

Kurashiki Machiya Trust

by Noriko Ehara

One of Okayama prefecture's biggest tourist drawcards is the Kurashiki Bikan Area, which is a beautiful historic area in Kurashiki City. You will see many visitors walking in and out of the main tourist attractions that are located along the Kurashiki River; the Ohara Museum of Art and other art galleries, souvenir shops, restaurants and cafes. But just to the north you will find a quiet residential neighborhood with many "Machiya" (wooden houses) on Honmachi Street.



Onsaka no Ie, located on a hill.

The Honmachi area is a preservation district that the national government has placed on its list of "Important Preservation Districts for Groups of



The view of Kurashiki Bikan Area from a window of *Onsaka no Ie*



No food is provided but the kitchen and bathroom are fully equipped.

Historic Buildings." Unfortunately in recent years, the number of vacant houses in the area has increased. In order to prevent these vacant buildings from becoming derelict, local resident

Yasunori Nakamura, who runs a record shop in the area, set up a Non-Profit Organisation called the Kurashiki Machiya Trust in 2006. With the help of local architects and shop owners, they renovated an 80-year-old house and turned it into a guesthouse providing accommodation for

visitors who want to experience life in a Machiya.

The renovated house called "Onsaka no Ie" and is located on a hill with a nice view of the Kurashiki Bikan Area and the people's daily comings and goings.

Anyone can stay in "Onsaka no Ie" but you need to register as a Kurashiki Machiya Trust member. An annual membership fee is ¥2,000. Prices for Sunday to Thursday nights are ¥10,000 for one person, ¥11,000 for two, ¥12,000 yen for three. Add ¥2000 for a Friday, Saturday or the night before a public holiday. You can book through their website, <http://kurashiki-machiya-trust.jp> (in Japanese.)