



Salt road

There used to be a road extending about 120 km from Itoigawa to Matsumoto for carrying salt produced in the Japan Sea. This salt road is called Sengoku Road because the guard station was located in Sengoku. Salt was carried to the salt guard station in Shiojiri of Matsumoto Feudal Domain. The road was busy with tradesmen carrying commodities on the back of themselves, horses and cattle. The most important among those commodities was salt, which was precious to those living in mountainous areas. There still remain statues of "Horse Head Goddess" along the road to pray for the safe travel. The walking course along the road in Omachi Town still retains the images of what it used to be. In "Salt Road Festival" visitors can enjoy walking with town people attired in old-day travelers and salt carriers.



Great Snow Patch on Mt. Hakuba
This is the greatest snow patch in Japan extending over 100m in width, 3500m in length and 600m of difference in elevation, where Shiraneaoi, Kinugasaso and other plants grows. You can walk to the tip of the patch casually with sneakers on.



Takase Gorge
Takase Gorge is famous for beautiful colored leaves in autumn. Takase River joined with Minamata River (with its water source in Mt. Yarigatake) has three dams; Takase Dam, Nanakura Dam, and Omachi Dam from upstream. Hot springs and inns are scattered in the downstream area of Nanakura Dam. Sometimes you can enjoy the sight of wild monkeys.

Hisui (Jade) Gorge
Hisui Gorge has been famous for production of jades and designated as "Natural monument" of Japan. With its history going back to Jomon Era, 8000BC to 200BC, the area is well-known by the birthplace of the jade culture producing the jade ball, one of the Three Sacred Treasure of the Imperial House.



Tsuga-ike Natural Park
Tsuga-ike Natural Park is one of the largest high moors in Japan extending over the mountainside of Mt. Norikura. You can enjoy the magnificent view of three mountains of Hakuba range, Hakuba Oike Pond, alpine plants and plants in the moor throughout the seasons.

Nature and sightseeing resources in Matsumoto Sabo Work Office Jurisdiction

Rich and precious natural environment surrounding Matsumoto Sabo Work Office is the most important factor to support the sightseeing industry, the geatest industry for local people. It is an important duty for Matsumoto Sabo Work Office to support these sightseeing resources.

Kappa Bridge

This is one of the most scenic spots in Kamikochi. Viewed from over the Bridge, Azusa River, Hodaka Mountain Range and Mt. Myojin are magnificently beautiful. The first Kappa bridge was completed around 1892.



Nomugi Pass

Nomugi Pass is famous for a book "Nomugi Pass" by Shigemi Yamamoto, in which young girls walked through the Pass to go working at silk-reeling factories in Suwa City. The old road grown with bamboo grass are used as a hiking course.



Animals and plants growing in the North Alps



Snow grouse
Snow grouses, designated as the Special Natural Monument, live in high mountains of 400m or higher. They usually live in bushes of creeping pines and alpine meadows and comes into grasslands in the morning and evening. They usually live in the northern parts of the earth. Japan is the southern limit of propagation of the snow grouse. The color of feather is changed according to seasons, and becomes all white in winter.



Japanese Kamoshika (Serow)
"Kamosika", a term for "Japanese serow" gives a wrong impression that this animal belongs to a family of deer. Actually they belong to the bovine family. They swiftly moves up steep slopes and cliffs people cannot step on. It is very impressive to see them running through the deep snow.

Tsukumoso

Tsukumoso is an indigenous species in Japan and grows scattering on gravel lands. It is featured with soft hairs all over the plant and yellow calyx looking like a flower. It is designated as an endangered species.



Iwana (Char)

Iwana is fresh water fish living all over Japan. Literally translated, its name, Rock Fish, is named because it lives in rocky places in mountain streams. The fish can be seen in the upper stream of Azusa River, Takase River and Himekawa River. They lay eggs in narrow streams in autumn and eggs are hatched to juveniles in spring.



Uruppuso

Uruppuso is a plant growing only in Mt. Hakuba, Mt. Yatsugatake of the Japan Alps, and Rebus Island in Hokkaido. It is also an endangered species. The name, Uruppu, comes from Uruppu island (of the Kuril Islands) where the plant was discovered. The best season to see the flowers is just after the rainy season in the North Alps.



Traffic in Kamikochi



Increasing number of mountaineers and tourists are visiting Kamikochi to enjoy beautiful scenery since the beginning of modern mountaineering. Roads have been developed to accept these visitors. Kama Tunnel was completed in 1924 and buses started to carry people up to Kappa Bridge in 1935. Recent popularity in mountaineering has further increased the number of those visiting Kamikochi. Traffic of cars is restricted for the purpose of protecting the nature of Kamikochi from exhaust emission and garbage problems, and also solving traffic jam. Since the national road, Route 158 is not connected to other road beyond Kamikochi, the area can be isolated in case the road should be collapsed. In September 15, 1999 about 1,300 tourists and 30 buses were detained in Kamikochi due to landslides.