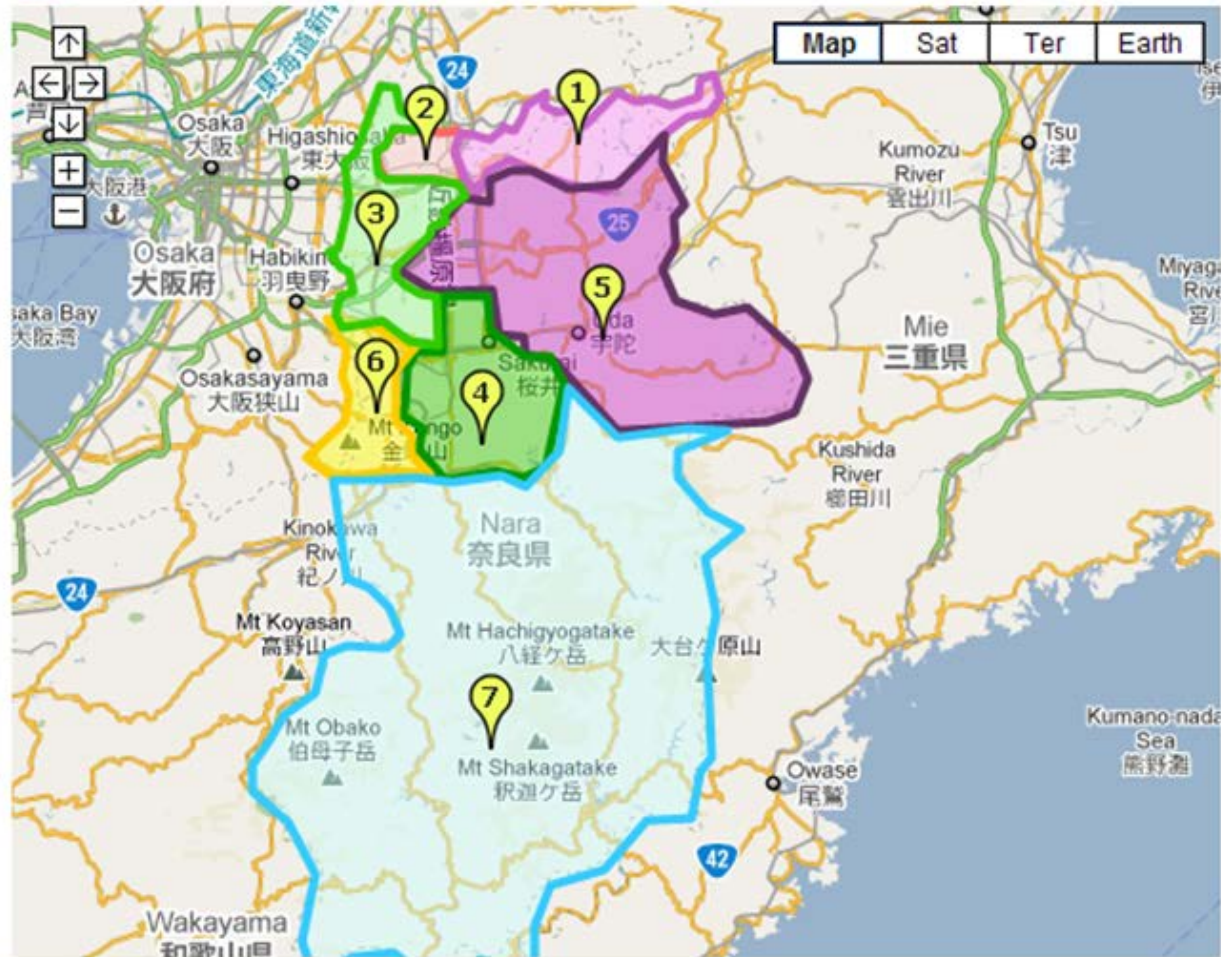
4 Asuka/Kashihara

5 Yamanobe-no-Michi/ Hase/ Murou

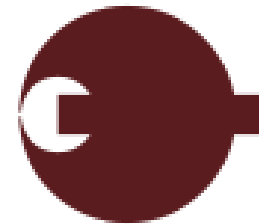
6 Taima and Katsuragi Area

7 Yoshino Area

The whole area



Prefectural Symbols



Facts and Figures

Prefectural Capital	Nara
Governor	Shogo Arai
Area	3,691sq km
Cities	12
Rural District	7
Population	1,399,978(As of Oct. 1, 2010)
Foreigners	11,149(As of Dec. 31, 2010)
Prefectural Income (per capita)	¥2,526,000

A Chronology of Japanese History

P e r i o d	Y e a r		
Yamato		~	550
Asuka	550	~	710
Nara	710	~	784
Heian	784	~	1185
Kamakura	1185	~	1333
Muromachi	1333	~	1573
Azuchi-Momoyama	1573	~	1603
Edo	1603	~	1868
Meiji	1868	~	1912
Taisho	1912	~	1926
Showa	1926	~	1989
Heisei	1989	~	

A Brief History of Nara

Yamato Period	538	Buddhism was introduced from Korea.
Asuka Period	592	
	607	Horyuji Temple was built. The first envoy was sent to the Sui Dynasty.
	630	The first envoy was sent to the Tang dynasty.
	645	The Taika Reform
	694	Fujiwara-kyo Capital was founded.
Nara Period	710	The capital was transferred to Heijo-kyo.
	752	Dedication of the Great Buddha in the Todaiji Temple.
	754	Ganjin came to Nara.
	759	Toshodaiji Temple was built.
	768	Kasugataisha Shrine was built.
Heian Period	784	The Capital was shifted to Nagaoka-kyo.
	794	The Capital was shifted to Heian-kyo.

Nara's World Cultural Heritage

(1) Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area
(Registered in 1993)

(2) Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara
(Registered in 1998)

(3) Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii
Mountain Range (Registered in 2004)

(1) Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area



Horyuji temple



Hokkiji temple



Mirokubosatsu, Chuguji temple

(2) Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara



Todaiji temple



Kofukuji temple



Kasugataisha shrine



Gangoji temple



Toshodaiji temple



Yakushiji temple

(3) Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range



Yoshino



Kinpusenji temple



Kumano kodo, Pilgrimage Routes

- <http://www.pref.nara.jp/>
- http://www.pref.nara.jp/nara_e/dd_aspx_menuid-1074.htm
- http://www.city.nara.nara.jp/b_hp/english/index.htm
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nara,_Nara
- <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2165.html>
- Reischauer Edwin O. and A.M. Craig(1978), *Japan Tradition and Transformation*, Charles E. Tuttle, Tokyo.
- Martin, John H. and Phyllis G. (1993), *Nara A Cultural Guide to Japan's Ancient Capital*, Charles E. Tuttle, Tokyo.

The Beauty of Nara in Four Seasons (DVD)