

Amusing Local Treasure Hunt at the Foot of Mt. Hakusan

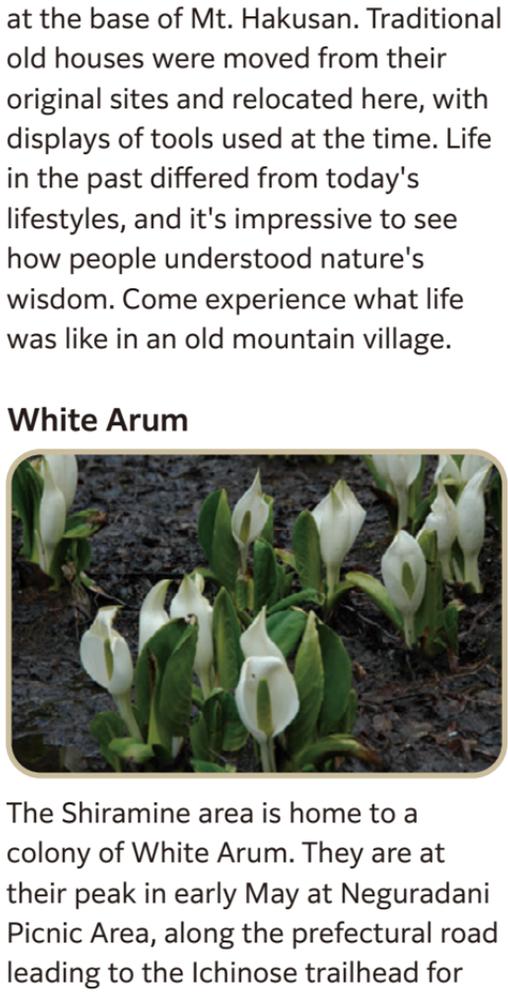
Shiramine, Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture Edition

Shiramine is an area in Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture. It has flourished since medieval times as a route along the Echizen Zenjodo trail up Mt. Hakusan. During the Edo period, the area was subject to constant disputes between members of the Kaga and Fukui domains, and was considered a "tenryo," or shogunal demesne. Known worldwide for its heavy snowfall, the region has few rice paddies due to the steep, mountainous terrain. Thus, their agriculture focused on "dezukuri," or making use of the natural landscape to live self-sufficiently, primarily using the practice of slash-and-burn on the mountainsides.

The Shiramine area serves as the gateway to Mt. Hakusan from the Ishikawa side. It is home to old townscapes and hot springs, all surrounded by an abundant natural setting. Geographically and historically, it has been isolated from other regions, and much of Shiramine's peculiar dialect and culture remains, even today. Here, we delve into the treasures of the Shiramine area.

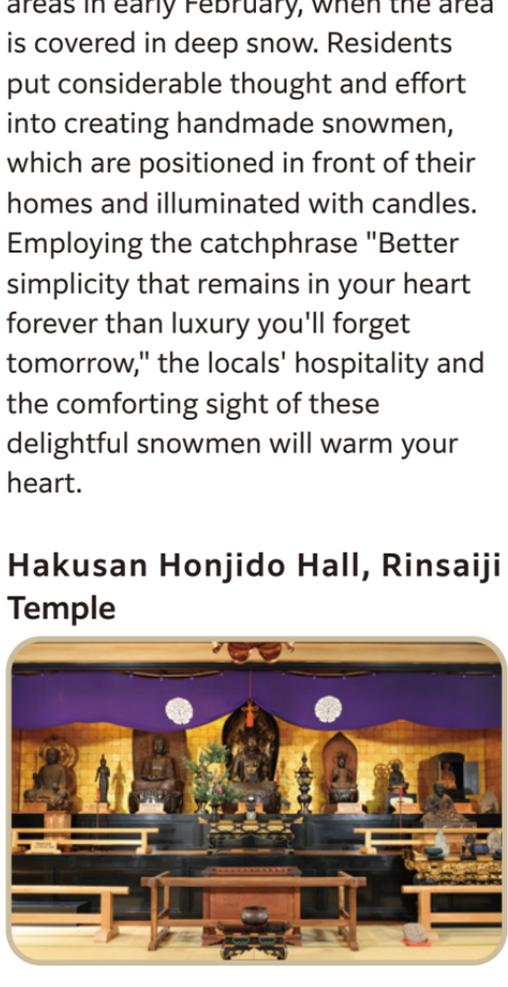
Shiramine: Gateway to Mt. Hakusan, Town of Snowmen, Tenryo Feudal Domain

Hakusan Folk Museum



The Hakusan Folk Museum is an outdoor exhibition facility that recreates the lives of people who lived at the base of Mt. Hakusan. Traditional old houses were moved from their original sites and relocated here, with displays of tools used at the time. Life in the past differed from today's lifestyles, and it's impressive to see how people understood nature's wisdom. Come experience what life was like in an old mountain village.

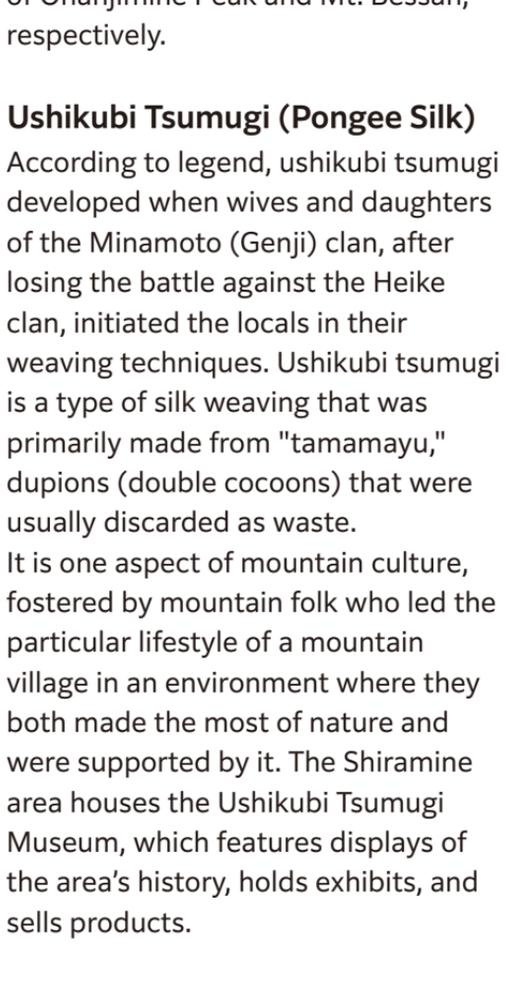
White Arum



The Shiramine area is home to a colony of White Arum. They are at their peak in early May at Neguradani Picnic Area, along the prefectural road leading to the Ichinose trailhead for Mt. Hakusan.

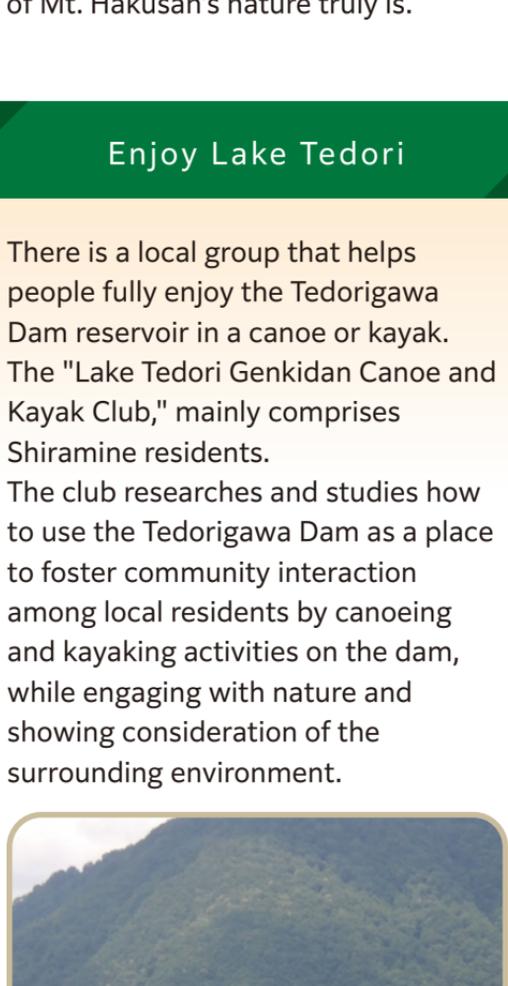
Another colony is located at the foot of Mt. Oarashi. Drive up the forest road and then hike up to Mt. Oarashi. Along the way, there is a fork in the road where you'll find a sign for the White Arum. Viewing White Skunk Cabbage after working up a sweat is a special experience.

Shiramine Snowman Festival



The Shiramine Snowman Festival is held in the Shiramine and Kuwajima areas in early February, when the area is covered in deep snow. Residents put considerable thought and effort into creating handmade snowmen, which are positioned in front of their homes and illuminated with candles. Employing the catchphrase "Better simplicity that remains in your heart forever than luxury you'll forget tomorrow," the locals' hospitality and the comforting sight of these delightful snowmen will warm your heart.

Hakusan Honjido Hall, Rinsaiji Temple



All of the Buddhist statues in this hall are known as "gezanbutsu," or "Buddha down from the mountain." Originally enshrined at or near Mt. Hakusan's summit, these statues were at risk of being removed from the mountain and abandoned due to the early Meiji-period policy forcing the separation of Shinto and Buddhism. They were brought down from Mt. Hakusan and moved to Rinsaiji Temple.

There are seven gezanbutsu in all. The central statue is a seated Eleven-Headed Kannon Goddess of Mercy statue that was originally enshrined on Mt. Hakusan's main peak, Gozengamine, where Okumiya Shrine is now located. On either side of it are seated statues of Amida Buddha and Sho Kannon Bodhisattva, which were enshrined at the summits of Onanjimine Peak and Mt. Bessan, respectively.

Ushikubi Tsumugi (Pongee Silk)

According to legend, ushikubi tsumugi developed when wives and daughters of the Minamoto (Genji) clan, after losing the battle against the Heike clan, initiated the locals in their weaving techniques. Ushikubi tsumugi is a type of silk weaving that was primarily made from "tamamayu," dupions (double cocoons) that were usually discarded as waste.

It is one aspect of mountain culture, fostered by mountain folk who led the particular lifestyle of a mountain village in an environment where they both made the most of nature and were supported by it. The Shiramine area houses the Ushikubi Tsumugi Museum, which features displays of the area's history, holds exhibits, and sells products.

Ohta Giant Horse Chestnut Tree

This giant tree, designated a Natural Monument by the government, is currently the largest horse chestnut tree in Japan.

The tree is located along National Route 157, about a 90-minute walk from Donomori Shrine in the Omichidani area. Selected as one of Japan's 100 most famous trees, it is approximately 1,300 years old, with a trunk circumference of approximately 13 meters and a height of approximately 25 meters.

Gazing at its enormous form, you can sense how deep and rich the embrace of Mt. Hakusan's nature truly is.

Enjoy Lake Tedor

There is a local group that helps people fully enjoy the Tedorigawa Dam reservoir in a canoe or kayak. The "Lake Tedor Genkidan Canoe and Kayak Club," mainly comprises Shiramine residents.

The club researches and studies how to use the Tedorigawa Dam as a place to foster community interaction among local residents by canoeing and kayaking activities on the dam, while engaging with nature and showing consideration of the surrounding environment.

[Lake Tedor Genkidan Canoe and Kayak Club]
<http://tedorikogccc.g1.xrea.com/index.html>

Chubu Regional Environment Office, Ministry of the Environment/Association for Conservation of Circum-Hakusan Area