



SHOJI UEDA MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Growing up in his hometown of Sakaiminato, Shoji Ueda loved hiding on the roof of his house. Away from everyone, there he would find an undisturbed setting to gaze at the endless greenery stretching as far as he could see. While he most likely wasn't aware of it yet, he was already looking through the lens of his future. Not too many years later, he would become a photographer who would make Tottori's landscapes internationally acclaimed.

With the exception of the few years he studied at the Oriental School of Photography in Tokyo, Shoji Ueda (1913-2000) spent most of his life in Tottori Prefecture capturing the everyday sights in and near the city of Yonago where he owned a studio and gallery. Ueda captured the happiness in

the ordinary — his wife and children, umbrellas, hats, silhouettes, often with the dunes as a backdrop, giving birth to masterpieces like "Doodle Face" (1949), "My wife in the dunes" (1950) and "Hat" (1980).

Built in 1995 after Ueda donated his works to the local town, Shoji Ueda Museum of Photography archives more than 12,000 of Ueda's photographs in its award-winning building designed by famed Japanese architect Shin Takamatsu. The building, which resembles four giant boxes lined up when viewed from afar, is the sole establishment in the vicinity of lush agricultural land, built face-to-face with Mount Daisen as if the two were having a conversation. It is the perfect setting for a museum dedicated to a surrealist artist who cherished simplicity just as much as he loved his homeland Tottori.

When visiting the museum, stop by to spend an undisturbed moment gazing at the sight from its large windows — you may feel as if you were stepping in young Ueda's shoes, back in time when he was enjoying a similar sight from his roof.





DOWN THE SPIRITUAL ROAD: THE WORLD OF MIZUKI SHIGERU

The supernatural power can be perceived at its strongest when you stroll down the Mizuki Shigeru Road in Sakaiminato City, an alley, celebrating the dozens of mischievous “yokai” folklore creatures created by the legendary manga artist and Tottori-native, Shigeru Mizuki (1922-2015). As you walk down this boisterous street, you’ll see them hiding behind shops, sitting on benches, looking at you from atop street lights, crawling on sculptures and surprising you from every corner. You’ve officially entered their kingdom and they are more than happy to have you there. But worry not — despite them looking frightening at times, they are harmless and have co-existed with their human counterparts for decades (on paper) and centuries (in folklore).

Born as much from his imagination as from his experience as a child, Mizuki’s creatures are characters with supernatural powers, big attitude and somewhere down inside them, unprecedented kindness to all living things and their surroundings.

GeGeGe no Kitaro character images ©MIZUKI Productions
Photographs by David Jaskiewicz



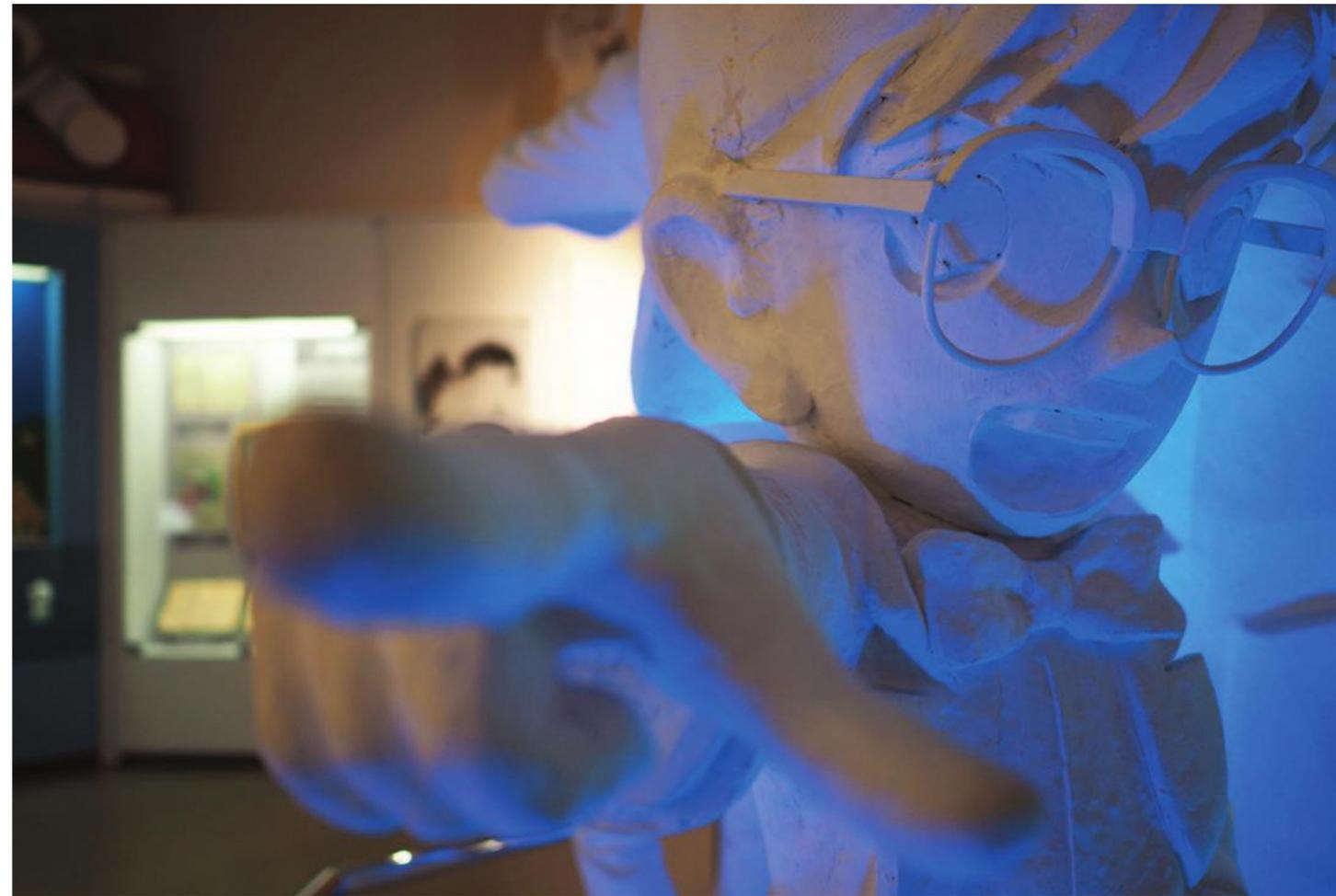
When Mizuki was growing up, there was more darkness than light. Deep in the Japanese countryside back in the late 1920s and early 1930s, many houses lacked much of today’s comfort. The darkness was often accompanied by a squeak in the wooden houses, a footstep-resembling sound in the distance, a chilling to the bone cold in winter and the mysterious smoke from the hearth. The setting of this nothingness frequently triggered Mizuki’s imagination. Considered an odd child who wouldn’t speak a word until the age of four, Mizuki absorbed everything around him, including the many supernatural tales NonNonBa, the family’s helper and a grandmother-like figure to Mizuki, (who also served as inspiration for many of his future works), would share with him. Mizuki’s childhood experiences with yokai, which he became fully immersed in, influenced his life and oeuvre. Today, known as the master of yokai manga, Mizuki’s works span countless creatures, the best known of which is Kitaro from the 1960s series “GeGeGe no Kitaro.”

You’ll find the story of his life toward the end of the Mizuki Shigeru Road at the Mizuki Shigeru Museum, a place housing the spirit of Mizuki and his creatures in a haunting yet somewhat heartwarming ambiance. The museum is a wonderful insight into the author’s life and works, featuring rare early

drawings, notes, and many of the writer’s personal belongings. A tour of the museum also helps reveal the many other faces of Mizuki — the historian who published works relating to Japanese and world history, and his own World War II experience, and the husband and father who would live a life (until the very end) much supported by his wife, Nunoe Mura’s patience and humor.

The 800-meter-long Mizuki Shigeru Road, partially an open-air museum, partially a theme park, is undeniably the most popular attraction in Tottori’s Yonago-Sakaiminato area. It’s a lively place, boosting with shops, eateries and amusement, where children and adults can enjoy immensely at daytime and nighttime when the creatures are lit-up and accompanied by mystifying music. If you start counting, you may find 177 of them — though keep in mind that there are probably many more who prefer not to reveal their appearance.

While there, allow yourself the pleasures of the unknown — stop by at the Yokai Shrine and draw a fortune slip, take photos with your favorite supernaturals, or surprise yourself with a letter of the future at the Yokai Post, where you can post a handwritten note to self and receive it five years later. Last but not least, treat the yokai with respect — they’re watching and most likely judging you too.



GOSHO AOYAMA MANGA FACTORY

While Shigeru Mizuki's yokai are hovering around the Mizuki Shigeru Road mischievously chasing you around, the case is different at the Conan Street, down the Yura "Conan" Station in the town of Hokuei, about an hour's drive from Sakaiminato City.

The 1.4-kilometer-long alley stretching from the station is dedicated to the life and work of Tottori-native manga artist Goshō Aoyama, the author of *Detective Conan* ("Case Closed"), the long-running comic (and later anime) series about a genius high school detective who ends up looking like an elementary-school kid after members of a crime syndicate force him to drink an experimental poison as a punishment for witnessing their crime.

Conan Street is lined with numerous bronze statues of the detective, his partners in (solving) crimes and various objects that appear in the series. Among the most popular places on the Street are a restaurant and shopping complex inspired by a house and a cafe that are often seen in the series.

The Conan Street eventually takes visitors to the Goshō Aoyama Manga Factory, a museum housing all of Aoyama's masterpieces and original drawings. Divided into seven sections, including Aoyama's studio, a gallery, and interactive replications of some of the tricks played in the Conan stories. Like with the Mizuki Shigeru Museum, here you can discover more about the author's (and Conan's) curious life and work.

Detective Conan character image ©GOSHO AOYAMA/SHOGAKUKAN Photograph by Ear Lew Boo

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contents/1561690420288/index.
html

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For more information on Tottori,
see the prefecture's official
sightseeing website at
tottori-tour.jp/en

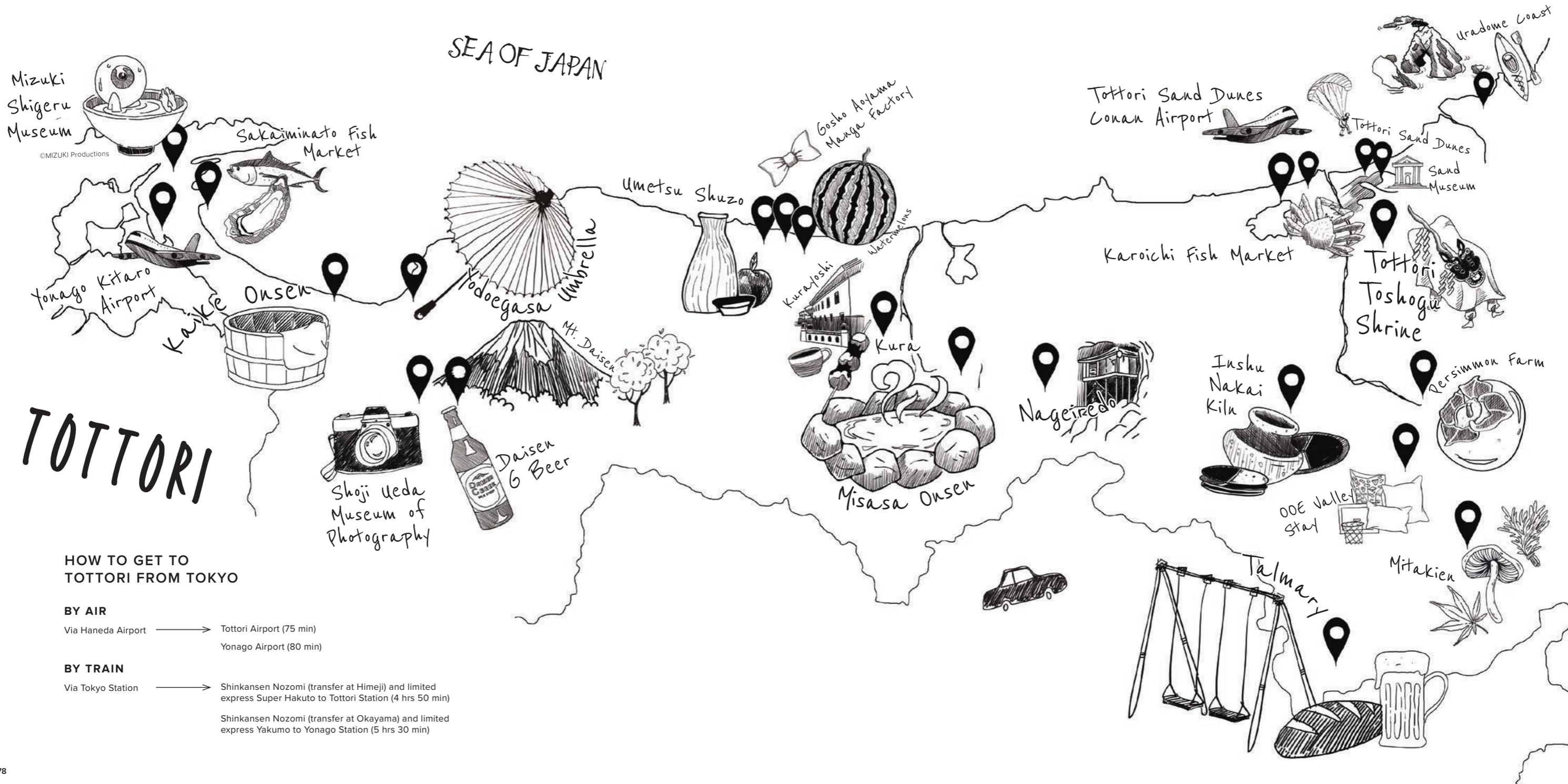
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*Tottori is a place of wonder.
Standing on its dunes leaves you speechless. Flying above them makes you breathless.
Climbing up to Nageiredo and back changes you as a person.
At the end of every journey here, you're happily fulfilled yet oddly impatient to go back.
Tottori leaves you lost for words and then turns you into a storyteller.
May you find your story here.
The one that will help you leave your own footprints in the sand.*



TOTTORI

HOW TO GET TO TOTTORI FROM TOKYO

BY AIR

Via Haneda Airport → Tottori Airport (75 min)
Yonago Airport (80 min)

BY TRAIN

Via Tokyo Station → Shinkansen Nozomi (transfer at Himeji) and limited express Super Hakuto to Tottori Station (4 hrs 50 min)
Shinkansen Nozomi (transfer at Okayama) and limited express Yakumo to Yonago Station (5 hrs 30 min)



TOTTORI

The Land, The Lives, The Stories