

Outline of Mishima

1. Characteristics

Mishima is located in the east of Shizuoka Prefecture, at the entrance of the Izu-Haokone National Park. Mishima is about 11.1 kilometers (6.9 miles) east to west and about 13.2 kilometers (8.2 miles) north to south. The total area is 62.13 square kilometers (38.6 square miles). Two-thirds of the area is mountainous and hilly districts. The base of the Ashitaka Massif is to the west and the Hakone mountain ranges to the east.

To the north of the city we have a fine view of Mt. Fuji (3,766m/12,388ft) and the thawing water from Mt. Fuji gushes out into many ponds and streams around Mishima. People in Mishima are blessed with a beautiful natural environment and a mild climate, and City of Mishima is tackling to establish a “City filled with fresh green, pure water and cultural fragrance”

2. History

Mishima is one of the oldest historic places in Japan where culture flourished from early times. During the Nara and Heian Period (8-12th century), Mishima prospered as a center of politics, culture, and transport for the reason that there located a *kokubunji temple* and a *kokubunniji temple*, which were provincial temples established by Emperor. Mishima is well known all over Japan for the fact that Minamoto-no-Yorimoto, the founder and the first shogun of the Kamakura Shogunate of Japan, visited the Mishima Grand Shrine to pray for the success as he raised an army.

In the Muromachi Period (14-16th century), the ruling Hojo family built the Fort Yamanaka half way up Hakone mountain. However, they were defeated by their enemy Hideyoshi Toyotomi, who later united the country, and the Fort Yamanaka was destroyed.

During the Edo Period (17-19th century), *daikansho*, the office of a magistrate, was placed and Mishima was put under direct control of the government of the Edo Shogunate. In those days Mishima prospered as one of the five major post stations among the 53 stations of the Tokaido Road that connected Tokyo and Kyoto.

On April 29 in 1941, Mishima was incorporated into a city combining two towns, Mishima and Nakazato. The Mishima train station for the Shinkansen, known as the bullet train, was opened in 1969 and it enabled people to travel to the capital Tokyo within an hour. Today, Mishima, with a population of approximately 114,000, is further developing as a center city of eastern Shizuoka Prefecture.

3. Sister cities

Mishima formed a sister city agreement with the City of Pasadena, California, USA on July 24, 1957, which was just the fourth sister city affiliation with a foreign city for cities in all over Japan. Then, Mishima signed sister city tie with New Plymouth, New Zealand in commemoration of Mishima's 50th anniversary celebration on April 29, 1991, and on May 12, 1997, Mishima tied the third sister relation with Lishui, China.

Since becoming sister cities with those cities, Mishima has been developing friendship between every three cities though a variety of programs such as mutual exchange of citizen's delegations, home stay program for students and teaching exchange in local schools.