

英語版

Medieval Scenery — A Legacy for the Future —



骨堂村荘園
Honodera Mura Shoen

Historic Site

Honederamura Shōen Iseki

Important
Cultural
Landscape

The rural landscape of
Ichinoseki Hondera

Preserving the traditional Japanese rural landscape for the future

Here was once an estate called “Honederamura”

Long ago, the Hondera area in Genbichō, Ichinoseki City, was a shōen (estate) called “Honederamura”, belonging to the bettō (steward) of the sutra repository of Chūson-ji temple.

The four boundaries of Honederamura were clearly defined in the “Azuma Kagami,” a historical text from the Kamakura period.

The appearance of the village in medieval times can be seen in the old texts and the two “Illustrations of Honederamura of the Mutsu Province” preserved at Chūson-ji.

Honederamura is surrounded by mountains and features a wide expanse of winding waterways and rice paddies of irregular shapes, with houses shielded from the wind by small groves interspersed throughout, and shrines erected at key locations.

The sight of the village, with its clever use of the workings of nature is a fine example of a tranquil Japanese landscape.

Today, so many of these beautiful sights, once common throughout Japan, are disappearing one by one. Therefore, Honederamura, the site of an estate associated with the Ōshū Fujiwara clan, is an irreplaceable heritage site preserving the traditional Japanese rural landscape.

History

The beginning of Honederamura belonging to Chūson-ji

Chūson-ji sutra repository and Honederamura Shōen

It was the 12th century. The lord Fujiwara no Kiyohira, wishing to create a country based on the ideal of the Pure Land of Buddhism, appointed the monk Jizaibō Renkō, who had distinguished himself through the completion of the “Issai-kyō Sutra written in gold and silver on dark blue paper,” as the first steward of the Chūson-ji sutra repository. Renkō then offered Honederamura, his private territory, as a means of support for the sutra repository. The village was approved by Kiyohira as a shōen (estate) to provide the funds for the maintenance of the repository. This marks the beginning of Honederamura under the steward of the Chūson-ji sutra repository.

Thereafter, Honederamura was controlled by the steward of the repository until the Muromachi period, in the 15th century, subject to repeated disputes with the Kasai clan, who had become the lords of the province after the demise of the Fujiwara clan. It is speculated that the two “Illustrations of Honederamura of the Mutsu Province”



The First Sutra Repository Steward, Jizaibō Renkō, Chūson-ji Temple Collection



Zaika Ezu (Household Map) (Detailed Illustration), Chūson-ji Temple Collection



Busshin Ezu (Shrine and Temples Map) (Simplified Illustration), Chūson-ji Temple Collection

In the illustrations, the boundaries of the area belonging to the repository is laid out, with Kagikake in the east, Sannō no Iwaya in the west, Iwai river in the south, and Mitake-dō in the north. Similar descriptions can be found in the historic text “Azuma Kagami.”

were drawn up in the late Kamakura period as a means for settling these disputes.

Upon entering the Edo period, the province came under direct control of the Sendai fief, and remained so until the Meiji restoration. It is said that the name Honedera became corrupted into Hondera during this time.

The origins of Honederamura

The illustrations contain the descriptions “Honedera ruins” and “Honedera-dō ruins”, and depict what may be the cornerstones of buildings. This tells us that there used to be a temple here called Honedera, and that it was in ruins near the end of the Kamakura period, when the illustrations were drawn. Today, the site of the temple has not been confirmed, but it is thought that the name of the temple became the name of the village.*

“Honedera” is an unusual name, and it is said that it was a place for storing the bones of the dead, or that it was an ossuary for people associated with Honedera.

* The Skull Legend

In the “Senjusho,” a compilation of Buddhist tales, there is a story about a young woman from Hiraizumi who learned the Lotus Sutra from a talking skull in the attic. At the skull’s behest, she then buried the skull at Mt. Sakashiba. The lore of Hondera has it that this skull belonged to the monk Ryōgen (Jie Daishi), who was the 18th abbot of Enryaku-ji temple on Mt. Hiei, and that the place where it was buried became Jiezuka.

This story is also said to be the origin of the name Honederamura.



Aerial Photograph (1998)



Aerial Photograph (1947)

Illustrations

Comparison of Medieval Times and Today

The Illustrations of Honederamura show the boundaries of the village, and convey the atmosphere with its realistic depiction of the fields and houses.

There are currently about 40 well-known shōen illustrations in Japan, but none are as realistic as the illustrations of Honederamura.

Looking at the illustrations while strolling through the landscape takes one back to the shōen of medieval times.

South Side

The southern mountains are depicted in less detail than the northern ones because they lie outside the village. The Iwai river marks the boundary of the estate, and only someone well-versed in local geography could have depicted the swift currents of the river.



The Plains

Shown from above, the illustration depicts scattered groups of rice paddies and nearby houses. These sets of houses and fields are called "tayashiki" in old historical texts. Some of the names of these tayashiki have been passed down until today.



Zaika Ezu (Household Map) (Detailed Illustration),
Chūson-ji Temple Collection

Front (western mountains)

A horizontal view of the west side. The reason for depicting the far-away Komagata mountains (Mt. Kurikoma, Sukawadake) is that these mountains played an important role in the life of the village.



North Side

The continuous mountain range is depicted as viewed from the south. The mountain ridge is drawn in thick lines to mark the northern boundary of Honederamura Shōen. This illustration was drawn to confirm the boundaries of the estate.



East Side

Although the northern and southern mountains converge into a narrow valley in reality, the illustration shows an unbroken line of mountains. Also, it is thought that the old road running along the cliffs of the Iwai river was too dangerous, prompting the construction of the "Masaka Shin-Michi" ("Masaka new road").



Honederamura Shōen Iseki and the rural landscape

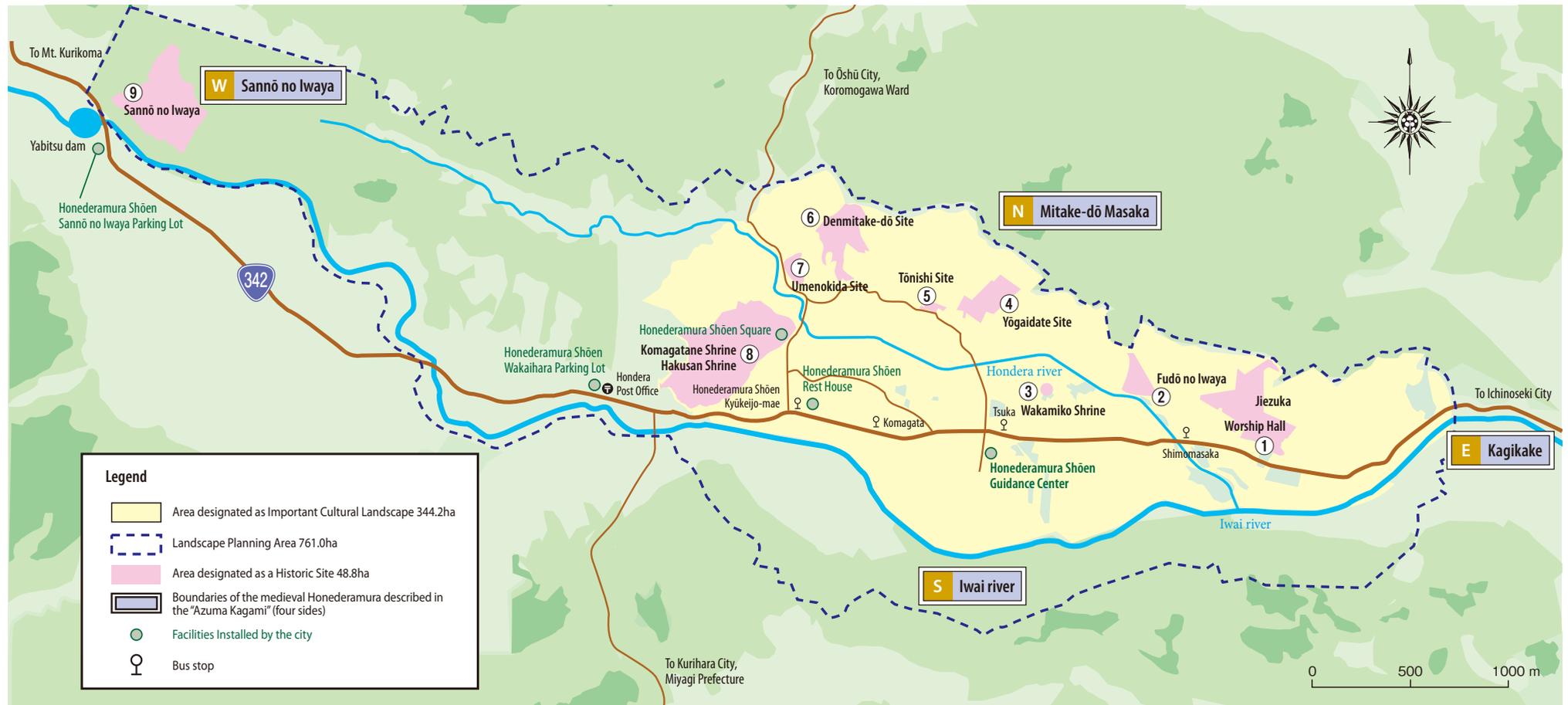
National Historic Site

In Honederamura, which is now “Honederamura Shōen Iseki” in the Hondera area of Ichinoseki City, there are many remnants of shrines and temples depicted in the Important Cultural Property “Illustrations of Honederamura of the Mutsu Province.” The medieval landscape is well-preserved overall, letting one experience the world depicted in the illustrations for real. Due to this reputation, nine locations including shrines and caves that could be identified from the maps were designated as the National Historic Site “Honederamura Shōen Iseki” in March, 2005.

Landscape Planning Area and Important Cultural Landscape

In addition to being designated as a historic site, the rice paddies, residences and surrounding land of the Hondera area is designated as a “landscape planning area” in accordance with the Landscape Act, and the central portion has been designated an “important cultural landscape” under the Cultural Properties Protection Act. The landscape is thus assured triple protection in addition to being a national historic site.

This shows that the rural landscape of the Hondera area, which retains its medieval appearance, is recognized as an irreplaceable cultural treasure.



Historic Site

Honederamura Shōen Iseki

Explanation of the Site

① Jiezuka, Worship hall

The eastern point of the mountain range on the north side of the Hondera area is called Mt. Sakashiba, at the top of which Jiezuka (Jie mound) is located. The burial mound measures 10m in diameter, and is surrounded by a moat and earthwork. A stone shrine erected in the Edo period can also be seen.

The worship hall located at the skirts of the mountain venerates Jie Daishi.

② Fudō no Iwaya

This cave is located on the mountainside west of Jiezuka, and is depicted in the illustrations of Honederamura. The cave is 3m in height and 13m in depth, and is thought to have been a place of training for young monks.

③ Wakamiko Shrine

This shrine is depicted in the illustrations of Honederamura, and is still present in the eastern fields. According to ethnologic research of the name (“miko” meaning a shrine maiden or medium), the shrine is said to venerate the guardian spirit of the medium who used to invoke the spirits of the departed and transmit their voices to the living.

④ Yōgaidate (Fortress) Site

This mountain fort from the Sengoku period lies in the northern mountains, and is said to have been the residence of Hondera Jūrōzaemon. The remains of the fortress mark the end of the shōen.

⑤ Tōnishi Site

Excavations have revealed the remains of a leveled surface and a structure with earth fast posts. Pottery from the 12th and 13th century has been discovered, thought to be a remnant of life in the time of the shōen.

⑥ Denmitake-dō Site

Near the western peak of the northern mountains lies the place known as Mitake-dō, commanding a view of Mt. Sannō to the west, and overlooking the plains below. The place is thought to have been a sacred mountain. It is depicted in the illustrations, and marked the northern boundary of the village.

⑦ Umenokida Site

The remains of a large building with postholes and column spacing were excavated. This large building may have been important to the running of the village.

⑧ Komagatane Shrine, Hakusan Shrine

Komagatane Shrine venerates “Komagata” and “Komagatane” (Mt. Kurikoma, Sukawadake) depicted at the west edge of the illustration. Thought to correspond to “Rokusho no Miya,” also depicted in the illustration.

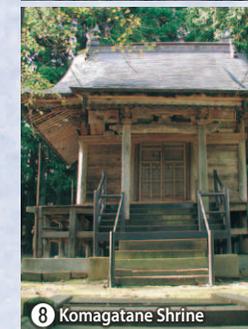
Hakusan Shrine was a place of worship for the deity “Shirayama-hime no Kami” of Ishikawa. The Shirayama Hime Shrine was a branch of the temple at Mt. Hiei in the medieval period, and the priests of Hakusan worked to spread the influence of the Tendai sect of Buddhism.

⑨ Sannō no Iwaya

“Hie Sannō Sin” is the guardian deity of Enryaku-ji temple. The fact that the cave dedicated to this deity is situated at the highest point of the village seems to emphasize that Honederamura belonged to the Tendai sect temple of Chūson-ji. The cave is also thought to have been used as an ossuary.



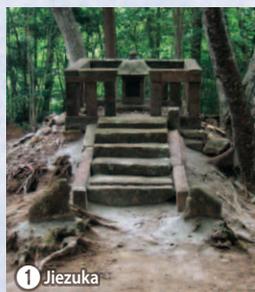
⑨ Sannō no Iwaya



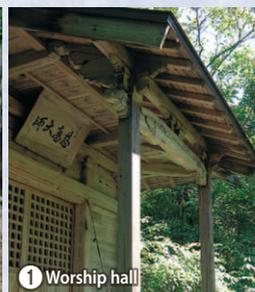
⑧ Komagatane Shrine



⑧ Hakusan Shrine



① Jiezuka



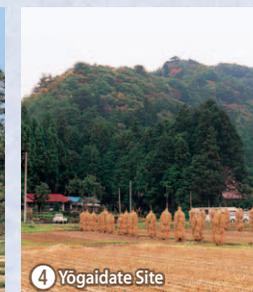
① Worship hall



② Fudō no Iwaya



③ Wakamiko Shrine



④ Yōgaidate Site



⑤ Tōnishi Site



⑥ Denmitake-dō Site



⑦ Umenokida Site

Important Cultural Landscape

The rural landscape of Ichinoseki Hondera

Characteristics of the rural landscape of Ichinoseki Hondera

- 1 The Hondera area of today is very similar to the arrangement of the shrines, paddies and residences depicted in the medieval maps. For example, the scattered sets of houses and paddies, referred to as “tayashiki” in medieval times, can still be seen today.
- 2 In the Hondera area, with its strong western winds in the winter, the residences are surrounded by “igune” (trees planted as windbreaks). The network of waterways dug following the gentle sloping of the land for irrigation of the paddies also remains, and combines with the surrounding nature, making for a harmonious landscape.
- 3 This area, consisting of mixed forests, rice paddies adapted to the lay of the land, and the houses surrounded by windbreaks, sustains a rich ecosystem in a varied and integrated environment.

- 4 The paddies of the medieval Honederamura were watered with marsh water from the hills and water from Hondera river. In the Edo period, the farmland was expanded by digging a canal to draw water from the Iwai river at the base of Mt. Sannō. But the village’s water system did not change dramatically, making for a gentle development of life in the village.

Summary of Important Cultural Landscapes

In addition to its value as a historic site, the rural landscape of Ichinoseki Hondera received praise for the characteristics described on the right, and was designated as an Important Cultural Landscape in July, 2006.

According to the Cultural Properties Protection Act, a cultural landscape is a landscape which “has evolved together with the way of life and geocultural features of a region, and which is indispensable for understanding the lifestyle of the Japanese people,” and cultural landscapes that are considered particularly important may be designated and protected as Important Cultural Landscapes.



I N F O R M A T I O N

Air Travel (To Iwate-Hanamaki or Sendai Airports)

Sapporo	About 55mins	Iwate-Hanamaki	About 5mins by car	Hanamaki Airport IC	Tōhoku Expwy About 44mins	Ichinoseki		
Osaka	About 1hr 25mins		About 10mins by car	Shin-Hanamaki Station	Tōhoku Shinkansen About 25mins			
Nagoya	About 1hr 10mins		Sendai	About 10mins by car	Sendai Airport IC		Tōhoku Expwy About 1hr 10mins	Ichinoseki
Fukuoka	About 2hrs			About 40mins by bus	Sendai Station		Tōhoku Shinkansen About 23mins	
Sapporo	About 1hr 5mins	Sendai Airport Transit About 17mins						
Narita	About 1hr 5mins							
Nagoya	About 1hr 10mins							
Komatsu	About 1hr							
Osaka	About 1hr 15mins							
Hiroshima	About 1hr 35mins							
Fukuoka	About 1hr 45mins							
Naha	About 2hrs 40mins							

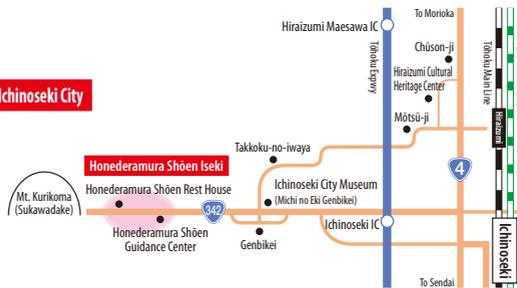
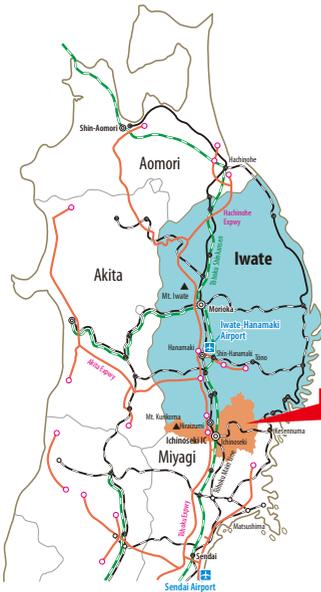
Tōhoku Expwy (To Ichinoseki IC)

Kawaguchi Junction	About 4hrs 20mins (420.3 km)	Ichinoseki IC
Sendai-Miyagi IC	About 55mins (87.9 km)	
Morioka IC	About 60mins (91.8 km)	
Aomori IC	About 3hrs (259.2 km)	

JR Tōhoku Shinkansen (To Ichinoseki Station)

Tokyo	About 1hr 58mins (fastest)	Ichinoseki Station
Sendai	About 23mins	
Morioka	About 27mins	
Shin-Aomori	About 1hr 38mins	

- ❖ About 20mins by car from Ichinoseki IC to Honederamura Shōen Iseki
- ❖ About 30mins by car from Ichinoseki Station to Honederamura Shōen Iseki
- * There is a bus line from Ichinoseki Station (several trips per day)



Contact Us:

**Ichinoseki Educational Committee,
Honedera Shōen Office**

7-2 Takeyama-chō, Ichinoseki, Iwate, 021-8501
TEL: 0191-21-2111 **FAX:** 0191-21-2164
E-mail: honedera@city.ichinoseki.iwate.jp

* For information regarding guided tours

Honederamura Shōen Guidance Center

241-2 Wakakamiko, Genbichō, Ichinoseki, Iwate, 021-0101
TEL/FAX: 0191-33-5022

Closed: Tuesdays and at the end of the year **Open:** 9:00 to 17:00
URL: <http://www.honedera.jp/>