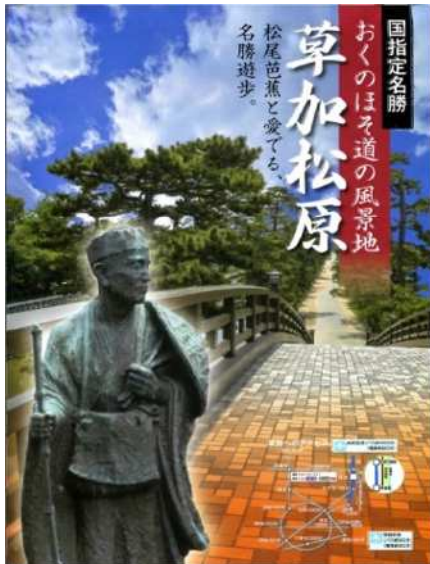


【Soka Matsubara like “ Big Bonsai Road ”】

National Scenic Beauty—A Scenic Area of Oku-no Hosomichi “ Soka Matsubara ”



An area of Soka Matsubara is among 13 beauty spots of 10 prefectures (*) related to “ Oku-no Hosomichi ” by MATSUO Basho, which were designated as a national scenic beauty on March 18, 2014.

(*) 24 beauty spots of 11 prefectures as of October 7, 2015.

Soka Matsubara located in the north of Soka-shuku (a post-town), which is described in “ Oku-no Hosomichi, ” has been a famous place in the Nikko Road since the Edo Period.



Soka Matsubara with a row of pine trees (like a “ Big Bonsai ”) is maintained as a stone walking trail of 1.5 km in total length along the Ayase River.

This scenery was highly evaluated as having some traces of the times of “ Oku-no Hosomichi, ” with some old trees with 2 meters in diameter.

【MATSUO Basho and “ Big Bonsai Road ”】

MATSUO Basho (haiku poet in the Edo Period) and his disciple KAWAI Sora traveled to scenic and historical places related to ancient Waka poem in the northern part of the mainland and along the coast of the Japan Sea and completed the traveler ’ s journal “ Oku-no Hosomichi (The Narrow Road to Oku) ”



Starting from Fukagawa to Senju in a boat MATSUO Basho made for Soka.

「Moshi ikite kaeraba to, sadame naki tanomi-no-sue wo kake, sono hi you-you Soka to iu shuku ni tadori tsuki ni keru」.



It seemed to me instead that I should be fortunate if I managed to come home alive. Leaving this uncertainty for the future to decide, I pursued my journey to a post-town called Soka which we were barely able to reach the day of our departure. (Translated by Donald Keene)

Soka Matsubara walking trail, including old trees that reach 2 meters in diameter, filled with the atmosphere of the era of “Oku-no-Hosomichi” is still greatly appreciated in this age.



【The History of “ Big Bonsai Road ” 】

Soka Matsubara like “ Big Bonsai Road ” has a legend that pine trees were first planted in 1630, at the opening of Soka-shuku, or in 1683, with the improvement work of the Ayase River, and has been known as a scenic area of the Old Nikko Road since the Edo Period.



Soka Matsubara, where Basho passed, went through repeated maintenance work and supplementary planting, and the number of pine trees remained about 500 until around the Meiji Restoration in the late 19th century.

The number of mature trees, however, decreased to about 60 due to the air contamination along with the high economic growth around 1970.



A groundswell arose to preserve pine trees, and above all a citizens' organization “ Soka Matsu-namiki Hozon-kai (Soka Pine Trees Preserving Association) ” was organized in 1976, which took initiative in the preservation and supplementary planting of pine trees by a number of citizens.



Now we have 634 pine trees whose number coincides with the height of the Tokyo SKYTREE. Soka Matsubara is a place of relaxation for visitors to this walking trail.



あなたに歩いてほしい道があります。

A path for an enjoyable stroll

伝えたい歴史があります。

A history to be passed down

松尾芭蕉も歩いた街道

An old highway MATSUO Basho once walked on

【“ Big Bonsai Road ”】

National Place of Scenic Beauty Scenic areas of Oku no Hosomichi

「 Soka Matsubara 」