

English

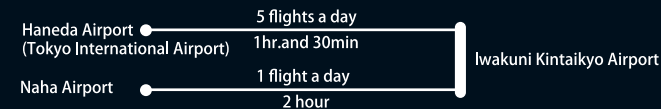
# 錦帯橋



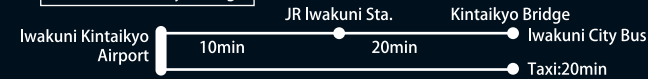
## Chronology

Name of Period	Date	Christian Calendar	Event
Enpo Period	1 <sup>st</sup> year	June 28	Ground-Breaking Ceremony by the third feudal lord Hiroyoshi Kikkawa
			Bridge Opening Ceremony
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	May 28	The bridge was washed away
			Bridge Opening Ceremony
Showa Period	5 <sup>th</sup> year	1677	The river bed was reinforced to prevent deterioration
	25 <sup>th</sup> year	1950	Designated as a "Place of scenic Beauty" under the Act on Protection of Cultural Properties
			The bridge which had been indestructible since 1674 was swept away by typhoon Kezia.
Heisei Period	26 <sup>th</sup> year	February 22	Beginning of the Showa era Reconstruction Project
	28 <sup>th</sup> year	January 15	Bridge Opening Ceremony
Heisei Period	12 <sup>th</sup> year	December 26	Beginning of Heisei era Renovation and Replacement Project
Heisei Period	16 <sup>th</sup> year	March 20	Completion Ceremony of Heisei era Renovation and Opening Ceremony

## Air Line



## Access to Kintai-kyo Bridge



## JR Train



[If you take JR local train] Get off at Iwakuni Station. Take the Kintai-kyo Bridge bus from the bus stop in front of the station. The journey takes 20 minutes. 15 minutes by taxi.

[If you take the Shinkansen (bullet train)] Get off at Shin-Iwakuni Station. Take the Kintai-kyo Bridge bus from the bus stop in front of the station. The journey takes 15 minutes. 10 minutes by taxi

## Guide to Iwakuni



Iwakuni City Tourism Office  
1-14-51, Imazu-Machi, Iwakuni City, Yamaguchi Prefecture 〒740-8585  
TEL 0827-29-5116 FAX 0827-22-2866  
<http://kankou.iwakuni-city.net/>

Iwakuni Tourist Association  
1-5-10, Iwakuni, Iwakuni City, Yamaguchi Prefecture 〒741-0062  
TEL 0827-41-2037 FAX 0827-41-2073  
<http://www.iwakuni-kanko.jp>

春 Spring

夏 Summer

秋 Autumn

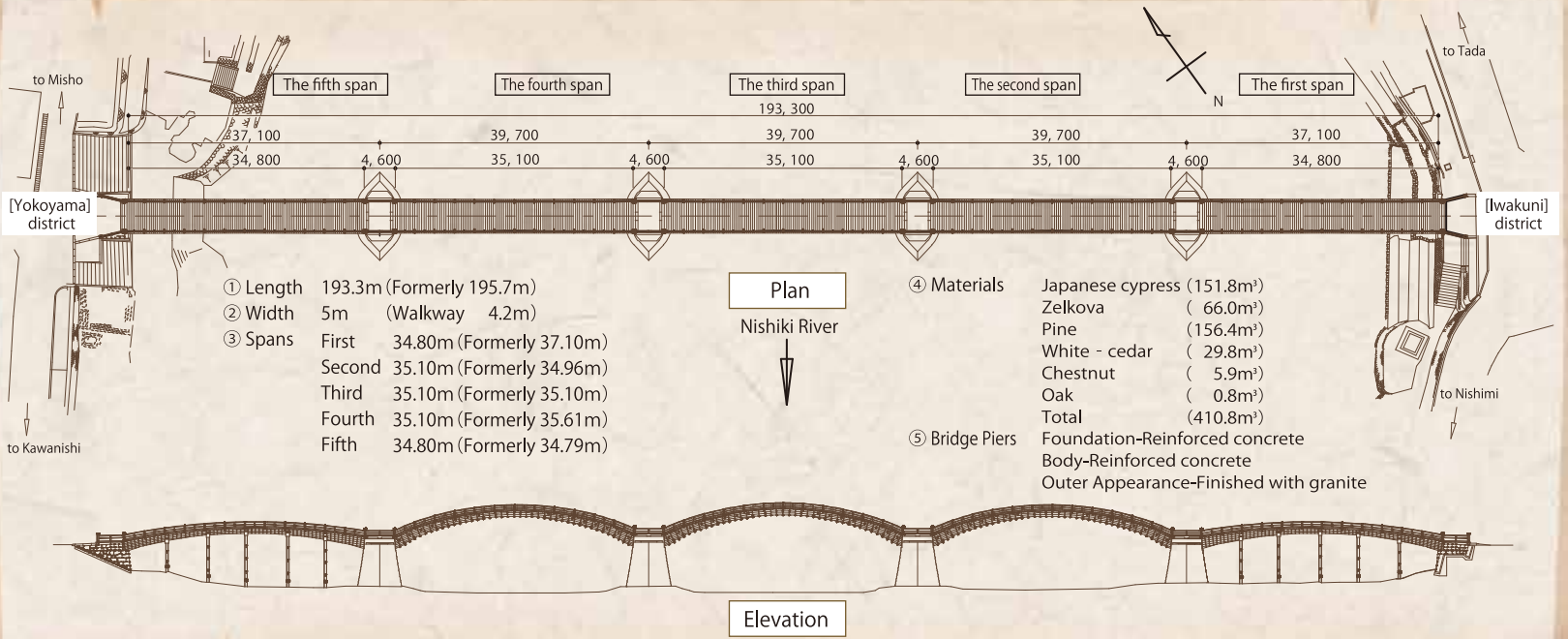
冬 Winter



Path to the Birth of this Renowned Bridge

A series of seemingly unrelated events led to the building of the Kintaikyo Bridge. The feudal family Kikkawa, was ordered to govern the domain of Iwakuni, the castle town of which had been established on both sides of the River Nishiki. As Iwakuni Castle, built for advantage on the top of Mt. Yokoyama, utilized the river as a natural outer moat, Kikkawa needed a bridge to cross the river.

Hiroyoshi Kikkawa, the third feudal lord who had been studying a way to build a bridge that would never be washed away, met the naturalized Chinese monk, Dokuryo, and happened to see the *Saikoyuranshi* (a journal about sight-seeing around the West Lake of China) in which the monk’s hometown, Hangzhou, and the West Lake were depicted. In the journal he found a picture which inspired him to build the Kintaikyo Bridge. The five-arch bridge was finally completed on October 1st, 1673. Unfortunately, due to river bed subsidence, the bridge was washed away the following year, but immediately reconstructed after the river bed had been reinforced.



The Fame of the Bridge

The beauty of the Kintaikyo Bridge has been famous since the middle of the Edo era. Although it is located far from the Sanyo Route (see the map of the Iwakuni Domain), other feudal lords who sometimes had to travel from their domains to Edo (the present day Tokyo) made detours to see the bridge.

Due to its elegant appearance not only painters employed by the feudal lord, but other famous talented painters such as Hiroshige Utagawa and Hokusai Katsushika, used the bridge as a motif.

★by Hiroshige Utagawa



The bridge which is thought to have been painted according to someone’s description can be seen behind the actors.



The Saikoyuranshi Picture

After Kikkawa saw a picture of several stone bridges spanning the islets of the West Lake, he came upon the idea of building piers like islets and connecting them with bridges.



Unfortunately the original drawings from the time of the bridge’s construction are not available, but twelve drawings used when it was renovated during the Edo era still survive.

A Bridge That Will Never Be Washed Away

Hiroyoshi Kikkawa worked enthusiastically to obtain the technology he needed. He ordered retainers to research bridges and make prototypes. Even after the 1674 reconstruction he had them learn the high level *Ano*-style stone stacking technique which was subsequently used in the building of the stonewall of Azuchi Castle.

The Kintaikyo Bridge which was the fruits of the cutting-edge technology, with its continuously developing advanced devices, remained invincible against the elements for 276 years until it was washed away by floods caused by the violent typhoon, Kijiya, in 1950.

However in 1953, thanks to the enthusiasm of the townspeople of Iwakuni, the bridge was rebuilt. And in 2004 a renovation project was completed. The bridge we see now has a very long history.

Hashidemai

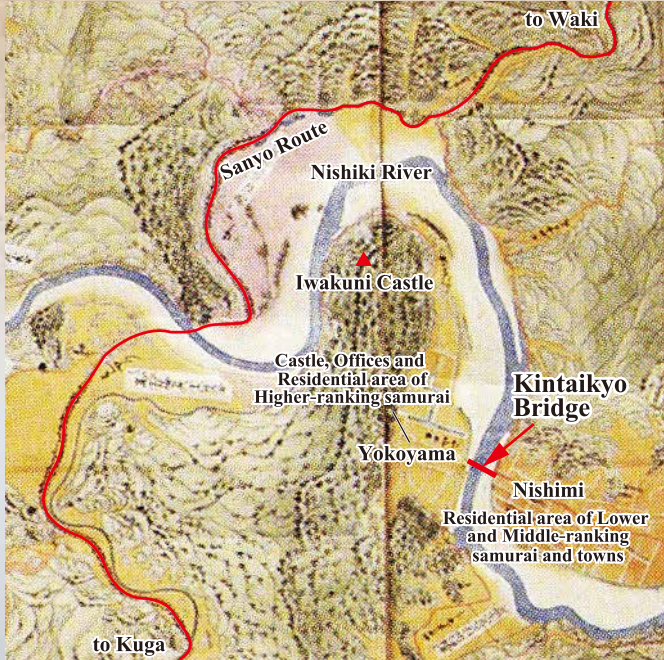
Everybody who lived in the domain had to pay a special tax, depending on their income, called *hashidemai* which was used to keep the bridge in good repair. It proved a good way of maintaining The Kintaikyo Bridge, which was reputed to be indestructible.

The Fruits of Advanced Technology

We can see the highly advanced technology used in the construction of the Kintaikyo Bridge in other places, too. For example, one of the bridge carpenters who was involved in reconstruction project designed the Kangiin Kisomon Gate in Kumagaya City, Saitama Prefecture. It is a state-designated “important cultural property”.

Engineers in charge of a survey concluded, “The design and building techniques of the Kintaikyo Bridge are in perfect accordance with modern principles of dynamics. Present day bridge engineering could not improve it”. The soundness proved since the Edo era is almost the same as that of today.

There are legends, such as “Not one single nail was used” or “If one nail is pulled out, the entire bridge will collapse”, which underline how unique and full of wonder the bridge appears because of its high level of technology.



Taken from a map of the entire Iwakuni Domain (1668 - before the Kintaikyo Bridge was built)



★by Yoin Mito(1761)

Soundness Surveys

The Kintaikyo Bridge is one of the most famous arched bridges in the world even though it is made of wood. The biggest concern is decay, which can quickly affect even the core of the bridge. To maintain its sound condition, it is essential to discover any decay in its early stages and take adequate measures. Therefore various periodical surveys are conducted to check the soundness of the bridge.



【The Strength Test (August 12, 2009)】  
This is to check the safety of the bridge by measuring “how the bridge transforms when there are people on it”.