



## Farms and Fields of Ikeda-cho

*Higashikuma/Higashimata and Elsewhere, Ikeda-cho*

A life tied to the soil: ploughing, planting, and harvesting the fruit of one's labors. Recent decades have seen the agricultural traditions of thousands of years slowly fade away across Japan, but this way of life lingers on in Ikeda-cho's farm fields and homes.



Preparing a rice field for planting in Higashikuma, Ikeda-cho



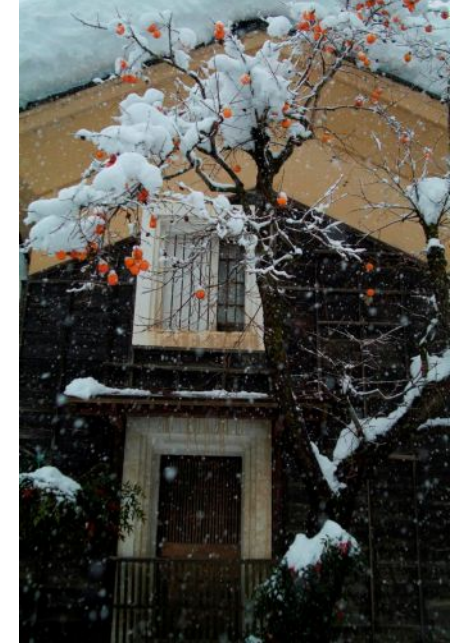
Rice paddies in Ikeda-cho's Higashimata

The sight of farming fields and homes can still be found throughout much of Ikeda-cho. Compost made from town waste is used to restore nutrients to the soil and minimize the use of pesticides to support organic farming in the town. The consumer is given primary consideration, and the town's produce is raised to preserve the integrity of its long tradition, and this philosophy is apparent in the taste of every fruit and vegetable produced there. The sight of *daikon* drying outside farm houses reminds visitors and residents alike of the pervasiveness of farming into Ikeda-cho's everyday life.

The harsh winters accumulate as much as 2m of snow on the town's fields and homes. Living with this gives its residents a greater appreciation of not only nature's challenges, but also its many blessings bestowed and the town and its surrounding area.



Hanging *daikon* to dry



Persimmon trees surviving the snowy winters



Hand-made Uomi konnyaku

In Ikeda-cho's Uomi, hand-made konnyaku has long been a staple food. Though labor-intensive, it has been passed down for generations and will continue to serve as an essential part of local cuisine.

