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## CHAPTER 6

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# KOJIKI STORIES OF DEITIES



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### THE HEAVENLY GODS DESCENDED TO EARTH

The High Celestial Plain was where gods and goddesses dwelled. The Supreme Sun Deity Amaterasu was given the Island of Japan by the Great Land Deity O-kuni-nushi.

Amaterasu decided to send Prince Hiko-hono-ninigi, her grandson, to preside over the Earth. With three sacred treasures, Prince Hiko-hono-ninigi descended to Earth, escorted by the Deity of this land Saruta-biko.

The area where Prince Hiko-hono-ninigi descended to Earth became known as Takamagahara (High Celestial Plain).

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### WHEN THE EMPEROR MET A GOD

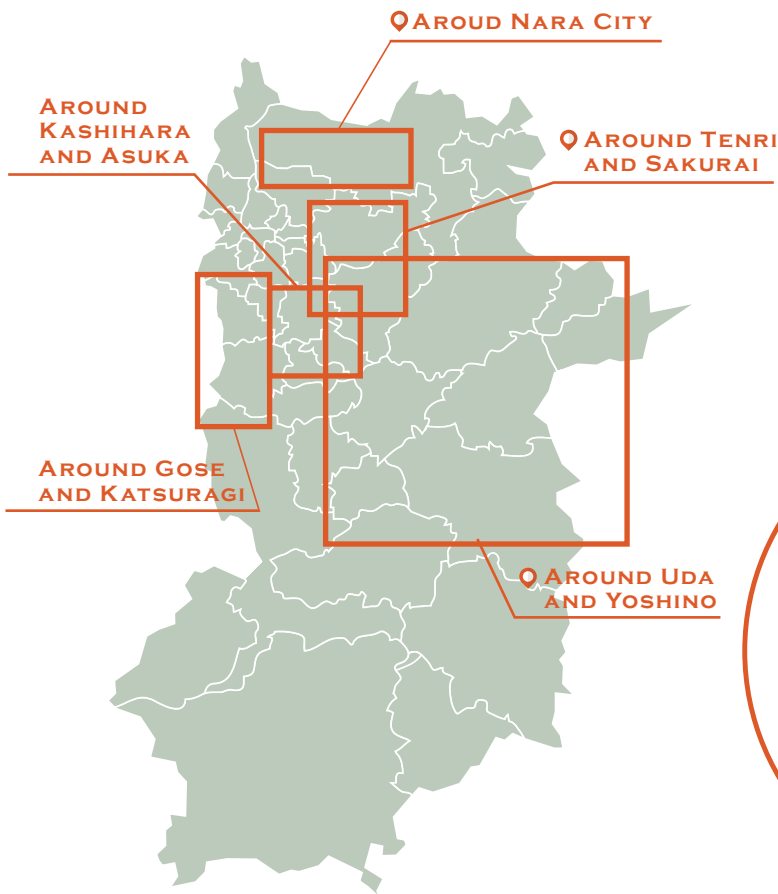
While walking on Mt. Katsuragi, Emperor Yuryaku met a group of people who were dressed exactly like him and his entourage.

The Emperor was outraged, thinking that it was rude that anyone would dare to imitate him, as he was the supreme sovereign of Yamato. He demanded to know the identity of the leader of the other group.

The leader replied, “Since you have asked first, I will tell you my name first. I am the deity who can bring good or bad fortune with a single word. I am the Great Deity Hito-koto-nushi of Kazuraki.”

The Emperor was awestruck. He reverently offered his great sword and his bow and arrows. He also made all of his men disrobe, and gave all their garments to the Great Deity Hito-koto-nushi of Kazuraki.

## NARA AREA MAP



### Getting Around IN nara

Nara is about a 30-minute train ride from Kyoto or Osaka, and getting around in Nara is easy. Major tourist destinations are connected by Nara's extensive public transportation system. Rental bicycles are also a popular way to find your way around.



### Takamahiko Jinja Shrine

📍 AROUND GOSE AND KATSURAGI

This shrine's main deity is Takami-musubi, grandfather of Prince Hiko-hono-ninigi. The entrance is guarded by impressive cedar trees that are several hundred years old. (Gose City)

### Mt. Katsuragi

📍 AROUND GOSE AND KATSURAGI

This mountain has been regarded as a dwelling place for deities since ancient times. The area is famous for its "Million Azaleas" in the spring and, in winter, serene views of snow-covered trees. (Gose city)

### Katsuragi Hitokotonushi Jinja Shrine

📍 AROUND GOSE AND KATSURAGI

It is believed that if a pilgrim states his or her wish in a single word at this shrine, that wish will be granted. The Great Deity Hito-koto-nushi of Kazuraki is enshrined here. (Gose City)

### Katsuragi Old Road

📍 AROUND GOSE AND KATSURAGI

Many *Kojiki* stories that involve deities took place around this ancient 13-kilometer-long road overlooking Mt. Katsuragi. (Gose City)

## Mitsue Jinja Shrine

📍 AROUND UDA AND YOSHINO

Mitsue literally means “Respected Cane.” Legend has it that the Supreme Sun Deity Amaterasu placed a cane to mark this site as a possible choice for her permanent home. (Mitsue Village)

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## Hasedera Temple

📍 AROUND TENRI AND SAKURAI

This temple has been popular for more than a thousand years. From its hall, visitors can see the area where Emperor Yuryaku encountered the Great Deity Hito-koto-nushi of Kazuraki. (Sakurai City)

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## Ancient shrines related to Emperor Sujin

📍 AROUND UDA AND YOSHINO

In Nara there are many shrines that are said to have been built by Emperor Sujin, such as Sumisaka Jinja Shrine and Uda Mikumari Jinja Shrine. (Uda City)