

Aiming for Community Building based on Co-creation

The Kawanishi Community Development Ordinance was established in 2004 to encourage cooperation between citizens and town administration in creating a harmonious society.

Kawanishi Future Vision, the 5th Comprehensive Plan

Basic Objectives

Loves and Dreams for Future Generations
- In the transition that more people yearn for rural life -

Theme

Evolve from Cooperation
-based Society to Co-creation-based Society

The 2nd Comprehensive Strategy for Community Building, Human Development and Job Creation

Leading Projects

Promoting Kawanishi as a medical town and putting medical environment in place

Five Projects

Revitalization of local economy
Promoting moving to Kawanishi, settling in Kawanishi and exchanges between newcomers and locals
Advancing gender equality
Promoting dynamic engagement of all citizens
Creating a society in which people enjoy their life with peace of mind

Substantial English Education

Six primary schools (Otsuka, Inukawa, Komatsu, Chugun, Yoshijima and Tamaniwa) and Kawanishi Junior High School are promoting educational programs to enhance academic capabilities of pupils and encourage them to have a dream and power to live. Especially with focus on English education which became obligatory in 2020, teachers are striving to upgrade their teaching capabilities. All schools are community schools, enabling to pursue better education by uniting schools, households and local communities.



Child-raising Support

There are four town-run kindergartens and nurseries: Hokuto, Misato, Komatsu and Tamaniwa, and four private childcare facilities. Childcare Support Center and Family Support Center play vital roles in creating an environment where families feel comfortable in raising their kids. Other supports include providing free health care for children under 12th grade and running nurseries to take care of sick kids.



Welfare based on Reciprocal Support

Life-support coordinators are allocated in each area to grasp the needs of residents and problems that elderlies are facing, facilitate reciprocal support and create a friendly environment in which people can lead healthy and comfortable lives forever. Kawanishi is also pushing for building communities in which people with and without disabilities live together equally in pursuit of helping disabled people live independently and integrate in the society.



Securing Public Transportation

There used to be bus service running throughout the town. In 2006, on-demand ride-sharing launched in corporation with taxi companies. The JR Yonesaka Line and Flower Nagai Line are also running across the town. JR Uzen Komatsu Station, gateway of the town, started its operation as the first town-run station in Japan in 1982 and is now operated by NPO.



Where is Kawanishi Town?

Kawanishi is located at the center of the Okitama district in the southern part of Yamagata Prefecture at the altitude of 38 degrees north latitude, equivalent to that of Lisbon, Seoul, Athene and Washington, DC. There is a crossing point of 38 degrees north latitude and 140 degrees east longitude in the town.



Town Charter

Let's make a harmonized town of nature and life.
Let's make an enriched town with innovative ideas and jobs.
Let's make a vibrant town where people help each other.
Let's make a healthy and lively town where people comply with rules.
Let's make a town full of culture where people are well-educated and enjoy a relaxed life.

Logos



Town Emblem



Town Flower



Town Tree

The town emblem is designed based on the kanji character "川" pronounced "kawa" and "西" pronounced "nishi". The combination of a round-shaped letter and riverlike letter represents an attitude of the citizens: peace and harmony. Dahlia is the official flower and pine is the official tree of Kawanishi.



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Kawanishi Town website

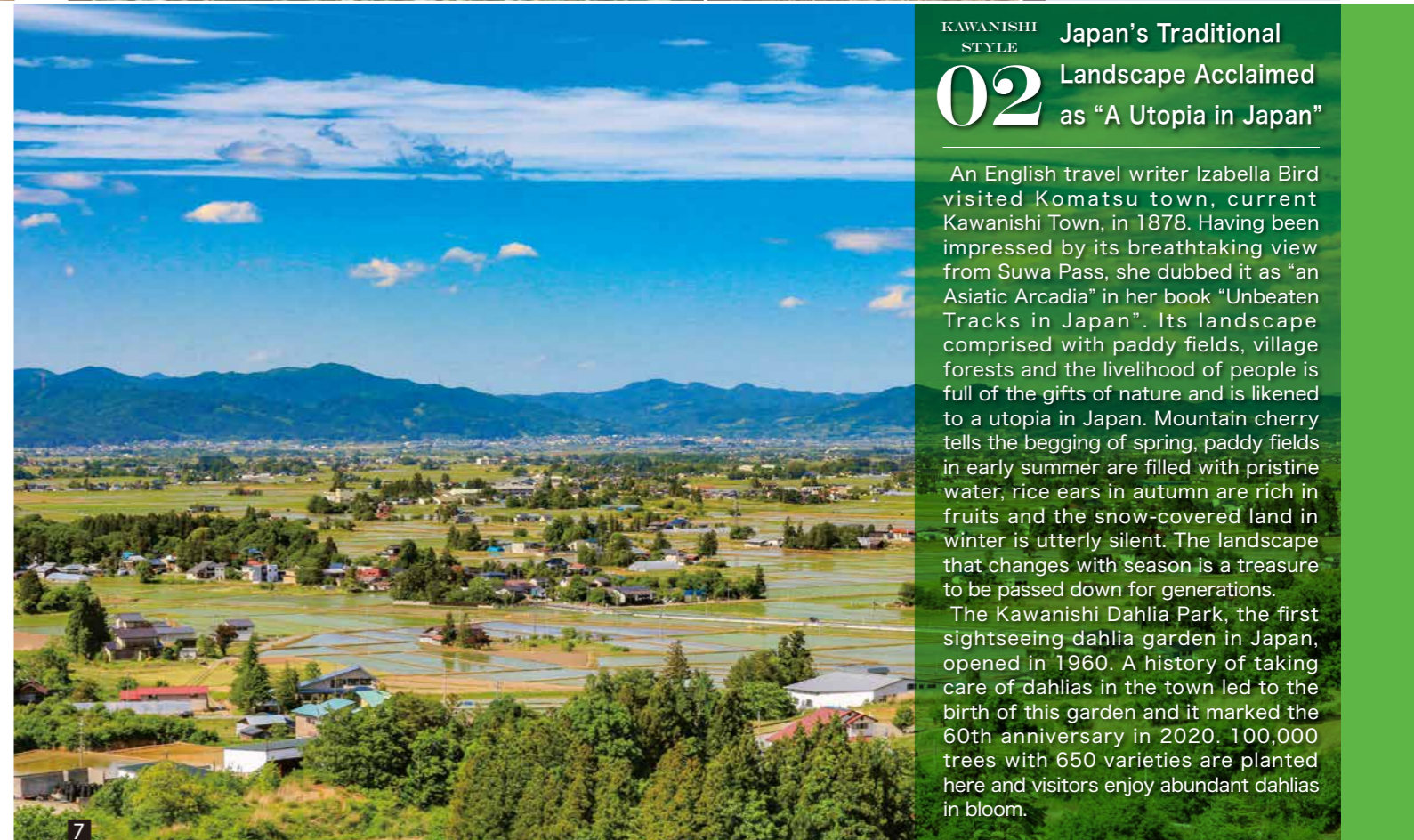


Dahlia is a symbol of Kawanishi.

Kawanishi has a dahlia sightseeing park, the largest in size in Japan. Growing dahlias is very popular in Kawanishi. Hiroshi Saito has painstakingly grown various sizes and kinds of dahlias in the greenhouses, and his dahlias have been shipped nationwide.

KAWANISHI STYLE **01** Fulfilled Life with Lots of Happy Smiles

Located in the heart of the Yonezawa Basin surrounded by mountains, Kawanishi is blessed with rich nature. People's lives rooted in the climate unique to the basin have coexisted with the boons of nature. Some people from outside of Kawanishi ended up living here as they were charmed by this town. A project of "Local Vitalization Cooperators" launched in 2011 has welcomed 29 cooperators until 2021 and they have been active in a variety of fields, including agriculture, community building and cultural promotion. Many of them decided to settle here after finishing their missions. Citizens of Kawanishi help each other and cooperate. "Kawanishi Kids Cafeteria & Community Kitchen" is an initiative led by mothers with the aim of creating a safe place to get together. "Kirari Yoshijima Network", NPO consisting of all households in the Yoshijima area, has drawn people's attention as a pioneering model case of community building.



KAWANISHI STYLE **02** Japan's Traditional Landscape Acclaimed as "A Utopia in Japan"

An English travel writer Izabella Bird visited Komatsu town, current Kawanishi Town, in 1878. Having been impressed by its breathtaking view from Suwa Pass, she dubbed it as "an Asiatic Arcadia" in her book "Unbeaten Tracks in Japan". Its landscape comprised with paddy fields, village forests and the livelihood of people is full of the gifts of nature and is likened to a utopia in Japan. Mountain cherry tells the begging of spring, paddy fields in early summer are filled with pristine water, rice ears in autumn are rich in fruits and the snow-covered land in winter is utterly silent. The landscape that changes with season is a treasure to be passed down for generations. The Kawanishi Dahlia Park, the first sightseeing dahlia garden in Japan, opened in 1960. A history of taking care of dahlias in the town led to the birth of this garden and it marked the 60th anniversary in 2020. 100,000 trees with 650 varieties are planted here and visitors enjoy abundant dahlias in bloom.

1 Activities of Local Vitalization Cooperators vary from agricultural trainings to researches on the Chihitsudo-bunko library 2 Lunch at Kawanishi Kids Cafeteria & Community Kitchen 3 Regular workshop held by Kirari Yoshijima Network to discuss on community development 4 Higashizawa Exchange Program aims to boost exchanges between pupils from the mountainous Higashizawa area and those from Machida City, Tokyo 5 Okitama Public General Hospital, core of community medicine, is indispensable to the health of residents 6 Okitama Agricultural High School focuses on practical learning about agriculture, food and environment. The school carries out educational programs in collaboration with local communities

7 70-year-old cherry tree Ryuzo Sakura standing at the center of the pastoral field 8 Circular tank diversion work installed to evenly distribute water into the paddy field 9 Colorful dahlias in bloom from August to early November in the Kawanishi Dahlia Park 10 Traditional method of drying harvested rice in the sun 11 Pastoral field of the Tamiwa area shone in gold 12 Silvery white snow spread in the entire town in winter 13 Rural landscape in early summer looked down from Mount Kokuzoyama

Please scan QR cord to access website or Facebook of each entity.

Facebook of Kawanishi Local Vitalization Cooperators



Facebook of Kawanishi Kids Cafeteria & Community Kitchen



For details on community development → Kawanishi Town website



Okitama Public General Hospital website



Okitama Agricultural High School website



The Kawanishi Dahlia Park website





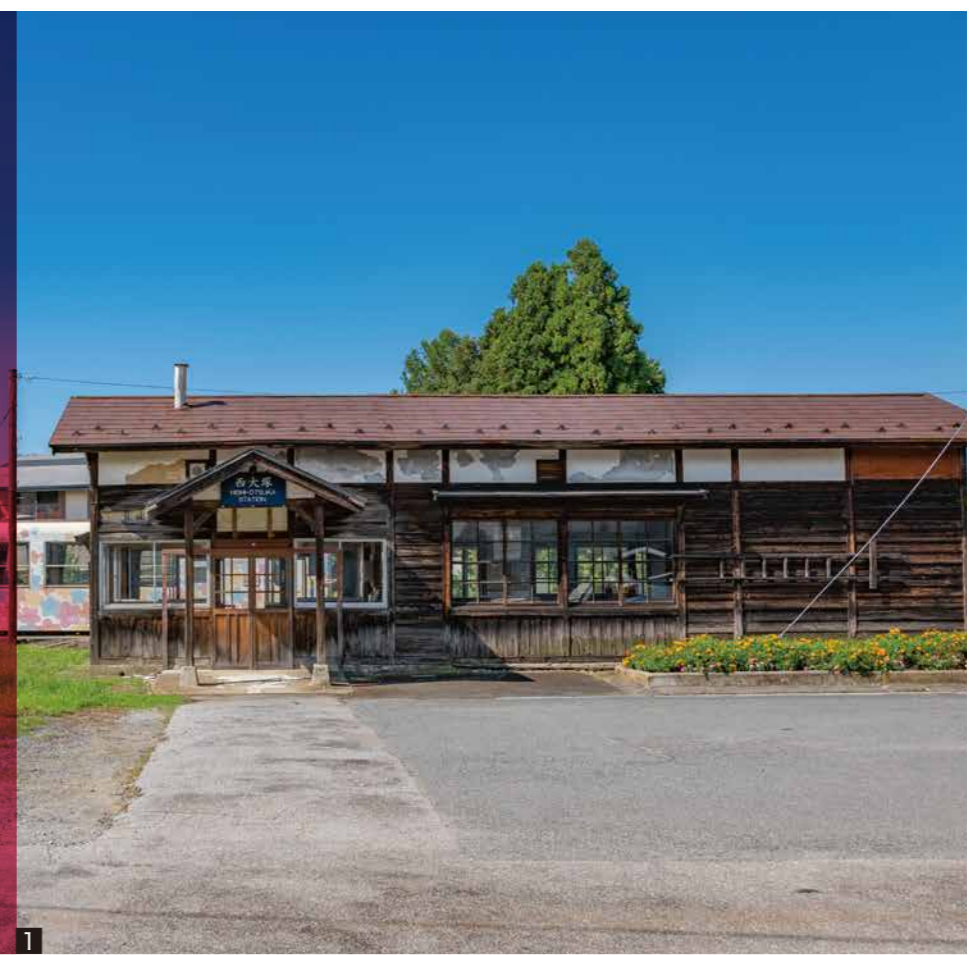
KAWANISHI STYLE Heritages to be Passed down to Next Generation

04

Nishiotsuka Station along the Flower Nagai Line opened in 1914 and is one of the few wooden stations active in service. This nostalgic building has been loved by locals. Nishiki-ya, sweets shop founded in 1790, has an idyllic thatched roof. This national tangible cultural property tells the old days of this region.

The Shimokomatsu Tombs tell how the ancient people lived between the 4th and the 6th century. They form the largest tome group in Tohoku with 200 tombs including keyhole-shaped mounds.

Kawanishi has produced talented figures, including Hisashi Inoue, English scholar Kenkichi Takanashi, educator Kiichi Honma, western-style painter Goro Kurosawa and social activist Zenshu Sagae. The town has been devoted to leaving the legacies of its predecessors for future generations.



KAWANISHI STYLE Taking pride in Our Hometown and Handing It down from Generation to Generation

03

Performers clad in lion costumes promptly go through fire hoops. A traditional lion dance "Komatsu Honen Shishiodori" held in summer dates back to 1200 years ago. While blending the movements of farm work, the dance culminates with the wild dance of lioness. It named after a fact that this dance was allowed only in the bountiful year during the Edo period. Praying for a good harvest, it has been dedicated to the god in each area, becoming an important folk performing art passed down for generations.

The Chihitsudo-bunko library has 220,000 books donated by Hisashi Inoue, author and playwright from Kawanishi. Kawanishi Friendly-Plaza incorporating this library, a theater and town library is a cultural hub of this town. Kawanishi residents from kids to adults are familiar with arts and seek knowledge.



■ Trees of books in the town library. Books written by Hisashi Inoue are lined up ■ "Kirikiri Day" is a remembrance event in honor of Hisashi Inoue who passed away in 2010 ■ Dynamic lion dance is dedicated to the god enshrined in each shrine ■ Children are marching with a lantern in hand and chanting "Yossey, Yossey, Yossey" to see off gods on their way to the Izumo Shrine ■ Komatsu Honen Shishiodori is a Yamagata Prefecture's intangible folk cultural asset. Six performers with flower hat are beating the drums with the sound of flutes and song, creating beautiful tunes. "Walking through flaming hoops" represents sorrow and anger of a mad mother lion whose baby was kidnapped and is rarely found in Japan

■ The main building of Nishiotsuka Station is designated as a national tangible cultural asset along with its stone-piled platform ■ The well-preserved building of Nishiki-ya is used as a shop ■ The Arcadia Historical Figures Museum introduces the achievements of great figures from Kawanishi ■ The main house of Taruhei Brewing Co.,Ltd. sake brewery was founded around 1695 ■ The Shimokomatsu Tombs ■ Grass and tree pagoda is a stone monument built to appreciate and pray for the spirits resided in the grass and trees. These pagodas concentrate in the Okitama region, confirming 22 pagodas in Kawanishi

For details on the Chihitsudo-bunko and Hisashi Inoue
→ Kawanishi Friendly-Plaza website ▶



For details on Komatsu Honen Shishiodori
→ Kawanishi Town website ▶



For details on cultural properties
in Kawanishi
→ Kawanishi Town website ▶



For details on grass
and tree pagoda
→ Kawanishi Town website ▶



For details on great figures
from Kawanishi
→ Aipal Community Center website ▶



KAWANISHI STYLE Stay
05 Healthy through Sports

Taking opportunity to be selected as a venue of hockey in the Benibana National Sports Festival held in Yamagata in 1992, Kawanishi has promoted itself as a town of hockey. Hosting national hockey competitions many times, the town has produced global level athletes at the artificial grass hockey field built in 2012.

Many bike lovers came from inside and outside Kawanishi to the mountain bike competitions held in June and September. Since winter sports are popular, people enjoy skiing, snowboarding and snow surfing in Komatsu Ski Area. Opportunities to enjoy sports and exercises to be healthy are available anywhere in this town, including community sports festivals and events held in the Kawanishi Dahlia Park Golf Field.



KAWANISHI STYLE Taste and Skill by
06 Taking Advantage of Resource in Kawanishi

With widespread rice fields, Kawanishi is well-known as one of the leading rice producing areas in Japan. Brand-name rice originated from Yamagata, including "Tsuyahime" and "Yukiwakamaru", is grown here through tireless R&D. The town is also the biggest producer of Yonezawa beef and boasts of herding the largest number of breeding cows in Yamagata Prefecture.

Crimson soybean, indigenous food in Kawanishi, has drawn people's attention, leading to its increased production. With the emergence of bean sommeliers who teach how to cook beans, promotion of Kawanishi as a town of beans is enhancing.

High skills are also seen in the industrial products. Mitsubishi Pencil Yamagata Plant and its affiliated companies manufacture world-class ballpoint pens. Kawanishi has a rich natural environment as well as techniques and savory products nurtured by diligent producers. We are trying to hand our superb heritages and potentials down to future generations.



1 Hockey players from Okitama Agriculture High School and Kawanishi Junior High School 2 Residents can deepen exchanges with others at sports festival held in each area 3 Snow surfing means riding on a board with boots to go down a snowy hill 4 The Dahlia Cup Mountain Bike Competition held along the Uchiyamazawa Walkway near the dahlia park 5 One event of Kawanishi Junior High School sports festival 6 Badminton class 7 The Kawanishi Dahlia Park Golf Field, the largest golf field in Yamagata Prefecture, opened in 2018

8 The Festival of Local Sake and Black Beef in which visitors can enjoy strictly-selected premier Yonezawa beef and locally brewed sake 9 Breeding cattle in the National Wagyu Beef Competition 10 Children are experiencing rice planting 11 As one of the leading rice producing area in Japan, people can enjoy the best rice at home and restaurants 12 Mitsubishi Pencil Yamagata Plant started making pencils in 1944, boasting the largest share in Japan 13 Two traditional sake breweries in Kawanishi continue making sake 14 Kawanishi Mori no Marche where local specialties are lined up, including fresh vegetables, fruits and handmade crafts 15 The Kawanishi Beans Expo annually held in Tokyo 16 Food products made from crimson soybeans are also popular.

Facebook of mountain bike team Shirozaru

Facebook of snow surfing studio OutBack Labo

The Kawanishi Dahlia Park Golf Field website

For details on Yonezawa beef → Kawanishi Town website

Nakaoki Sake Brewery website

Taruhei Brewing Co.,Ltd. website

Kawanishi Mori no Maruche website

For details on crimson soybean → Facebook of Mamenoarumachi

Mitsubishi Pencil website