

USING JAPAN'S OLDEST BOOK, KOJIKI, AS A GUIDE TO NARA



Nara's shrines, temples, and other historical treasures are reflections of the way of life and the spirit of ancient Japan. Understanding the stories associated with these sites can help enrich the experience of those travelling to Nara. With that in mind, Nara Prefecture has been working on the "Nara Kiki Man'yo Project" to introduce various destinations in Nara connected with three important Japanese works produced in ancient Nara: Kojiki (An Account of Ancient Matters) and Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan), which are both historical records, and the Man'yo-shu (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves), a collection of ancient Japanese songs from a variety of sources. This publication, "Exploring Nara through Kojiki" is the first from the project that is specifically tailored to visitors from other countries.

Kojiki is the oldest surviving historical record in Japan. It covers Japanese history from its origins to the early 7th century. It includes creation mythology and legends of deities as well as records and anecdotes of historical figures who helped to establish Japan as a unified country. It also depicts ancient society and the natural environment in striking detail.

Kojiki describes many locations in Nara as the sites of historic events and epic drama. We have selected here a few compelling stories from Kojiki that took place in ancient Nara. We hope these will help make your journeys in Nara even more inspiring.