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## CHAPTER 8

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# KOJIKI STORIES OF WOMEN



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### A MYSTERIOUS WOMAN SAVES EMPEROR RICHU

When Emperor Richu was in a drunken slumber after a banquet, his younger brother, Suminoe-no-nakatsu, took advantage. He attempted a coup and set fire to the palace in Naniwa (in present day Osaka). The Emperor escaped from the burning palace and fled for safety, heading for Yamato.

As Emperor Richu approached a mountain along the way, he met a young woman who told him, “Your enemies are waiting for you on the mountain. It would be safer for you to take the longer way around the south side of the mountain.”

Emperor Richu followed her advice and escaped danger. He reached Isonokami Jingu Shrine, the Emperor’s sacred safe haven.

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## THE JEALOUS WIFE OF EMPEROR NINTOKU

Empress Iwa-no-hime was extremely jealous about Emperor Nintoku's interest in other women.

One time, the Emperor heard about the beauty of Lady Kuro-hime and summoned her to serve him closely. However, Lady Kuro-hime feared the jealousy of the Empress and fled back to her hometown.

From the high tower of the castle, Emperor Nintoku saw the boat carrying Lady Kuro-hime away. The Emperor sang a song about how much he missed her.

Upon hearing the song, the Empress became furious. She sent her minions to force Lady Kuro-hime off her boat and made her walk all the way home.

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## THE EMPRESS REFUSES TO RETURN TO THE PALACE

Some time after the incident with Lady Kuro-hime, the Empress Iwa-no-hime traveled to the Land of Kino (in present day Wakayama Prefecture) to gather leaves to use as cups for rice wine at a banquet.

In her absence, the Emperor Nintoku took another wife, Princess Yatano-waka-iratsume. The Empress heard this news when she was near the Port of Naniwa (in present day Osaka) on her way back to the palace.

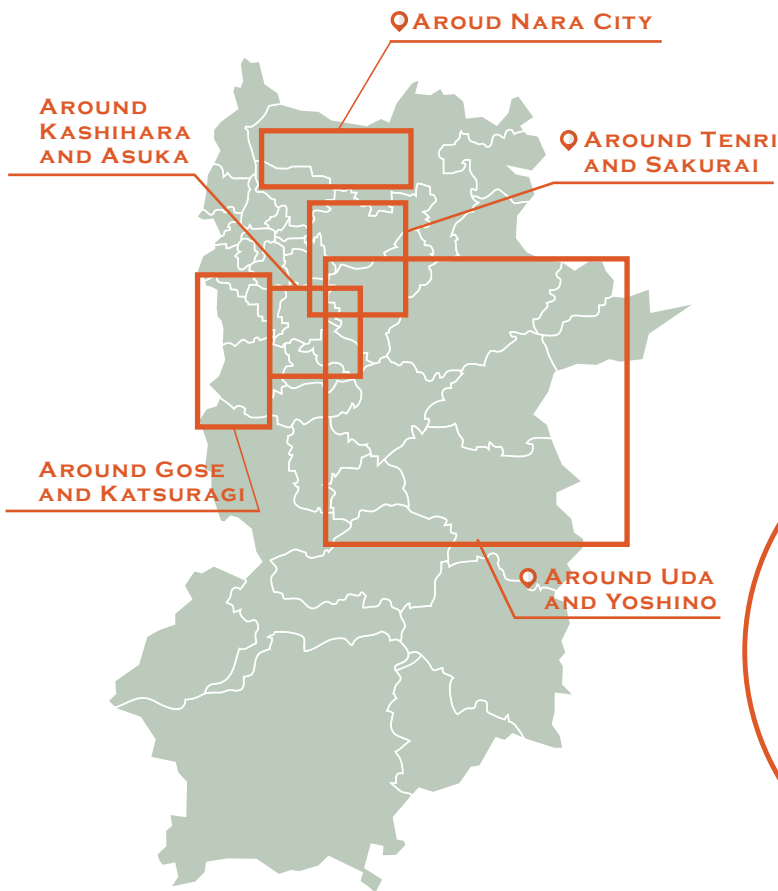
Enraged, she dumped all the leaves into the ocean, but that did nothing to calm her anger. Instead of sailing back to the palace, the Empress took her boat up the river passing through the Province of Yamashiro (near present day Kyoto).

The Emperor heard about what the Empress had done, and it made him miss her. The Emperor kept sending messengers with songs to persuade the Empress to return to the palace, but her heart remained unmoved.

Finally, the Emperor Nintoku himself visited the place where she was staying and sang a song to prove his sincerity.

(*Kojiki* stories do not mention what happened after this, but another record indicates that Empress Iwa-no-hime never returned to the palace and died elsewhere.)

## 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.



### Isonokami Jingu Shrine

📍 AROUND TENRI AND SAKURAI

One of the oldest and most important shrines in Japan. It is famous for its unique treasure of a seven-branched sword. The shrine served as an armory for ancient Yamato regimes. (Tenri City)

### Mt. Nijo

📍 AROUND GOSE AND KATSURAGI

Emperor Richu used the south side around this beautiful mountain as his escape route. From the top of the mountain one can see Nara in the East and the Port of Osaka in the West. (Katsuragi City)

### Saki Tumulus Cluster

📍 AROUND NARA CITY

This area looks like a virgin forest, but it is made up of more than sixty burial mounds, including the tombs of women who appear in *Kojiki* stories. (Nara City)

### Hishage Tumulus

📍 AROUND NARA CITY

This 219-meter-long mound is believed to be the tomb of Empress Iwa-no-hime, wife of Emperor Nintoku. (Nara City)

### Mobune

📍 AROUND GOSE AND KATSURAGI

A replica of an 8-meter-long boat-shaped carrier for corpses (called a *mobune*) used in ancient funeral processions is on display at the Koryo Town Cultural Heritage Preservation Center. (Koryo Town)