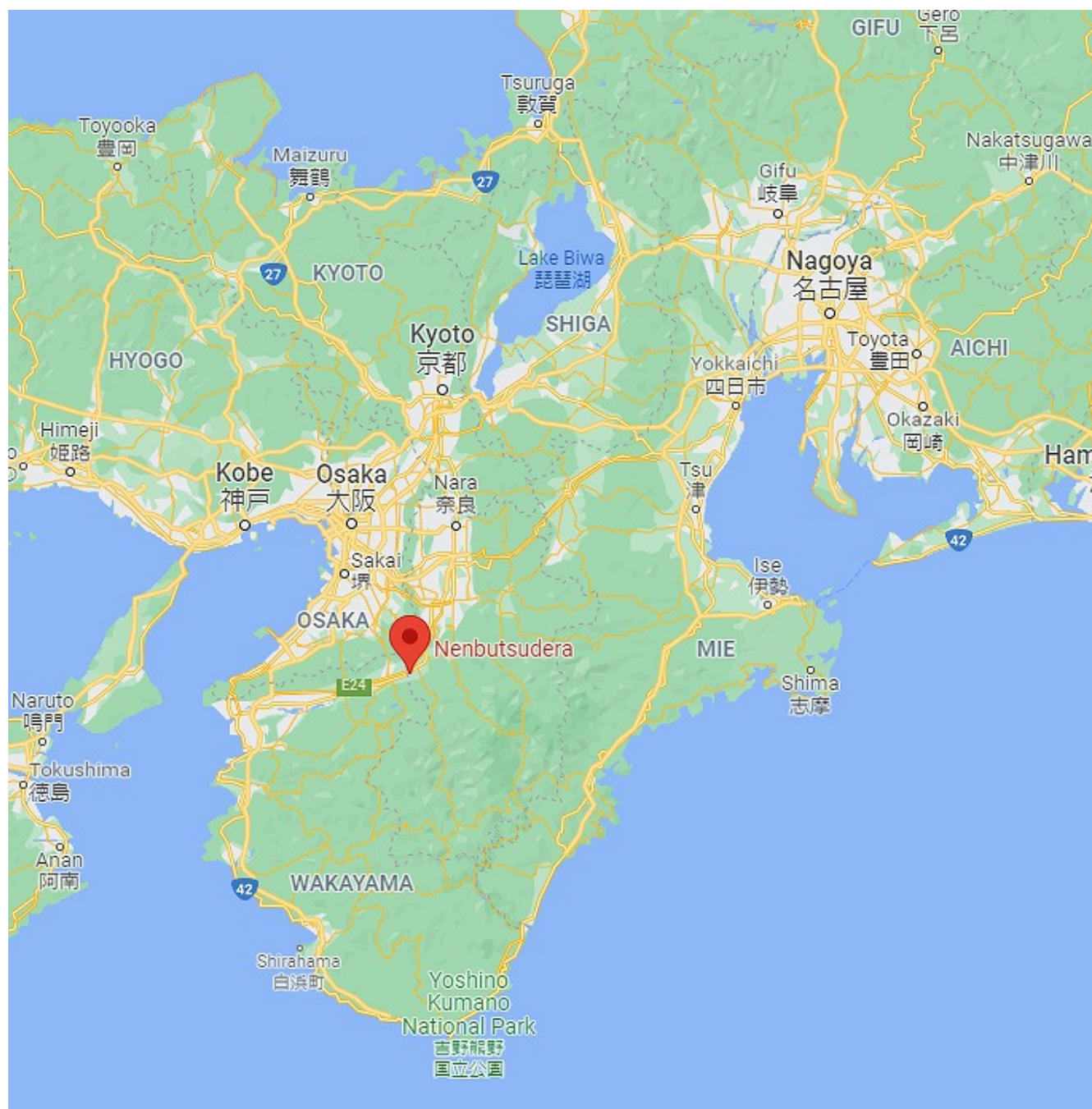
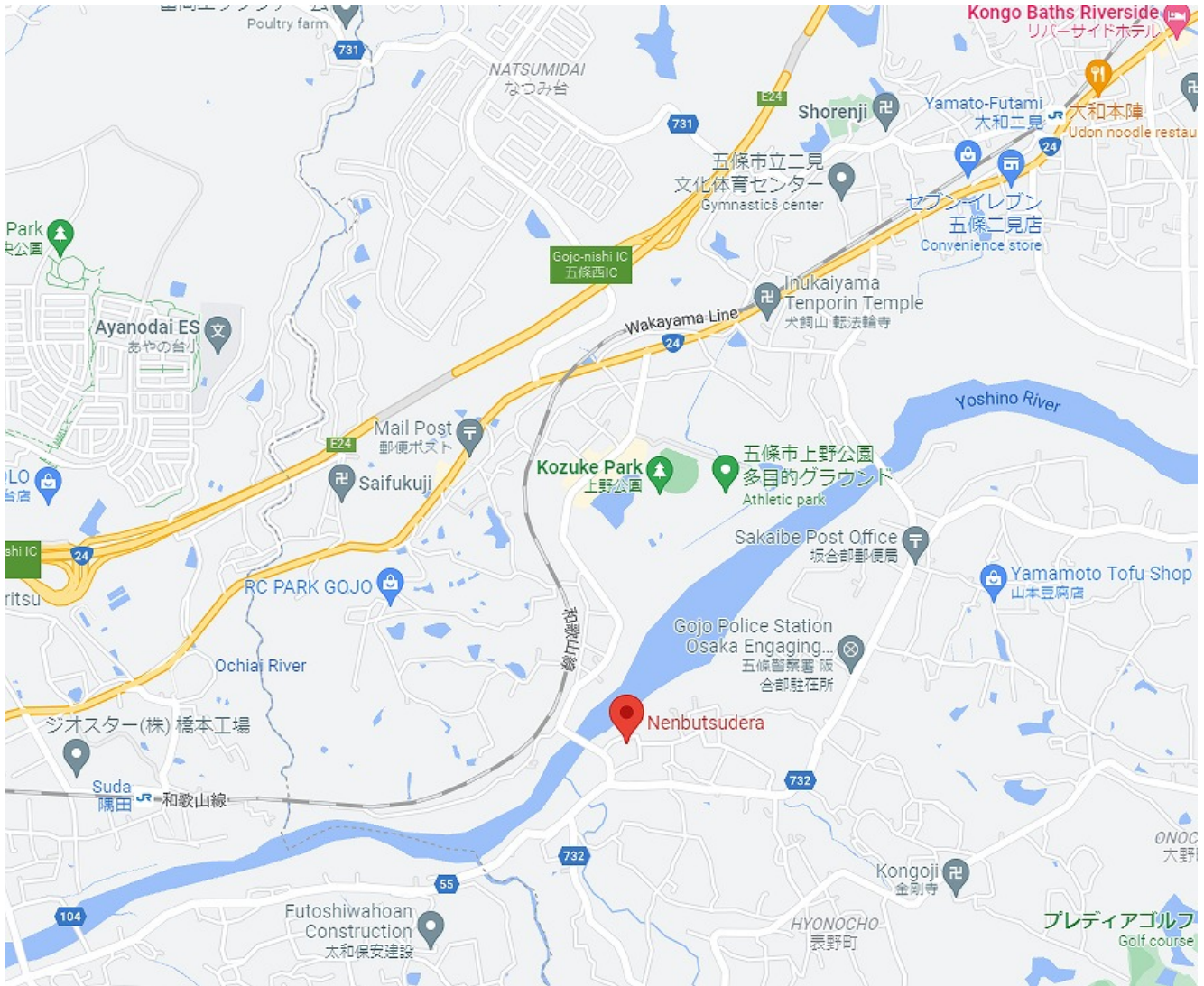


# Ogre runs with fire ~at Dada-do





**Date:** January 14th every year

**Location:** Otsu town 177, Gojo city, Nara prefecture

**Access:** 10 minutes by car from JR Yamato Futami Station, or 30 minutes on foot.

**What is the purpose of doing this?**



<https://ameblo.jp/ura-tom0/entry-11750814403.html>

Ogres with huge torches wielding fire. Such events are held at a place called Nenbutsuji Temple 念仏寺. It is a very inconvenient place. The official website even lists the last train schedule. Every year, they hold an event where ogres run with torches in the temple.

Part of an event called Shusho-e 正月会. Shusho-e is a Buddhist event held at New Year's to pray for a good harvest and to ward off bad luck. Here at Nenbutsuji Temple, we regard it as an event to rid ourselves of past sins and pray for happiness in the new year. The final day is Kechigan けちがん. Kechigan means "consummation of a vow period".





father and mother ogre



父王



子鬼面



鬼面（伝阿弥陀面）

kid and Amida

The masks used in the current event were made of cypress in 1961. However, the older masks were made in 1468, so we can assume that this event started at least around that time.

## Schedule of Events

4:00 pm. the event daytime

4:30 pm. throwing rice cakes

7:00 pm. Monks begin reading sutras

9:00 pm. main event starts



<http://yoshino-ohmine-koya.jp/information/2014/01/1684/>

Why don't we go to Dada-do? There are no foxes or raccoons there. If there are, we can go back. But then ogres appeared!

This time, the stage was the Dada-do だだど in Nenbutsu-ji Temple ねんぶつじ where such a children's song is handed down. It is roughly



divided into daytime and nighttime sessions. In the daytime, ogres appear and run around with torches as in the nighttime, but they do not set fire to the torches. It's like a kind of rehearsal. But it has the advantage that there are not as many people as at night. Also, since it is bright, you can see the gestures and masks clearly. In the past, people used to make the masks from a single tree made of Japanese cypress, which weighed about 4.5 kg, but now they use masks made of a single tree made of thatch.



[https://www.city.gojo.lg.jp/soshiki/bunka/1\\_1/1/3117.html](https://www.city.gojo.lg.jp/soshiki/bunka/1_1/1/3117.html)



However, the main attraction is still at night. Fire seems to have something that makes people's hearts flutter. Whether or not you've prepared well for the daytime session, the main event is the evening session.

The evening session begins at 9 p.m.

As the sound of sticks tapping on the wall rang out, the monks entered first, blowing hollow shells. Behind them are the ogres. The monks began to shout, and the sound of sticks and more bells rang out. It's time to begin. The sound of the bells was and still is used to warn people of fire. The sound of the bells quickens people's heartbeats and heightens their sense of danger. People also call tapping on the wall with a stick "Amitabha's shoulder tapping," a unique name. In Buddhism, Amitabha is the Buddha who saves all people.

In the meantime, the first person to handle the fire in the hall (called katte) appeared with a large torch. He draws the Chinese character for water 水 in the hollow to prevent the fire from raging. Right behind him was a waterman named Kawase



with a bucket of water to put out the fire and clear away the sparks. When it was over, the demons finally made their appearance.



<https://www.pref.nara.jp/45519.htm>



[https://yamatoji.nara-kankou.or.jp/01shaji/02tera/04south\\_area/nembutsuji-gojoyo/event/qtx8lu3j2a/](https://yamatoji.nara-kankou.or.jp/01shaji/02tera/04south_area/nembutsuji-gojoyo/event/qtx8lu3j2a/)





A father ogre, a mother ogre, and a child ogre: there are three ogres in total:. It is said that the ogres here are not bad, but good, bringing good fortune to the people. That's why they have quite charming faces.

The assistants pass the burning torches to the ogres. The ogre puts it on his crotch and supports it with one hand. The torch is 70 centimeters in diameter and weighs about 60 kilograms. There are two pillars in the center of the hall, so when the ogres appear, they move one by one to the next. When the child ogre appears, the three ogres are all together, creating a breathtaking sight. In this way, the demon circled the hall three times before finally leaving the hall.

Anyone can play the role of an ogre, but once they do, they often continue to do so. They bathe in water for a week and avoid fire. It takes a lot of strength and energy to be an ogre, so when they become weak, they are passed on to the next person. The event ends with people trying to steal the paper strings from the ogres, as the paper strings that the ogres wear on their bodies is said to ward off evil.

Ends around 9:30 p.m.

The nearest town, Gojo, is a traditional building preservation district where the streets of olden times remain intact. If you have time, you should definitely take a stroll.



[http://yamatoji.nara-kankou.or.jp/03history/02old\\_house/04south\\_area/shimmachidori-gojoshi/](http://yamatoji.nara-kankou.or.jp/03history/02old_house/04south_area/shimmachidori-gojoshi/)