

The Kiso River, a gift

(Fragment "Landscape with Nokogiriyane" Part 7)



▲ "Eight Views of Japan" (2005 reprint, first published in 1928)

The Kiso River creates the land of Owari and is closely related to the prosperity of the textile industry. In the Ichinomiya area, including on the other side of the river, there is a large concentration of Nokogiriyane.

In the early Showa period (1926-1989), in order to dispel the stagnant mood caused by the death of the Taisho Emperor and the financial depression, two major newspapers in Tokyo and Osaka sponsored a nationwide vote to select the eight scenic spots of Japan (and 25 or 100 other scenic spots). Eight well-known writers and others have written travelogues in each category. Kitahara Hakushu was in charge of the Kiso River, which was selected in the river section. While highlighting the scenic spots upstream such as Ena and the Japan Rhine river in Inuyama, Hakushu wrote

"It is only downstream from Inuyama to Kasamatsu that the Japan Rhine river in the middle reaches and the gorges of Nezame and Ena in the upper reaches come to life. As a river, it is incomparable for its variety of changes and its total beauty.

The "Four Seasons Village" in Kasamatsu and the "Sparrow Inn" in Satokomaki on the other side of the river are mentioned in the text, as is the swimming pool in Okoshi. It can be said that this is not a scenic spot in the upper or middle reaches of the river, but a scene of life born in the Kiso River. Eventually, a "landscape with Nokogiriyane" was formed in the whole area downstream from Inuyama.

● Nokogirian (living in Fujisawa City, Kanagawa Prefecture / from Imaise Town, Ichinomiya City / haunting Nokogiri Ni/2)

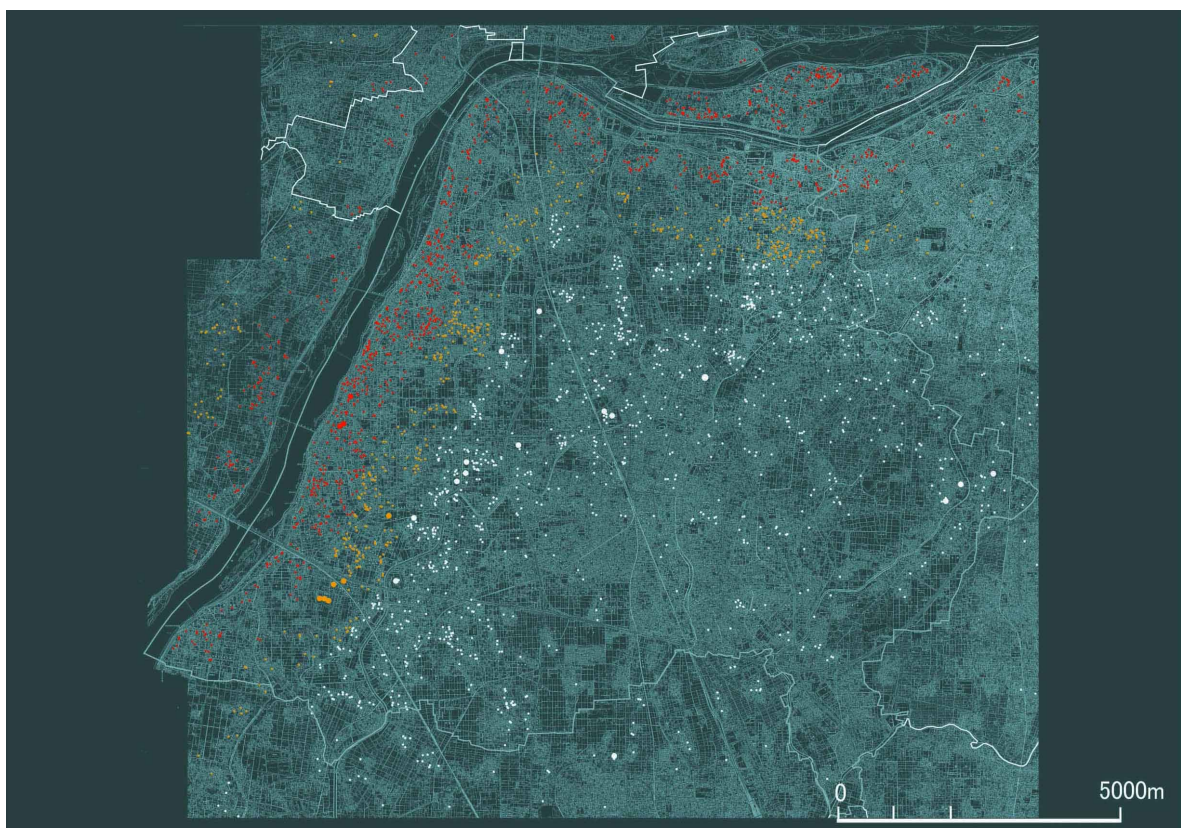
1. Nokogiriyane and the Kiso River

Nokogiriyane is closely related to the Kiso River. It has been said that the textile industry flourished in this area because the water of the Kiso River was pure, low in hardness and suitable for dyeing. In the early Showa period, a large scale water conduction project was carried out on the Kiso River at Tsuyakin Okoshi Factory. From spinning to twisting, dyeing, weaving and arranging, the whole process from yarn to fabric has been carried out by a number of Nokogiriyane, both in cooperation and in the division of labour.

In Ichinomiya city, there are almost 2,000 Nokogiriyane (for details, see "Landscape with Nokogiriyane - Part 6"). I tried to count how many of them are still around the Kiso River. As a result, I found that within 1km of the river bank, there were about 680 buildings, accounting for almost a third of the total, and within 2km, there were about 1,130 buildings, accounting for 55% of the total. A large number of Nokogiriyane also remain in the adjacent and opposite areas. Of these, about 150 in the former Kawashima Town (Kakamigahara City), situated on the middle of the Kiso River, are of particular interest.

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned that Nokogiriyane and the Kiso River are "close relationship". The reason for this is that I am aware of the "secret story about the birth of the Kiso River" told by Masmida crow the other day.

The quality of the Kiso River? That is only one factor. The fact that weaving has continued to flourish as an industry is not due solely to the power of you people. There are forces at work which you cannot see. Let me tell you. It's because the Kiso River was a dragon.



▲ Nokogiriyane along the Kiso River (red: 1km from the river bank, orange: 1-2km from the river bank)

2. "The Kiso Eight Dragons" - a flow of energy

The Kiso river is a dragon... what does that mean?

Masumida crow projected a panorama. It was a re-creation of the creation of the land of Owari. The water originated in the Kiso mountains, formed valleys and gorges on its way to the plains, where it wandered and formed the earth. Because of their appearance, they were called the eight streams of Kiso or the seven streams of Kiso.

No, no. The stream shown here is not a river. This is a dragon undulating the earth. Did the dragon create the earth?

So, the eight streams of Kiso (also known as the seven streams) were the "eight dragons of Kiso".

People settled on the land in the form of natural dykes and villages were formed. These people began to restraint the movement of the dragons everywhere. The first major capture was a project by Toyotomi Hideyoshi "Enclosure Embankment". This was followed by a series of major river works and renovations after the Meiji period. In the end, the river was divided into three parts at Kawashima (three faction rivers) and became the current course of the Kiso River. At some point, the dragon disappeared.

Do you remember that I once said that Owari is the result of the Kiso River? What I meant was that everything in Owari, including the land, was created by the energy of the eight Kiso dragons. Your life was also nurtured by Kiso Eight Dragons.

It is the gift of Kiso Eight Dragons.



▲ The Eight Kiso Streams and the Owari Land ("Topographic Map of the Rivers of the Nobi Plain (Ministry of Construction)" and "Tributaries of the Kiso River (History of Kiso River Town)" superimposed)

3. The "Kiso Eight Dragons" that became the Kiso River

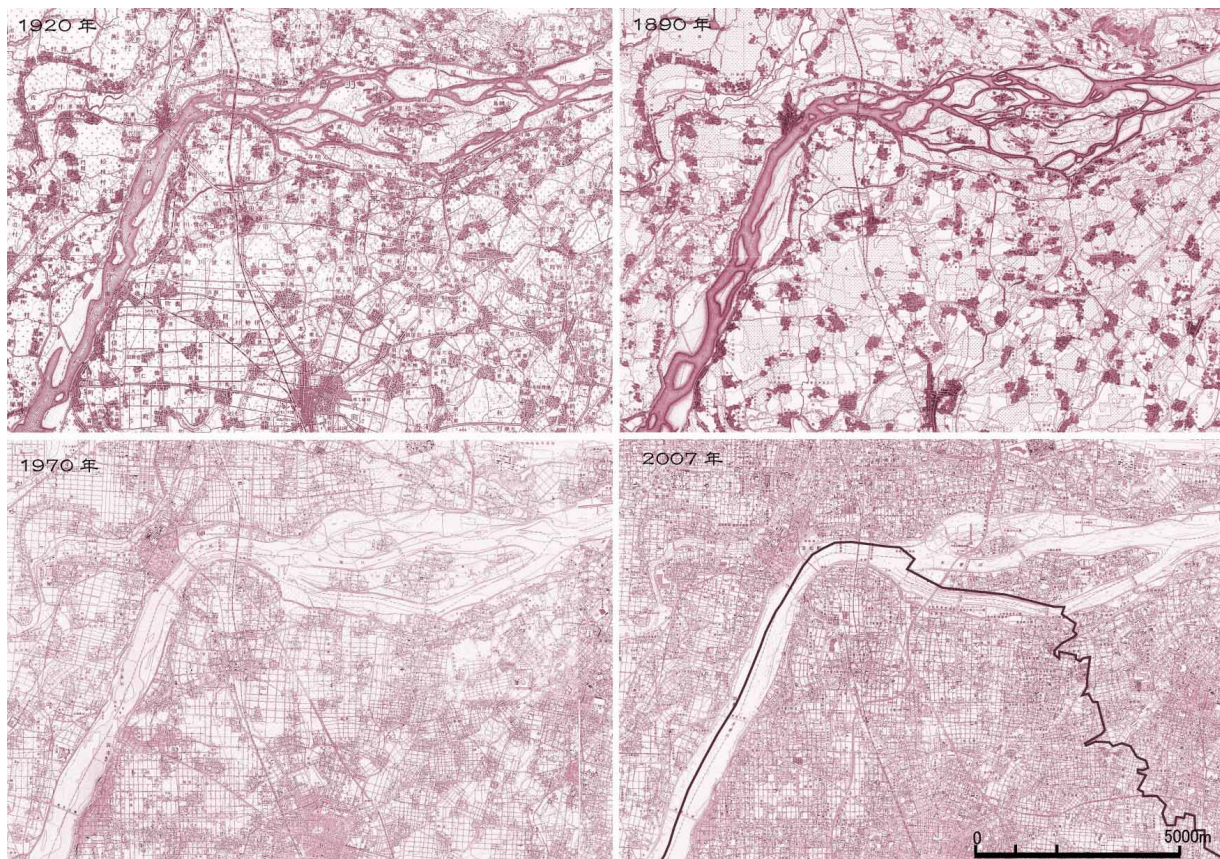
Are you saying that our existence is also due to the "Gift of the Eight Dragons of Kiso"?
What do you mean by that? And where did Kiso Eight Dragons disappear to?

It lies quietly in the depths of the three faction rivers in Kawashima. Until about a hundred years ago, it was still visible. It is said that in the early days of the Showa period, water conduction work was collected from the bottom of the river by diving under the river bank. It is the water filled with the "energy" of a dragon.

Masumida crow then showed the eight dragons of Kiso converging on the Kiso River. It can be seen on the map: the dragon's ki (energy) was flowing around 1920, but had disappeared by the 1970s.

You may know that the deity of Masumida Shrine has changed in many ways. After the Meiji era, it seems to have settled down to Amenohakari-no-mikoto, but there are many other deities such as Oonamuchi-no-mikoto, Kunitokotachi-no-mikoto, Amaterasu-no-mikoto, Tsukiyomi-no-mikoto and Great Dragon God. Of these, only the Great Dragon God had a soul. The rest are just shapes as symbols of power. Well, they are empty, so they can be used conveniently.

In the background of the production of things, the spiritual power of the land (genius loci) is involved. This is common to all countries. The fact that countless textile factories were born near the Kiso River, and that many of them still exist, regardless of their current use, is precisely the spiritual power of the Kiso Eight Dragons.



▲ How the "Kiso Eight Dragons" were laid to rest under the old Kawashima town (1890, 1920, 1970, 2007)

4. Park and Kouba (公場=public places)

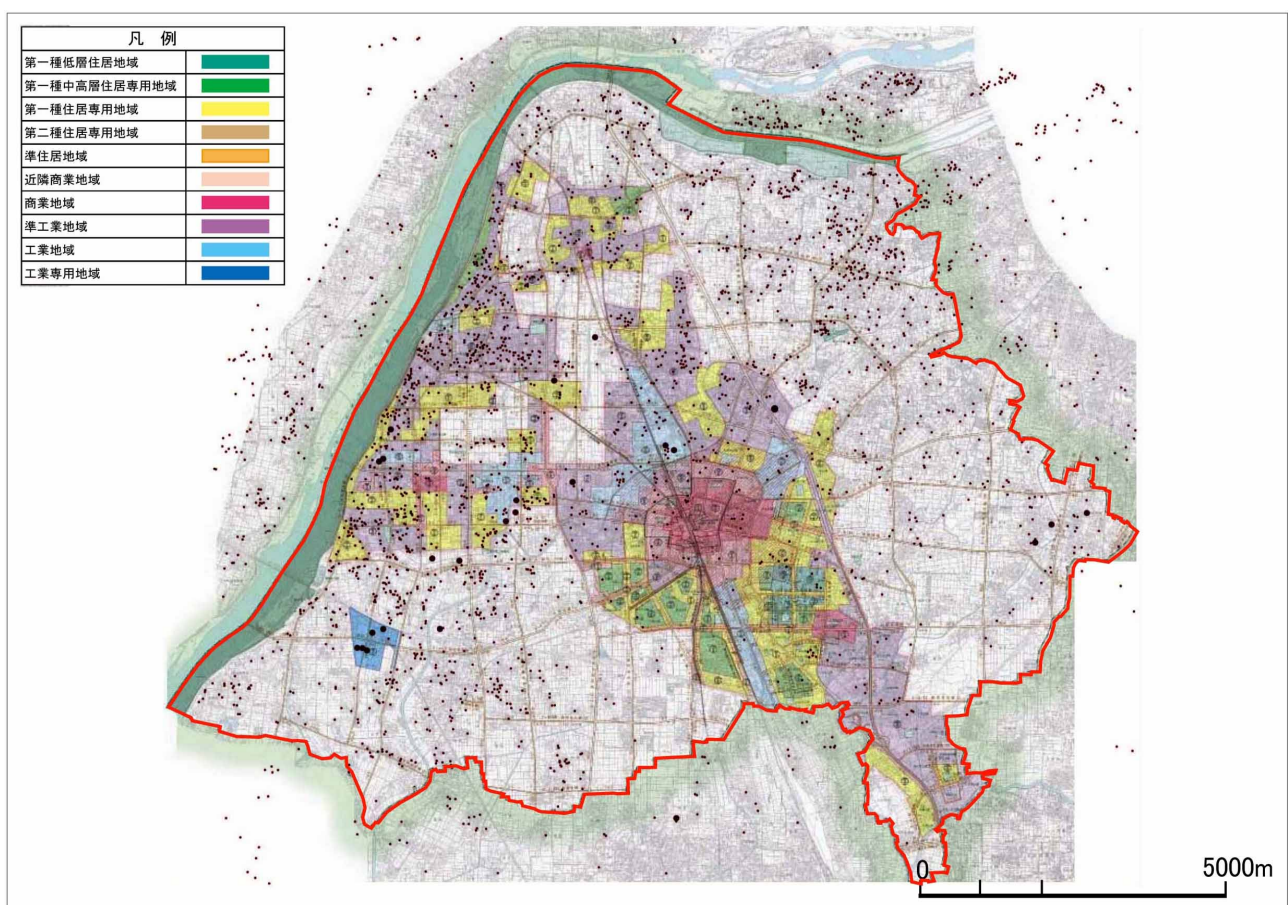
Is that so? If that's the case, then the "curse of Gacha Man" might be due to the curse of the Kiso Eight Dragons.

No, no. Unlike humans, Kiso Eight Dragons is a pure being. It doesn't do things like cast curses. The curse of the Gacha Man is on you yourselves. You are so dragged down by your temporary success and prosperity that you cannot see the earth beneath your feet. What Kiso Eight Dragons brought is not a curse, but a gift. What did you people do to it? You make it a national park and use it for your own purposes. You're always taking. Remember that a gift is also a poison.

The park was established in 1987 as the National Kiso Three Rivers Park in three key areas from Konan City to the mouth of the river. The park's basic principles include an appreciation of the natural environment and an appreciation of history and culture, and it is visited by 9 million people a year. Similar national parks are being built all over the country. I have no objection to this, but I am concerned about "institutionalised parks". Who is the "public"? As Masumida crow said of the "Ooyake", Japan's parks have been "government gardens" ever since the Meiji era.

We could not mention the "Four Seasons Village" in Kasamatsu and the "Sparrow Inn" in Satokomaki due to space limitations, but these privately run facilities give us a hint of the potential of "park". This should give us a clue to think of Nokogiriyane as a "公場=public place".

The words of Masumida crow, however, are disturbing. The gift is also the poison"...



▲ City plan map and Nokogiriyane distribution

○ Epilogue

"Okoshi is not very good" This is the line uttered by the oarsman in Kitahara Hakushu's travelogue on the boat to the "Four Seasons Village" in Kasamatsu. Is it about the number of visitors to the swimming pool in Okoshi, or is it about not fitting in with the scenery of the Kiso River? Or was it an expression of a writer who foresaw the encroachment of industrialisation on the landscape of the Kiso River as the town of Okoshi prospered? Come to think of it, Hakushu has some essays on urban planning ("Urban Planning Theory", Yanagawa Shimpo, 1923, etc.). He may have been concerned about the transformation of the landscape caused by industrialisation.

Yoshihide Nakayama, the Akutagawa Prize winner and winner of the literary award that bears his name, wrote a story called "Kiso River Story" (Chubu Nihon Shimbun, 1954). The story begins with a view of the Owari area from the sky in a small aircraft. Speaking of the Nobi Plain, he says: "It is the middle plain of Japan. It is the birthplace of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, who conquered the world with deer in this great fertile field. Every inch of the fields has been carefully tended, and the green of the barley and the yellow of the rape blossoms have been woven into a beautiful carpet of stripes. ...all over the fields there are hamlets and large towns, a scene which is not to be found anywhere else but in Nobi Plain. The saw-roof factories of the time were beginning to create a "thriving spectacle".

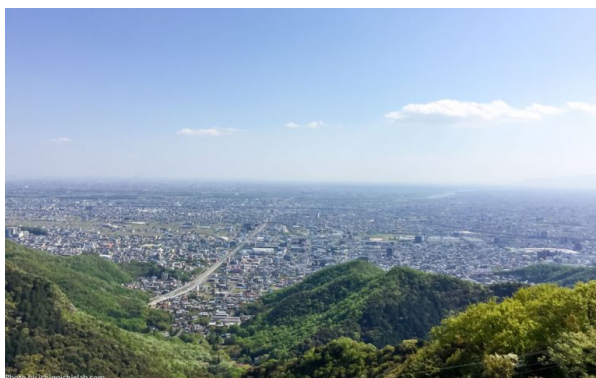
The scene changes to a view of the Nobi Plain from Gifu Castle on Mount Kinkazan. For a moment, I pretend to be Nobunaga and take a bird's eye view of the landscape below. I wonder if the Kirin will come to this land of dragons.

The dragon creates a flow of "ki(energy)". It may be unreasonable to call it the Kiso River because it is the river through which "ki" flows. In the second half of this article, we will take a geographical look at the area from the east, west, south and north. I will try to keep in mind that Nokogiriyane is a "公場=public place".

Coincidentally, today is the third day of the third month of the third year of Reiwa. If it is Heisei, it is the third day of the third month of the 33rd year. According to one theory, Masuida crow's home, Masumida Shrine, was founded on the 3rd of March in the 33rd year of Jimmu. The guidance of the Masumida crow? The Masumida crow have their own "Utsuho" (source of creation), Masumida Shrine.

The "Utsuho" for this Nokogirian is probably "Nokogiri Ni/2".

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▲ The view from Gifu Castle - will the Kirin come to the land of dragons?