

Shimane


Japan's Ancient Heartland

Discovering the Path to Wellness

We Ask Dr. Arakawa, a Pioneer of “Wellness Tourism”

Shimane is known as the home of Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine, which is one of the most sacred places in Japan. We spoke with Dr. Arakawa who advocates a new definition of “wellness” from the perspective of tourism about the possibility of Shimane as a wellness destination.

Shimane has many essential elements that will help you achieve “wellness.”



Masashi Arakawa, M.D.

Professor at the Center for Health and Wellness Tourism Research, Faculty of Global and Regional Studies, University of the Ryukyus

A pioneer in wellness and wellness tourism research. Dr. Arakawa offered the very first lecture on “wellness tourism theory” at a Japanese university. He redefined “wellness” by adapting it to modern society’ s needs and developed a model for “wellness tourism” that utilizes local resources.



One of Japan’ s largest *shimenawa* (sacred rope) majestically frames the Sacred Dance Hall at Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine.



The flooding of the Hiikawa River is said to be the origin of the legend of “*Yamata no Orochi*”, the story of the eight headed serpent.

“Worship of Nature”

The foundation of both Shimane and Okinawa’s culture and history.

Though Shimane and Okinawa are very far apart, they share the same root in their culture, the “worship of nature” .

In Okinawa, descending from the Ryukyu Dynasty, the worship of nature has remained unchanged since ancient times. They don’t have any *torii* gates or shrines, but instead the people pray to nature itself. Shimane, on the other hand, is where the story of the myriad gods in nature originates. Both regions have developed their own Shinto rituals and cultural traditions that reflect their admiration towards nature, such as the Okinawan Lion Dance and Iwami Kagura.



Inasa-no-Hama Beach welcomes the gods as they visit from the sea.A picturesque spot for sunsets and just a fifteen-minute walk from Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine.

Wellness through the journey of Go-En and Bihada.

Through traveling, you can find ways to improve your mind and body. Shimane is a place where people pay homage to the gods, nature, and the bonds between people. That is what we call “Go-En” .

Shimane is also known for “Bihada.” Its ideal climate, hot springs, food culture and lifestyle are well suited to keep your skin healthy. Shimane is the perfect fit for “Wellness Tourism,” a healing trip for your mind and body.

A trip to Shimane to experience “Go-En” and “Bihada” will help you enrich your life.



The hot springs loved by the gods of mythology are still active today. There are more than 60 hot springs with high-quality spring water spread throughout the prefecture.

Shimane, “the Land of Go-En,” is Japan’s top healing spot.

You can find the origin of “wellness tourism” in pilgrimage. People find solace and healing in their hearts by connecting with the gods through prayers. The Japanese have long since worshipped nature. And finding divinity in nature like the sea, mountains, sky, rocks, earth, trees and wind is the source of Japanese philosophy. Their worship is expressed through mythology and the “myriad gods.”

Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine in Shimane appears in mythology and has been worshiped since ancient times. It is safe to say that Shimane can be the perfect destination choice for wellness tourism.

Connecting with the locals by traveling to sacred places and learning about the history, traditions and culture is what people need in this current day society where face to face communication is becoming less and less. Getting tips on having a better life through bonding with nature

and the local community is becoming a new form of tourism. As Shimane is known as “the Land of Go-En,” I believe that Go-En is what brought me to Shimane.

When I visited Shimane, the Shimane Peninsula looked so sacred from the plane. It made me realize that Shimane has the power to make visitors feel as if their heart was healed through their trip. Shimane is known as “the land of Go-En” not only because of its geological and historical factors, but also because of this emotional factor.

We are living in such a stressful society right now. Your visit to Shimane will be a great chance to rediscover the value of traveling and focus on yourself by stimulating your five senses and getting in touch with rich Japanese wellness resources like the four seasons, nature, hot springs and traditional culture.

A Journey of Go-En and Bihada

J-Wellness, or Japanese-style wellness, is gaining worldwide attention. It is believed that the traditional Japanese culture and spirituality are what led Japan to its position as the country with the longest life expectancy. There are various types of "J-Wellness" that have been handed down from one era and region to another, but Shimane has played a crucial role in its origin. At the root of the spiritual world that defines the island nation of Japan lies Shimane, the land of beginnings. For those seeking to live a healthy life, inspiration is all around.

Go-En Point

The Legends of Izumo

A Culture of Prayer
that Connects Past and Present

Shimane, the Land of Gods, is depicted in the mythologies as the birthplace of Japan. The places mentioned in the “*Kojiki*” (Record of Ancient Matters) and “*Izumo no Kuni Fudoki*” (Izumo Topographical and Cultural Records) as the stage of Izumo mythology are still carefully preserved today. One can see glimpses of those ancient times in everyday life, feel the presence of the gods around every corner, and live with reverence and prayer. On the 10th day of the 10th month of the lunar calendar, the myriad gods from all over Japan gather at Izumo to discuss the connections that bind all things in the concept of Go-En. This month is only referred to as *kamiarizuki* (the month of gods) in Shimane, while the rest of Japan know it as *kannazuki* (the month without gods). Go-En is a major key to increasing happiness and achieving a more fulfilling life. As you can see, many elements of wellness have existed in Shimane since ancient times.

- 1 / Izumo Taisha Grand Shrine and the mountains peeking from the misty heavens
- 2 / Rosokujima, or Candle Island, is a small 20-meter tall island that has been eroded by the waves and is a part of Okinoshima Town
- 3 / Horses peacefully grazing on the grass of Matengai Cliff in Nishinoshima Town



Unraveling the Path to Wellness

*Go-En...the connections that bind us to everything
*Bihada...healthy and well-conditioned skin which are a result of mental and physical wellness

Landscape Point

An Ancient Landscape

Etched with Memories of the Past

The Oki Islands, located off the Shimane Peninsula, are recognized as the Oki UNESCO Global Geopark for their formation, unique ecosystem, and human activities. Contained in the islands are the memories of the beginning of the Earth and our land. Metamorphic rocks that are approximately 250 million years old tell the story of the formation process of the Japanese Islands, which were born when the land was connected to the Eurasian continent. About 6 million years ago, volcanic activity created the original shape of the islands, and about 10,000 years ago, erosion by the sea separated the islands from the mainland, giving them their present form. Learning about the history of the land and standing in the awe-inspiring beauty of nature, one can't help but feel connected to the Earth.

Bihada Point

A Gathering of Gods

The Birthplace of Sake

Sake is an integral part of seasonal events, festivals, and many other important milestones. In moderation, sake relaxes the mind and body and enriches one's life. While there are many theories as to the origin of sake, Shimane is said to be the birthplace, as it is mentioned in the “*Kojiki*” (Records of Ancient Matters) as being used to defeat “*Yamata no Orochi*” (eight headed serpent). In the “*Izumo no Kuni Fudoki*” (Izumo Topographical and Cultural Records), there is a legend about the gods making sake and holding a banquet at a place that is now called Saka Shrine, which is a place of pilgrimage for brewers from all over Japan. Sake is a celebration of rice, water, and of course, people. With over 30 breweries in Shimane, sake reflects the land and the local climate.

Go-En Column

The Gods and Wellness

The myriad gods, a symbol of the vast and complex nature of spirituality.

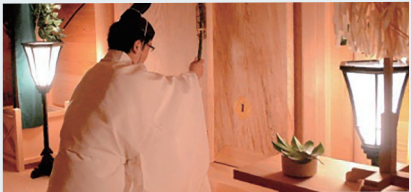


Tsuyoshi Nishikida

Born in Hikawa-cho, Izumo City and the chief priest of Mankusen Shrine and Tachimushi Shrine since 2012. Before serving as the chief priest he held various roles, including being a specialized curator at the Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo.

Shimane Prefecture, especially the Izumo region, occupies an important place in Japanese mythology. It is believed that the reason lies in geographical factors, which led to it flourishing as a trading point for people, goods, and information coming in to Japan. It played an important role in the formation of the nation and its cultural sphere. The spirit of respecting, acknowledging, and utilizing different values to create harmony continues to flow through the roots of the region. The concept of Sustainable Development Goals, now being advocated by the United Nations, already began in ancient Izumo as the belief

in the *Yaoyorozu*, the myriad gods, which encompass a wide variety of gods, ideals, and beliefs. I feel that Shimane is a place where we can regain the precious things that we, as humanity, have lost in our everyday lives, such as kindness and humility.



The *Karasadesai* (Farewell Ceremony for the Gods) held in the 10th lunar month at Mankusen Shrine

BIHADA Column

Sake and Wellness

Crafting joy through sake.



Rika Asano

Born in Oda-cho in Oda City and the second of three daughters of the family-owned Ichinomiya Sake Brewery. After studying fermentation science, she took over as the *toji* (head brewer). Her motto is to brew sake in a spirited and fun way.

As a brewery located in the birthplace of sake, we take our responsibilities seriously and never forget what nature has given us. Our sake is made with water from Mt. Sanbe, rice grown in Shimane Prefecture, and with the hearts of the locals; it is truly one of a kind. Right now is a very interesting time in Shimane because like all other sake breweries in Japan, Shimane is also trying to differentiate themselves by expressing their own uniqueness. And I hope everyone can get a sense of Shimane through all of the different sake. I feel the power of sake while brewing it every day. The brewers are all amazed at how good the skin on their

hands and faces look after producing *koji* (malted rice). In addition, we eat sake lees (a byproduct of sake brewing) every day to keep our family healthy from colds. More than anything else, I love enjoying sake while being surrounded by my loved ones. The things that make us happy—that's what wellness is to me.



Shimane's sake brewing tradition was brought over from the Asian continent and then refined during the Yayoi Period

Captivating People and Gods Alike

Living Today with Traditions of the Past

Kagura and Sumo are representations of Japanese culture. The origins of these two date back to the age of mythology. Even now, Shimane has carefully kept these traditions alive in their original form and have passed them down to the present day.

Just like in the myth of how the sun goddess hiding in Iwato Cave was lured out by lively dancing, Kagura, which is traditional Shinto music and dancing, began as a way to entertain the gods. In Shimane, there are various styles, including Izumo Kagura and Oki Kagura, but Iwami Kagura attracts the most attention. There are more than 130 groups, ranging from regional groups to school clubs, with all performers being local people. Kagura is a part of daily life for the Iwami community, and something that is enjoyed together as a family. Kagura dancers are even seen as heroes by the children. The performances, based on myths, are easy to understand and the high energy of the performers keep the audience entertained. The dynamic performance comes right up to the audience with the pleasing sound of flutes and drums, flashy costumes, lights, smoke gracefully invite the audience into the world of the gods.

Shimane is said to be the birthplace of sumo, based on the tradition of sumo wrestling among the gods in Izumo mythology. In the island town of Okinoshima, there is a strong following of the *Oki Koten-zumo* custom. A sumo wrestling tournament that is held throughout the night and reserved for celebratory occasions. There are two matches between participants, where they win one match and lose one match. With many pillars from sumo rings used as commemorative pillars to decorate houses and buildings on the island, you can catch a glimpse of how deeply rooted sumo culture is in Okinoshima. The traditions of Shimane continue in harmony with the changing times.



1 / The night performance of the Iwami Kagura play, "Orochi" is regularly held in shrines across the region. Photograph taken at Yunotsu Onsen. 2 / Dancers, players, and audience meld into one. 3 / Children and adults alike can't get enough of the dramatic *Oki Koten-zumo*.

Go-En Column

Kagura and Wellness

To be a part of Iwami Kagura means daily devotion and gratitude.



**Taizo
Kobayashi**

Born in Yunotsu, Oda City. A craftsman of Iwami Kagura masks and part of the Iwami Kagura Yunotsu Troupe. From the age of 11, he started learning how to make Iwami Kagura masks, and in 2008 he opened the Kobayashi Workshop.

To be involved in Iwami Kagura is to feel close to the gods and offer a prayer of gratitude, "Thank you for another day." I feel a strong connection with the everyday things and people that I meet. Thanks to the guidance from my elders and people before me, I am able to live a fulfilling life. Kagura nurtures your imagination, showing you how to believe in the unseeable, and naturally allows you to discipline yourself. The honesty and straightforwardness displayed in Iwami Kagura performances have a profound impact on those who watch it. In this world

of technology that we live in today, I want Kagura to be a haven for people seeking to soothe their soul.



Molding an Iwami Kagura mask out of clay.

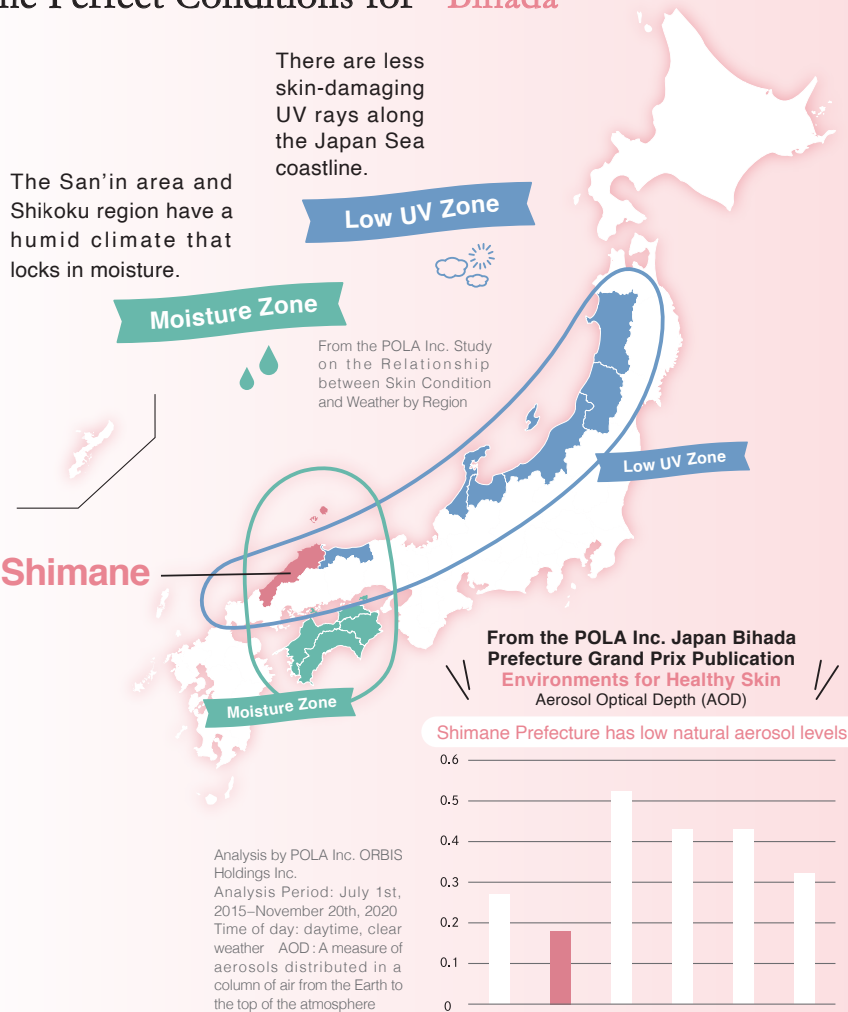
Discover a Complexion that Radiates Wellness

Weather and Hot Springs that Foster **Bihada**.

The perfect way to achieve wellness for both your mind and body is through "Bihada." These are the keys to beautiful skin and something that you will want to stay and experience for yourself.

Point. 1

Shimane is Blessed with the Perfect Conditions for **"Bihada"**



Shimane Prefecture is regularly ranked high in the Bihada Prefecture Grand Prix that is held by POLA Inc., a major Japanese cosmetics company. We recommend a wellness trip based on the theme of "Bihada" because nourished skin brings a nourished soul.

One of the reason why people in Shimane have healthy skin is the weather conditions. Shimane is located at the crossroads of the "Moisture Zone," which prevents skin from drying out, and the "Low UV Zone," an area less affected by ultraviolet rays. In addition, the low level of natural aerosols in the atmosphere makes the prefecture perfect for promoting healthy skin. On top of that, the prefecture is a hot spring resort area with approximately 60 hot springs, and six different types of spring water that are recognized to promote healthy skin. Bathing in these waters, you will feel your skin turn vibrant, smooth, moist, and plump. Wellness of the body is just as important as the wellness of the mind. So while you're in Shimane, indulge your skin in our beautiful weather and abundant hot springs.

Shimane is blessed with perfect weather, abundant hot springs, and a food culture that all promote Bihada wellness.



POLA Inc. ORBIS Holdings Inc.
Bihada-Wellness Production
Project Operating Manager

Yumika Yamakawa

She has published many findings as an expert on the effects of weather on skin. And as a cosmetics creator for POLA Inc., she is an advocate for a comprehensive approach to cosmetics that encompasses the mind, body, and environment.

Point. 2

【Shimane Hot Springs × Skin Science】

Six Hot Spring Water Qualities Recognized for Healthy Skin



For oily skin / rough skin **Yumigaki Peeling Onsen**

- Hinokami Onsen / Minshuku Tanabe
- Mimata Onsen / Kameya Ryokan



For oily skin / skin pore trouble **Melting Joka Onsen**

- Arifuku Onsen / Yoshidaya Ryokan
- Yugakai Onsen / Nakamura Ryokan



For dry skin / dull skin **Hogushi Booster Onsen**

- Kamedake Onsen / Tamamine Mountain Villa
- Tada Onsen / Hakuryu-kan
- Matsue Shinji Lake Onsen / Naniwa Issui



For oily skin / dry skin **Bisei Repair Onsen**

- Oda Onsen / Hatago Oda Onsen
- Kada Onsen / Kada-no-Yu
- Sanbe Onsen / Sanbe Villa
- Masuda Onsen / MASCOS HOTEL



For dry skin / itchy skin **Barrier Oasis Onsen**

- Izumo Yumura Onsen / Seiranso
- Kazenokuni Onsen / Onsen Resort "Kaze-no-Kuni"
- Saginoyu Onsen / Saginoyusou
- Saginoyu Onsen / Chikuyo
- Matsue Shinjiko Onsen / Matsue New Urban Hotel
- Yunokawa Onsen / Shiki-so
- Yunokawa Onsen / Yuyado Souan



For dry skin / aging skin **Express Junka Onsen**

- Tamatsukuri Onsen / Yunosuke-no-Yado Chorakuen



Scan here to go to the official Hot Springs
× Skin Science website (Japanese text only)

Go-En and Bihada, begin with Shimane

Shimane,
The home of sacred air, abundant
nature, and welcoming people.
The home of Go-En.

It reminds me of the connections that
surround me,
And soothes my soul.
Everything I touch, see, and feel
Connects and nourishes me.

For not only a better tomorrow but a
better future
I must find my own happiness and
I must shine.

There' s no better place to begin
Than Shimane, the Land of Beginnings.

Go-En

The gods, people,
everything are tied together



Bihada

Prepare your mind and body, cultivate your
beauty inside and out, reshape your lifestyle

<https://www.kankou-shimane.com/en/>

