

***Taraibune* Tub Boats**

Taraibune “tub boats” are small, circular vessels that resemble, and are named for, traditional Japanese bathtubs. These boats are ideal for shallow waters and can accommodate up to two passengers and one skipper, who maneuvers the vehicle with an oar in a side to side motion. The *taraibune* are also called *hangiri* boats because of their resemblance to the wooden containers (*hangiri*) used to make vinegared sushi rice. *Taraibune* are traditionally made from cedar or bamboo and can easily tip over if not maneuvered correctly, due to their odd shape and light material. The boats were traditionally used for shell fishing. Fishermen would reach out of the boat and place a glass box on the water for a clear view of the shellfish underneath. The unusual shape may have originated from a tax that was levied on all boats, which did not apply to the *taraibune* because they were not shaped like a typical boat.

Visitors can ride *taraibune* in Shukunegi, Yajima-Kyojima, and Rikiya Kanko Kisen in Ogi. The three places offer very different environments. In Shukunegi the tub boats are made from wood, making them the most authentic of the three. The boating experience at the twin islands of Yajima and Kyojima features a grand view of the bright red bridge that connects them. The most popular experience comes courtesy of Rikiya Kanko Kisen, the tour company whose female skippers wear traditional costumes with straw hats covering their faces while guiding their boats around a large, sheltered bay. *Taraibune* boating is offered in Shukunegi and Yajima-Kyojima from March to November, and year-round at Rikiya.