



In Fujinomiya City, Shizuoka Prefecture, there is a village surrounded by nature that is steeped in history. For this edition, the two of us went to investigate this beautiful village called Shiraito no Sato. Shiraito no Sato is located at the western foot of Mount Fuji and is full of rural scenery that complements its beauty. During our visit here, we created many new memories through listening to the stories of the local people, taking in the stunning scenery, and taking part in a farming experience.

The Heisei Rice Terraces Developed Over the Years



During the first stop on our visit, we were introduced to the Heisei Rice Terraces, where the “Shiraito Koshihikari” rice, a pride of the local people, is harvested.

The rice fields were named the “Heisei Rice Terraces” as the development of the fields to make them easier to manage was completed in Heisei 18 (2006). The day we visited was a clear day, and the view of Mt. Fuji from the Heisei Rice Terraces was very captivating.

Nordic Walking Around Shiraito Village

One activity enjoyed by the local residents is “Nordic Walking”, where people take walks around the “Heisei Rice Terraces,” “Shiraito Nature Park,” “Shiraito Falls,” and other nearby popular locations. It was canceled in 2019 due to the effects of COVID-19, but they are considering resuming it again this year. Although we did not get a chance to try it out we would like to come back and experience it as the area was truly beautiful.



The Mt. Fuji Shiraito Heisei Rice Terrace Festival Where Bamboo Lanterns Shine



One interesting fact we learned is that the village holds their special annual Rice Terrace Festival every March! 3,776 bamboo lanterns, matching the number of the height of Mt. Fuji, are made and lined up

along the rice terraces. Candles are placed inside and lit one by one. At dusk, with Mt. Fuji in the background and the bamboo lanterns illuminating the area, it becomes an impressive sight for all the visiting spectators. This time we were only able to see it from a photo taken during the event, but we would love to see the spectacular view in person as we are sure it’s a must-see!

Shiraito Falls, a Local Treasure

Next, we visited Shiraito Falls which we were surprised to learn is actually one part of the Mt. Fuji World Heritage site. As soon as we saw the waterfall, we understood why it is called Shiraito (translates to “white threads”) Falls. It looks like millions of delicate threads hanging down. According to the locals, decades ago, snow that had accumulated on Mount Fuji melted, and the water that flowed underground became a river over time and now flows down to make these falls. Hearing this, we thought that the power of nature was truly amazing.



Harakawa Waterfront Park

At Harakawa, a trout fishing event is held to encourage interaction between the locals and children and grandchildren returning home for Obon. Trout, a local specialty, are released into the river in the first half of the event, and participants cast their fishing lines while standing along the river bank with the hopes of catching one of the hundreds of released fish. In the second half, the water level is lowered and participants can enter the river to experience fishing with their bare hands. A tub-floating experience for children is also held as part of the Obon events.



An Agricultural Experience that Made Us Feel More Connected to Nature

At Shiraito no Sato, there are rice planting experiences in the spring and rice harvesting experiences in the fall, but this time, we took part in the “corn planting experience”. After planting the corn seedlings in the soil, we watered them and tied them with rope to protect them from birds such as crows. In August we were able to come back and taste the corn we grew with our own hands! The corn tasted extra delicious after having worked hard to plant it ourselves. It made us realize how much work goes into growing the crops that feed us and helped us to appreciate it even more.



Efforts and Wishes of Local Residents

During our visit we learned about their local organization “Let's Protect Our Beloved Hometown, Hara Mutsumi Association” that is engaged in various activities to protect the terraced rice paddies and to let many people know about Shiraito no Sato. We believe that it is thanks to the efforts of each and every local resident that Shiraito no Sato has been so wonderfully preserved. However, we are concerned about the future of Shiraito no Sato because the number of young people is decreasing due to the aging of the population. As the next generation, let's do our part to protect the wonderful Shiraito no Sato by participating in local activities and spreading the word on social media!



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