

Takabocchi

Yatsugatake-Chushin Kogen Quasi-National Park



Takabocchi is situated in the west of Yatsugatake-Chushin Kogen Quasi-National Park. From here, people enjoy the 360 degree overlook of the Northern Alps to the north-west, Mount Ontake and Kiso Mountains to the south, and Yatsugatake Mountains and Mount Fuji to the east.

At the end of May, part of Takabocchi becomes a grazing ground for dairy cows. Soon after the cows' arrival, 300 thousand plus Japanese azalea will come to a full bloom, coloring the mountain red. The Japanese azalea will, together with other alpine plants like "nipponicum" and "rosebays", welcome visitors with their beauty.

Takabocchi is, however, most famous for holding its annual Takabocchi Local Horse Race, where the audience enjoys watching in exciting close proximity to the race. Because of its geographical location, it is known as the highest ground to hold horse races in Japan.



The view of the Northern Alps (Tateyama and Ushiroateyama mountains, Tsubakuro, Otenjo, Jonen, Yari, Norikura etc.) which line up from north-west to south-west, is enhanced by the view of Matsumoto Basin.

Numerous photographers adore the scenery of Takabocchi and call it "Japan's number one shutter point."

(Picture taken of Lake Suwa and Mt Fuji)



Takabocchi Attractions



As the grass turns green at the end of May, dairy cows come up to graze on Takabocchi. It is the season that they have been anticipating.

Among the cows that come, many are expecting to give birth to their first calf. It is said that they give birth to healthier calves and produce tastier milk because of their stay on the spacious highland area of Takabocchi.

If you would like to visit them, they stay until the end of October, when the flower season ends.



In the middle of June, 300 thousand Japanese azaleas will bloom and the slopes of the highland will turn red. It is especially on days when the sky is blue and the clouds are white, that Takabocchi's beauty is brought out to its very best. Takabocchi Kogen has been referred as "Maiden's plateau" by visitors.

Wild plants on Takabocchi



Nipponicum



Glabrifolius (cufod) Kitam



Longicalycinus



Scabios



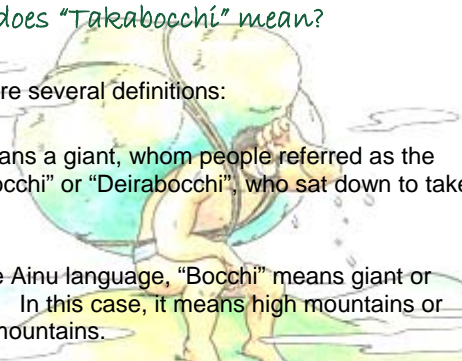
Takabocchi, having an elevation higher than 1,600 meters, has become well known for holding the local horse race on the highest grounds in Japan. The first race held there was in August of 1952. It was with the help of the public office that the Horse Lovers Club in Kataoka village (now Shiojiri Kataoka) was able to complete the building of the race tracks. Back then, the race was with farm horses owned by farmers. At the time when no buses went up to Takabocchi, and cars were not common, both the racing farm horses and visitors had to climb to the top by foot!

After Shiojiri was inaugurated, the scale of the event enlarged and became the biggest event in the city. Today, there are over 100 racehorses and ponies that join the race. Children also have a great time at the event, and especially love to participate in pony and horse carriage riding, and pet the animals. It is an event that can only be offered in the pleasant environment of Nagano.

What does "Takabocchi" mean?

There are several definitions:

1. It means a giant, whom people referred as the "Dairabocchi" or "Deirabocchi", who sat down to take a break.
2. In the Ainu language, "Bocchi" means giant or gigantic. In this case, it means high mountains or mighty mountains.
3. It means a "kubochi" (depression) on a high place.
4. Takabocchi, which looks like a wine cork on top of the mountain, can be described as "boccho" (stuck out), and this later evolved to "Takabocchi."



A little side trip...

Kikyogahara, famous for producing grapes and wine, is just a 30 minute drive away. Aroma of the sweet grapes will fill the air in this area every September. Among all the wines produced there, the multiple prize-winning wine in international competitions, "Kikyogahara Merlot", is highly recommended.

Traveling an hour further south, you will enter the hometown of Kiso Shikki (Japanese Lacquerware) called "Kiso Hirasawa." Situated right beside it is the biggest post town on the Nakasendo highway, "Naraijuku." Please feel free to drop by for a visit!



Kikyogahara Wine



Shikki (Lacquerware)



Post town "Naraijuku"