

# Tateyama Midagahara and Dainichidaira

Alpine Wetland,  
Ravine,  
Waterfall

Geographical Coordinates: 36°34.5'N, 137°32'E / Altitude: 1,040-2,120m / Area: 574ha / Major Type of Wetland: Alpine wetland (snow patch grassland), ravine, waterfall/ Designation: Special Protection Zone of National Park / Municipalities Involved: Tateyama Town, Toyama Prefecture / Ramsar Designation: July 2012 / Ramsar Criteria: 1

## General Overview:

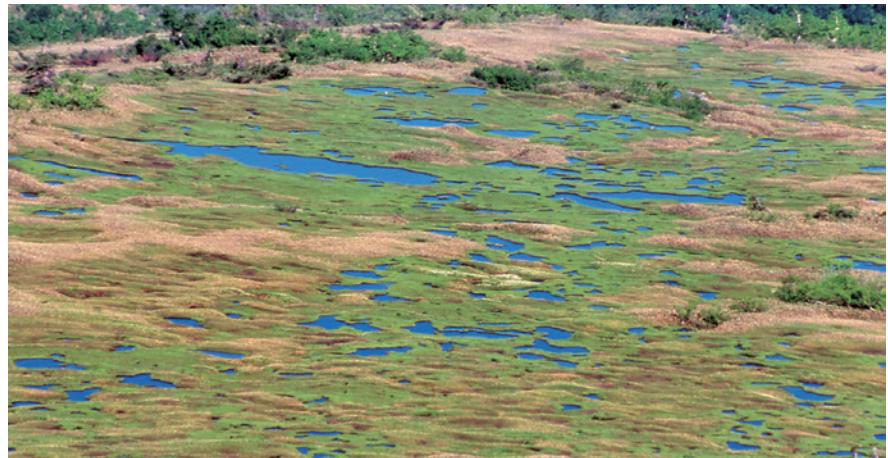
The Ramsar Site, Tateyama Midagahara and Dainichidaira in Tateyama town of Toyama Prefecture, is located at an altitude of 1,040 - 2,120m in a mountain range in the central part of Honshu. It consists of flat snow-patch grassland and the Shomyo Ravine and Shomyo Waterfall that boasts an abundant quantity of water. The area has a subarctic humid climate with large annual precipitation of as much as 5,000-6,000mm, average snow accumulation of 5m and continuous snow cover duration of approximately 200 days from mid-November to late June.

Tateyama Midagahara and Dainichidaira stretch over the gently sloping lava plateau formed by past volcanic activity. It has a unique open landscape of wet alpine fellfield or wind-swept field, with approximately 1,000 small ponds called "Gaki-no-ta", scattered over a wetland shaped by cold climate, heavy snow, abundant water and strong winds. The Shomyo Waterfall has the largest drop in Japan, gathering water from the wetland and rushing down the cliff. The area around Tateyama Midagahara and Dainichidaira in Tateyama Mountain Range is a part of Chubu-Sangaku National Park. The Shomyo Waterfall is designated as a National Place of Scenic Beauty and National Natural Monument.

## Flora and Fauna in Midagahara:

Tateyama Midagahara and Dainichidaira present typical mire vegetation consisting of *Carex blepharicarpa*, *Rhynchospora yasudana* and *Moliniopsis japonica* with the hierarchy composed only of herbaceous species. Besides the above mentioned species, *Nephrophyllum crista-galli*, Common Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia* L.), *Alettris foliata*, and *Shortia soldanelloides f. alpines* grow well alongside many endangered species such as Northern Green Orchid (*Platanthera hyperborea*) and Poor Sedge (*Carex paupercula*). Communities of *Scirpus hondoensis* are found in the ponds, and fellfield shrubs including *Pinus x hakkodensis* and *Rhododendron tchonoskii subsp. trinerve* are found on a slightly elevated area, along with the species such as Maries' Fir (*Abies mariessi*) and Butterfly Maple (*Acer tchonoskii*), with a partial invasion of Dwarf-bamboo (*Sasa kurilensis*).

As for the birds, besides the Common cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) and Meadow Bunting (*Emberiza cioides*) corresponding to the grassland and the environment of forest edge during the summer, the place



View of Midagahara (Photo by T. Sato)

is a wintering habitat for the endangered Japanese Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta japonica*).

## Mountain Worship and Tourism:

Mt. Tateyama has been revered by people for a long period of time as one of the "Three Holy Mountains" in Japan along with Mt. Fuji and Mt. Hakusan. This mountain was considered to be an embodiment of heaven and hell.

The name of "Gaki-no-ta", the plateau with numerous ponds, also originates in Buddhism. It was believed to be a place for rice planting by the hungry ghosts fallen into hell. Shomyo Waterfall is said to be named after the roar of the waterfall that sound like the chanting of Buddhist sutra. The waterfall is one of the best examples of nature worship in Mt. Tateyama.

The Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route connects Tateyama town in Toyama Prefecture and Omachi town in Nagano Prefecture, and provides easy access by public transportation to Murodo-daira, located at an altitude of 2,450m. Many people visit the area along the route to contemplate nature, learn about it and trek. There are some board walks in Midagahara visited by more than 50,000 tourists every year. Interpretations of nature by local guides are available here. It is easy to reach the Shomyo Waterfall by car, where visitors can enjoy a magnificent landscape. Additionally, Dainichidaira is a great place for mountain climbers because it is a part of a trekking course to Mt. Dainichidake, and



Shomyo Waterfall (Photo by M. Ota)

it is necessary to stay in a mountain hut to go for trekking.

## The Water of the Shomyo River for Drinking:

The Shomyo Waterfall pours into the Shomyo River and then into the Joganji River, and the water is used for drinking in the area. Snowfall and rainfall precipitated in the catchment area penetrate into the underground. The water springs out at Tateyama Station, the gateway of the Tateyama-Kurobe Alpine Route. The mild sweet water is sold as bottled water for drinking.

## Contact Information:

Tateyama Town Office

<http://www.town.tateyama.toyama.jp/>

