

The 130th Anniversary of Soseki Natsume's Arrival in Kumamoto (2026) Project

In 1896 (Meiji 29), Soseki Natsume arrived in Kumamoto to assume his post as an English teacher at the Fifth Higher School. The year 2026 marks the 130th anniversary of his arrival.

The Grassroots Exchange Center has previously hosted the Haiku Photo Contest "Haiku Photo: Soseki's Journey," featuring photographs and haiku poems related to places associated with Soseki. Starting this fiscal year, as a commemorative project for the 130th anniversary, we are launching an English Haiku Category. The contest will be renewed and continued under the title "Haiku Photo: Soseki's Journey." The submission period will be split into two terms per year: the [Autumn/Winter Term] and the [Spring/Summer Term] for entries and awards.

The 1st [Autumn/Winter Term]

"Haiku Photo: Soseki's Journey"

Call for Submissions

Category 1: Japanese Haiku Photo Category

Theme: An original Japanese haiku poem paired with an original photograph, themed around travel or locations associated with Soseki Natsume.

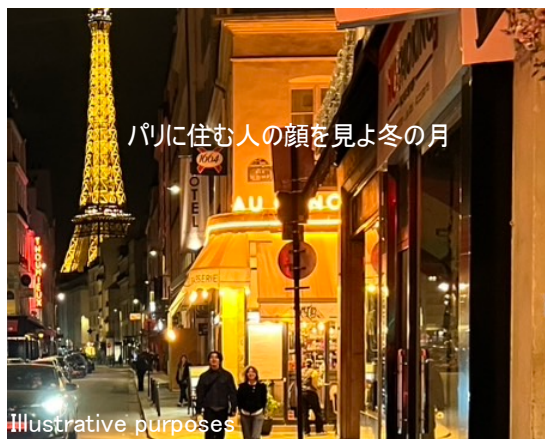
Eligibility: Open to anyone, regardless of nationality or place of residence.

Eligible Subjects: All locations associated with Soseki Natsume, both within Japan and internationally.



Illustrative purposes

Sites associated with Natsume Sōseki in Japan



Illustrative purposes

Sites associated with Natsume Sōseki outside Japan

Category 2: English Haiku Photo Category

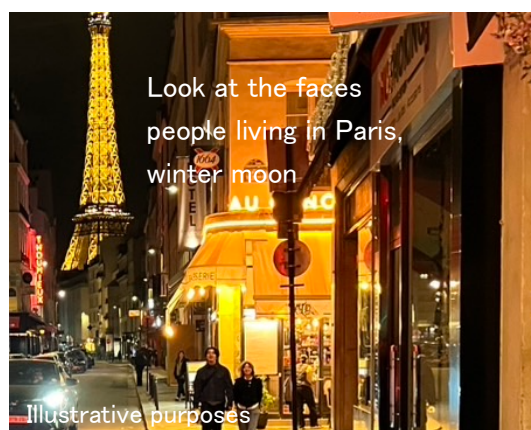
Theme: An original English haiku poem paired with an original photograph, themed around travel or locations associated with Soseki Natsume.

Eligibility: Open to anyone, regardless of nationality or place of residence.

Eligible Subjects: All locations associated with Soseki Natsume, both within Japan and internationally.



Sites associated with Natsume Sōseki in Japan



Sites associated with Natsume Sōseki outside Japan

Guidelines

Artwork Requirements (Applicable to all categories)

- Works must combine a haiku with a photograph on an A4-sized sheet.
(Digital manipulation of text is permitted. Haiku and photos may be submitted separately.)
- Both the haiku and the photograph must be original and unpublished.
(Collaborative entries are accepted (the haiku poet and the photographer can be different people.)
- Photos must be submitted in JPEG format (around 3MB recommended).

※*Note on "Sites associated with Soseki": This refers to locations listed in the Soseki Natsume Footsteps Map (Nationwide, Tokyo, International). However, any connection based on the applicant's personal knowledge, such as Soseki's works, pupils, or relatives, is also acceptable.*

Submission Method: Up to 3 entries per person per category.

Please submit via the dedicated online application form.

Entry Fee: Free of charge for all categories.

Application Period: 1st Round [Autumn/Winter]

September 1, 2026 – February 28, 2027

Judges (Titles omitted)

Chusei Iwaoka (Honorary Chairman of the Japan Traditional Haiku Association, Professor Emeritus at Kumamoto University)

Morio Nishikawa (International Haiku Association Member, Professor Emeritus at Kumamoto University)

Yumi Murata (Director of the Kusamakura Exchange Hall)

Awards: Outstanding works will be recognized in each category for the 1st Round [Autumn/Winter].

Grand Prize (1 Winner): Certificate + Extra Prize (Kusamakura local specialties)

Runner-up (1 Winner): Certificate + Extra Prize (Kusamakura local specialties)

Honorable Mention: Haiku Prize, Photo Prize, Theme Prize, Encouragement Prize / Certificate + Commemorative Gift

Announcement of Results:1st Round [Autumn/Winter]: May 2027

Selected works from each category will be exhibited at the Kusamakura Exchange Hall and related facilities, and will also be featured on the official Kusamakura Exchange Hall website.

Organizers:Kusamakura Exchange Hall, Tamana City
/ Kusamakura Fan Club

Address: 735-1 Tensuimachi Otai, Tamana-shi, Kumamoto 861-5401

Tel: 0968-82-4511

Email: kusamakura@kusamakura.jp

Website: <https://www.kusamakura.jp>

Cooperating Organizations:Tamana City Tourism Association

Tamana Brand Promotion Association

Tensui/Kusamakura Local Tourism Council



Places in Japan Associated with Natsume Sōseki Reference locations
from the travel work “Haiku Photo: Natsume Sōseki”

■Hokkaido	Iwanai City: A place where Sōseki's family register was once registered.
■Miyagi Pref.	Sendai City: Daibaiji Temple, which has a monument inscribed with a passage from Kusamakura. Tohoku University: Holds many books formerly owned by Sōseki. Shōtō Zuiganji Temple
■Gunma Pref.	Ikaho Onsen: Visited for medical treatment and recuperation.
■Chiba Pref.	Ichikawa City: The setting connected with the works Higan Sugimade and Wagahai wa Neko de Aru. Bōsō Peninsula: Locations including Nokogiriyama, Hota, Tomiura, Nago and Kominato, associated with Bokusetsuroku, Kusamakura, Mon and Kokoro.
■Tokyo	Shinjuku Ward: Sōseki's birthplace and the place where he died. Many locations also exist in other wards, including the University of Tokyo. ※See the separate page, “Places in Tokyo Associated with Sōseki.”
■Kanagawa Pref.	Kamakura, Engakuji Temple, Kigen-in Temple, and Enoshima Yugawara Onsen: The Amanoya Ryokan, where Sōseki wrote Meian, and Fudō Falls. Hakone: Fukuzumirō Inn
■Shizuoka Pref.	Shuzenji Onsen: Recuperated at Kikuya Ryokan. Okitsu: Visited his elder brother. Mt. Fuji: Viewed from the train during his journey connected with Sanshirō.
■Nagano Pref.	Nagano City: Visited Zenkōji Temple during a lecture tour. Karuizawa: Was welcomed during a lecture tour in Nagano. Yudanaka Onsen・Shibu Onsen: Shibu Onsen's Tsubataya, Jigokudani Onsen, and Kambayashi Onsen jinhyokaku .
■Shiga Pref	Enryakuji Temple on Mt. Hiei: Appears in the novel Gubijin and climbed with Torao Suga.
■Kyoto Pref.	Sōseki visited Kyoto four times and left connections with many places. 【Rakutō, eastern Kyoto】 Kiyomizu Temple, Akoya Tea House, Maruyama Park, Chion-in Temple, Sanjūsangendō Temple, Higashiyama and Sanjō 【Rakuchū, central Kyoto】 Erizen, Hiiragiya Inn, Kitanotaiga Inn, Daitomo, Ichirikitei and Shōkokuji Temple 【Rakuhoku, northern Kyoto】 Tadasu no Mori and Heihachi Jaya 【Rakusei, western Kyoto】 Sagano, Daihikaku Senkoji and Hozugawa
■Wakayama Pref.	Wakayama City: The Prefectural Assembly Hall and Wakanoura.
■Osaka Pref.	Minoh City: The Asahi Club, associated with Higan Sugimade. Sakai and Nakanosima.
■Hyogo Pref.	Kobe City: Kobe Port and Kobe Station. Akashi City
■Okayama Pref.	Okayama City: Sanban Port and Kataoka family-related locations. Sōseki stopped there during a trip through the Kansai region and visited Kōrakuen Garden and Okayama Castle.
■Hiroshima Pref.	Hiroshima City and Hatsukaichi City During the journey from Matsuyama to Kumamoto, he met Takahama Kyoshi in Ujina and stayed overnight on Miyajima.
■Ehime Pref.	★Places associated with Botchan (These locations are found mainly in and around Matsuyama City.)

	【Central Matsuyama】 Shikido, the ruins of Aishōtei , the ruins of Gudabutsu-an, Kidoya, Ehime Prefectural Ordinary Middle School site and Matsuyama Higashi High School 【Dōgo Onsen area】 Tsubakiyu Bathhouse, Kadohan Inn, Funaya Inn, Tsuboya confectionery shop and the Shiki Memorial Museum 【Mitsu Beach】 Iyo Railway and Turner Island 【Iyo City】Shōmyōji Temple
■Fukuoka Pref.	He visited his wife Kyoko's uncle and toured various places throughout the prefecture, including Hakozaki Hachimangu Shrine and Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine. 【Kitakyushu City】 Mojiko Port (Arrived by ferry from Hiroshima, then take a train to Kumamoto) 【Fukuoka City】Shuyukan High School (Inspection of English classes. Simultaneously, visits to Kurume Meizen High School and Yanagawa Denshukan.) Saga Nishi High School) 【Chikushino City】Futsukaichi Onsen (Honeymoon) 【Kurume City】 Visited a total of 5 places including the home of Torao Suga. (Mt. Kōra, Bairinji Temple, Hosshin Park, Mt. Minō, Yamakawatyo, Oiwake) Tracing Soseki's Path Through Haiku Monuments: Yamakawa Oiwake Edition 【Ukiha City】Yosii Town (Soseki stayed here overnight on his return journey from Yabakei.) 【Chikugo City】Funagoya Onsen.
■Saga Pref.	【Saga City】(Sōseki visited an English class at Saga Nishi High School. Together with the schools he visited in Fukuoka Prefecture, he observed English classes at four schools in total.)
■Nagasaki Pref.	【Nagasaki City】(Sōseki stopped at the port of Nagasaki both on his way to Britain and on his return journey.) 【Shimabara City and Unzen City】(He accompanied students on a school excursion to Amakusa and Shimabara.)
■Oita Pref.	Sōseki travelled to Yabakei, passing through Usa from Kokura. On his return journey, he travelled back to Kumamoto through Hita and Kurume. 【Nakatsu City】 Yabakei (He visited Rakanji Temple. Yabakei also appears in his novel “Higansugimade.”) Yamakuni Town (He stayed here overnight during his return journey. Ōtoshi Shrine is also located here.) 【Usa City】 Usa Jingū Shrine (Sōseki composed seven haiku associated with this location.)
■Kumamoto Pref.	Kumamoto contains many places connected with Sōseki's four years as a teacher at the Fifth Higher School, as well as the settings of two of his literary works. 【Kumamoto City】Sōseki lived in six different houses in Kumamoto, three of which still exist. The Third Former Residence (The house was relocated beside Suizenji Park. Sōseki lived there at the time of his journey to Oama.) The Fifth Former Residence in Uchitsuboi. The Sixth Former Residence. Kami-Kumamoto Station, formerly known as Ikeda Station. Kumamoto University, including the Memorial Museum of the Fifth Higher School. Lake Ezu, where Sōseki practised rowing. Suizenji Park. There are also many other places associated with Sōseki throughout Kumamoto City. 【Amakusa City】Hondo and Tomioka (During the school excursion to Amakusa and Shimabara, Sōseki stayed overnight in Hondo.)

	【Yamaga City and Kikuchi City】 Sōseki visited these areas during a school excursion. The Setting of “Nihyakutōka”.※The story is set around the foot of Mt. Aso. 【Aso City】 Mt. Aso. Uchinomaki Onsen Yōshintei Inn. (Now called Sannōkaku.) Myōgyōji Temple. Aso Shrine. Bōchū (Haiku and poetry monuments have been erected here. 【Minamiaso Village】Tateno Station. Toshita and Tochinoki Onsen. ※The Toshita area disappeared because of the construction of Tateno Dam, while the facilities at Tochinoki were relocated. ★The setting of “Kusamakura” the route extends approximately 16 kilometres from Kumamoto City to Tensui Town in Tamana City. Part of the road known as the “Kusamakura Route” still remains. ※Various maps, pamphlets and other materials are available for walking the Kusamakura route. 【Nishi Ward, Kumamoto City】 Kamatogizaka Slope (The model for the opening section of “Kusamakura.”) Tōge-no-Chaya (The remains of two mountain-pass teahouses at Torigoe and Noide.) The Stone-Paved Road (Located between the two mountain passes.) 【Tensui Town, Tamana City】 Site of the Maeda Family’s Main Residence (The model for the “white-walled house,” also described as the elder brother’s house.) Maeda Family Cemetery (model for Soseki’s handwritten painting “My Grave”) Kagami-ga-ike (The pond at the Maeda family’s second villa, model for “Kagami-ga-ike”) Grave of Nittchoshi (grave of Maeda Kakashi, “the hermit of Shioda”) Maeda family villa (main setting of “Kusamakura” – Soseki’s room and bathhouse). The end point of the journey in “Kusamakura”.
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Places in Tokyo Associated With Natsume Sōseki Reference (Haiku Photo: Natsume Sōseki)

■ Shinjuku Ward	Kikuichō (Sōseki’s birthplace. Ogura-ya. Natsume-zaka Slope. Seikanji Temple.), Waseda-Minami-chō (The place where Sōseki spent his final days. The Natsume Sōseki Memorial Museum, also known as the Sōseki Sanbō Memorial Museum, now stands here.) Kagurazaka (Zenkokuji Temple. Sōmaya. Taharaya. Tokyo University of Science.), Shinjuku (Taisōji Temple, which is mentioned in “Michikusa.”, Izu Bridge. Ichigaya (Ichigaya Elementary School.)
■ Toshima Ward	Zōshigaya Cemetery (Sōseki’s Grave)
■ Katsushika Ward	Shibamata (Appears in “Higansugimade” = (taisyakuten, kawajin)
■ Arakawa Ward	Nippori (Imosaka, Habutaedango, Dōkanyama)
■ Taitou Ward	Asakusa (Saruwakamachi = scene in the town, Bank of Japan branch = Metropolitan Police Department embankment, Komagata Loach) Yanagibashi (Kameseirou), Shitaya (Shingenji Temple = Iriyakisibojin), Negishi (Shikian =

	“Wagahaiwa Nekodearu”Place of presentation), Yanaka (Where Sanshiro and Mineko walk), Ueno (Ueno Park, National Museum, Tokyo Music School, Seiyoken, Kūya-mochi, Tōhō-manju, Ike-no-hata, Matsuzakaya)
■ Sumida Ward	Mukojima (Azuma-bashi, Asahi Beer site near the former town office) Ryogoku (Ekoin Tempie=The birthplace of sumo wrestling, Kokugikan, Site of the Former Koto Gijuku School)
■ Bunkyo Ward	Hongo (Kaneyasu = Former general store,Fujimura’ s confectionery closed,Okanoeisendo’ s bean cakes. , Hongo Cenrntral church. masagotyou= House where Mineko,The rice curry at Yodomiken,Kikusaka, Aokidou,Kitasyou= Hairsaion used by Soseki.) University of Tokyo (Sanshiro Pond, Medical School where Nonomiya’s sister was hospitalized, Science School where Nonomiya conducted physics experiments, Library depicted in works, statue of Bell where Sanshiro was questioned, Engineering school, Yayoi Gate, Faculty of Agriculture), Nezu (Nezu Shrine, Uramon-zaka slope = Opening of“Michikusa”), Sendagi (Dango-zaka slope, Dou-zaka slope= Sanshiro and Professor Hirota passes by), Otsuka (Gokoku-ji Temple, “Yume Juya”), Hon-komagome (Komagome-dake, home of the painter in “Sanshiro”), Mukogaoka (Oiwake-cho, appears frequently in “Sanshiro”), Former Residence of Natsume Sōseki (Sendagi house site = Where he lived after moving to the Meiji village ,Ougai lived there as well.),Ikubunkan (model for “Wagahaiwa Nekodearu”Rakuunnkan), Hourai-kan (model for Gun-kaku), Kougen-ji Temple, Nishikatamachi (rented house of Mr. Hirota and Soseki’s second rented house), Hakusan (Shin-fuku-ji Temple), Koishikawa (Den-tsu-in, Gokurakusui), Kohinata (Honpoji Temple, Kirisitan-zaka, Koshin-zaka, Soseki’s grave, “Sorekara”), Kasugamati (Andou- Saka Slope ,Kongouji-Slope=“Korekara”) Edogawa (Kanda River, “Sorekara”)
■ Chouou Ward	Nihonbashi (Mitsukoshi, Shirokiya, Maruzen, Monument where Kihara store once stood), Ginza (Asahi Shimbun, Tensho-do, Tikuyou-tei, Shiseido, Kan Factory = Toy shop)
■ Chiyoda Ward	Soto Kanda (Kanda Main Store, manseihashi) , Awajicho (Syoueitei, Takara-tei), Ogawamachi (Ogawamachi bus stop, Sato Hospital), Surugadai (Meiji University site, Nikolai-do, Inoue Eye Clinic), Hibiya (Imperial Hotel, Matsumoto-ro),Fujimityou(Hjimityou-Church) Ochanomizu Elementary School, learned in Meiji era, Furitsu-chu, Hibiya High Schoo,Nimatugakusya Preparatory School for the University of Tokyo (Present-day Faculty of Arts and Sciences)
■ Minato Ward	Shimbashi Station (Appears in“Botchan”, visited in real life about 50 times)
■ Oota Ward	Ōmori,Honmonji (Appears in “Botchan”)

Outside Japan Places Associated With Natsume Sōseki Reference

(Haiku Photo: Natsume Sōseki)

■ London, United Kingdom	Plaque at Sōseki's Former Lodging: At 80 Gaskarth Road, Clapham, a historic blue plaque has been installed to indicate that Sōseki once lived there. The British Museum: Sōseki frequently visited the museum and devoted himself to reading there. The Tower of London: The setting of Sōseki's short story "The Tower of London."
■ Cambridge, United Kingdom	Four days after arriving in London, Sōseki travelled to Cambridge. He met Mr Andrew, a senior tutor at Pembroke College, one of the colleges of the University of Cambridge, and toured the university.
■ Scotland, United Kingdom	Pitlochry: A small village that Sōseki visited while studying in London.
■ Paris, France	Before arriving in London, Sōseki stopped in Paris for one week. He stayed there from October 21 to October 28, 1900. After departing from Yokohama, he spent approximately one month at sea before arriving in Naples, Italy. He disembarked at Genoa, stayed there for one night, and then travelled to Paris by train. After arriving at Gare de Lyon, he stayed for one week at accommodation on Rue Gustave-Courbet in the 16th arrondissement. During his stay, he visited the Paris Exposition and called on Japanese residents living in Paris.
■ Hongkong, China	China Victoria Harbour area: While travelling to Britain in 1900, Sōseki stopped in Hong Kong. MANCHURIA
■ Manchukuo, China	CHINA From September to October 1909, Sōseki travelled through Manchuria, now northeastern China, and the Korean Peninsula. His account of the journey was serialised in the Asahi Shimbun under the title "Travels in Manchuria and Korea." Places visited included: Dalian Lüshun Fengtian, now Shenyang Anshan