

The Heartwarming ♥ Project

The "Heartwarming" Poster
feat. HS students from Shizuoka
Ajigasawa HS SBP Research Group



The Ajigasawa High School SBP research group is a business research team engaged in studying the local community and creating products utilizing local resources. In October 2019, connected by the National High School SBP Exchange Fair, we had the opportunity to collaborate with students of Hamamatsu Gakuhei High School (Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka Prefecture) on a project to promote our local area's values. Together, we strolled around the town of Ajigasawa, took photos, developed a catchphrase, and created a poster titled "The Heartwarming ♥ Project." We projected the sentiments of bone fide high school students in scenes of the everyday, such as the local seascape or the train station used for daily commuting. We want to teach people about the appeal of our beloved Ajigasawa Town! We want to reinvigorate our community with tourism! We hope to spread these feelings to people everywhere.

Contact

- Ajigasawa Town Tourist Information Center
☎0173-72-7000
- Ajigasawa Town Tourism Association
☎0173-72-5004
Website: <http://www.ajigasawa.info>
- Ajigasawa Tourism & Commerce Section,
Policy Promotion Division
☎0173-72-2111
Website: <http://www.town.ajigasawa.lg.jp>
- Ajigasawa Tourism Portal Site "AJI-IKU"
Website: <http://www.ajiiku.jp>

2022.1



The Next Train

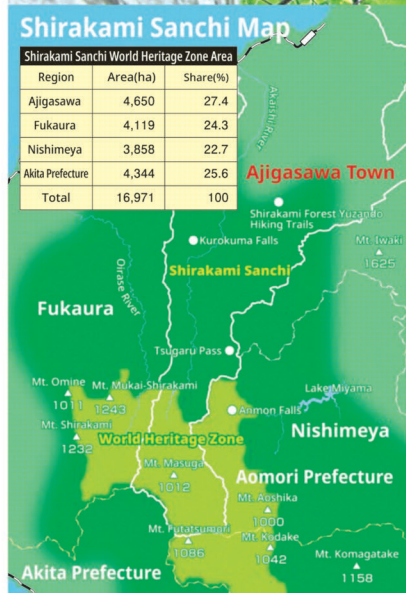
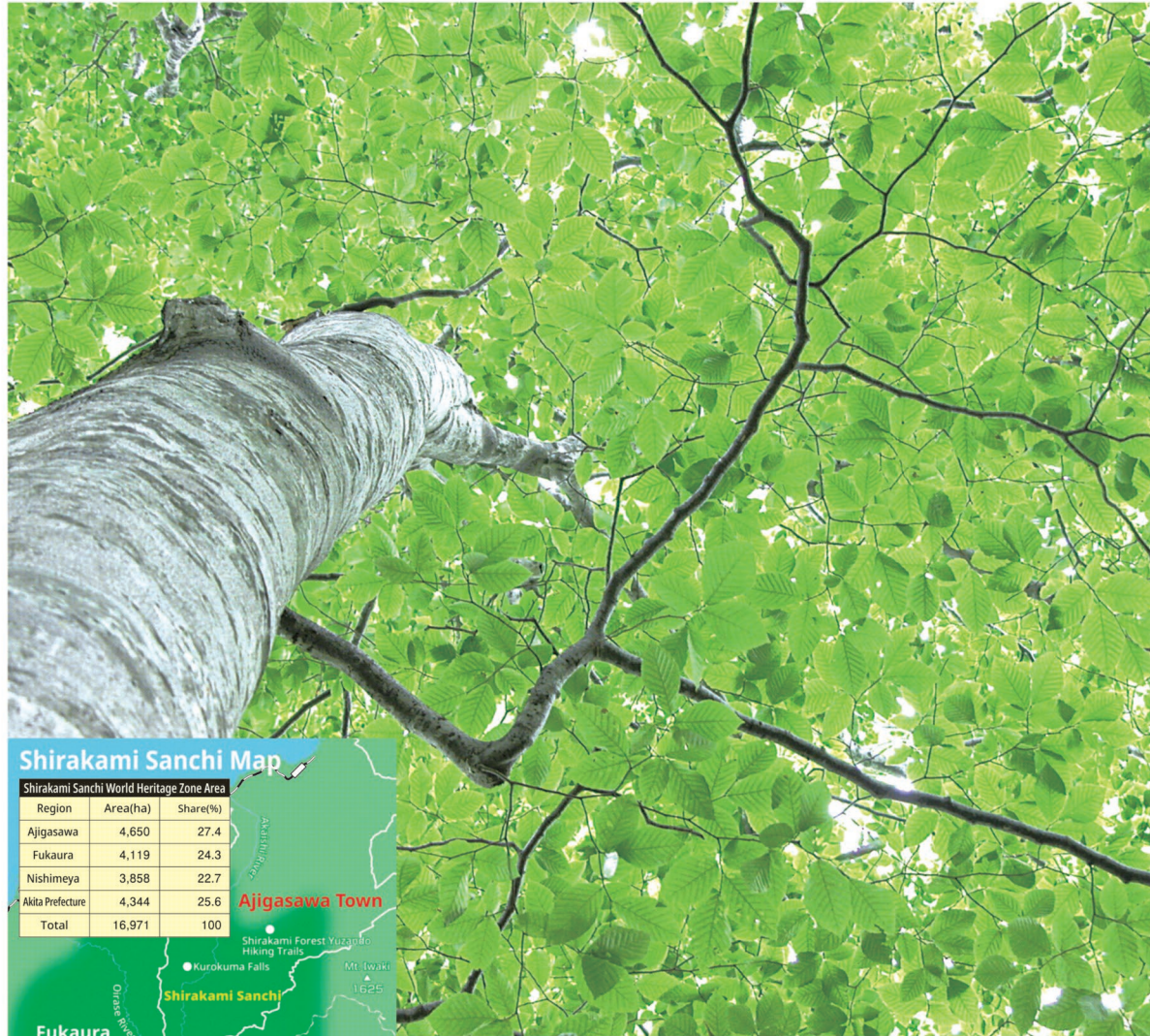


「あと何本」
あじがさわの駅に
もう何回か乗るよ
いまでもあじがさわの駅
あじがさわの駅
あじがさわの駅

On the platform all alone,
he isn't anywhere in sight.
Another train departs the tracks,
"Will I be waiting here all night?"
I whisper out a fretful sigh,
my breath a steaming cloud of white.

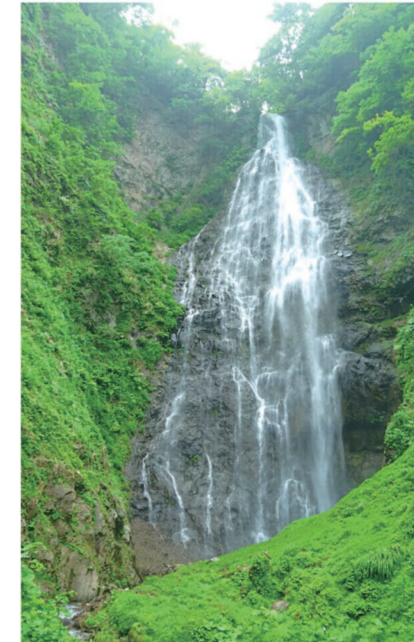
Location: Ajigasawa Station





Natural World Heritage Site, Shirakami Sanchi

Shirakami Sanchi is a mountainous region ranging from 100m to 1,200m in elevation. It covers an area of about 130,000 hectares and straddles the border of Aomori and Akita prefectures. A core area of 16,971 hectares, containing one of the largest primordial beech forests in the world, was registered as a World Natural Heritage Site in December of 1993. About 27% of this area occupies Ajigasawa Town. Shirakami Sanchi nurture a vast ecosystem harboring a wide variety of plant and animal life, including the black woodpecker and the golden eagle, both natural monuments of Japan.



Commanding Cascade Kurokuma Falls

Located in Takinosawa, a tributary of the Akaisi River, this waterfall has a vertical drop of 85 meters and a width of 15 meters, making it one of the largest falls in Aomori Prefecture. It has been a place of worship since ancient times because it resembles the goddess Kannon with hands joined in prayer. There are 12 large and small waterfalls in Takinosawa, and you see the first of the Kurokuma Falls by taking the maintained walking path. It is only a 15 minute walk from the parking lot. As you pass through tunnels of beech, oak, and katsura trees, you may encounter wild birds native to Shirakami Sanchi.

■ Open late May - early November

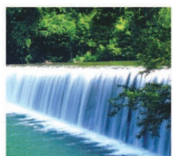


Rugged Ravine Akaishi Gorge

The Akaishi River, a clear stream sourced from Shirakami Sanchi, is a treasure trove of ayu (sweetfish), yamame (trout), and iwana (char). The sweetfish, called "golden ayu," are particularly attractive to anglers, who flock from inside and outside of the prefecture when the fishing season opens on July 1st every year. You can also enjoy the seasonal scenery along the Akaishi-Keiryu Line, a road that runs along the stream, and stop at scenic spots such as the Aoiwa (green tuff) Observation Deck. See the beauty of the ravine as it changes from season to season, from fresh spring greenery to colorful autumn leaves.



golden ayu



Sweetfish Sanctuary.

Waters of Shirakami Sanchi

The beech forest is known as a "natural dam" for its excellent water retention capacity. The pure spring water from the beech forests of Shirakami Sanchi, a World Natural Heritage Site, has been bottled using an unheated process, a first in Japan.



Café Water & Coffee

Coffee brewed from the waters of Shirakami Sanchi



National Historic Site: Tanesato Castle Ruins, Mitsunobu Manor

These are the ruins of Tanesato Castle, originally built by Lord Mitsunobu Oura who entered Tanesato from Shimo-Kuji in the Nanbu Region. He is said to be the founder of the Tsugaru clan because one of his future successors, Lord Tamenobu, achieved the unification of Tsugaru five generations later. Lord Mitsunobu's mausoleum, along with a bronze statue in his homage, stands peacefully among a field of around 800 peonies, the emblem of the Tsugaru clan. The sea of flowers blooms from May through June.

- Open on Fridays & weekends from May 1 to October 31
- Hours: 9:00 - 17:00 (until 16:30 from September)
- Admission: Adults ¥300, HS students ¥220, elementary and JHS students ¥150
- Contact: Ajigasawa Board of Education ☎0173-72-2111



Lord Mitsunobu's Mausoleum

Mitsunobu, who passed on October 8, 1526, was buried in accordance with his final will: standing upright facing southeast, fully suited in armor, bearing a sword and a conch on his waist.



Tsugaru Clan Founder, Lord Mitsunobu Oura



A unique place built
from the dreams of
seafaring men
Kitamae-bune
Port of Call &
Shipowner's
Village



Grand Festival of Shira-Hachimangu Shrine

This is a festival with a history of over 300 years, a tradition brought from the Kyoto area by Kitamae-bune. A continuation of Kyoto's Gion Festival, the festival includes portable shrine processions, floats, and entertainment akin to the kamigata culture of that area.

Designated as a cultural treasure by the prefecture and the town, it is held every four years.



Restored Kitamae-type wooden junk (benzaisen) -
"Michinoku Maru" (owned by Noheji Town)

Designated a "Japan Heritage Site" in 2017! Kitamae-bune Trade Ship

Ajigasawa flourished as a port for the Tsugaru clan. It prospered as a port of call for the westbound route, and serviced the frequent visits from Kitamae-bune from the Osaka and Hokuriku regions, bringing both economic and cultural wealth. The ship's votive tablet dedicated to Shira-Hachimangu Shrine tells us the situation of the port in those days.



Shira-Hachimangu Ema Plaque



Ozaki Sake Brewery

In the Edo period, this storehouse was operated by migrants from Fukui Prefecture, and was used to accumulate marine products to be transported on Kitamae-bune. Since 1860, it has been used as the only sake brewery on the west coast of Aomori Prefecture and is currently still in operation.



Kujira-mochi (Murakami-ya)

Kujira-mochi rice cake was introduced from Kyoto via Kitamae-bune. The ingredients are simple: unpolished rice, mochi rice, red beans, and sugar. It has a chewy texture and an elegant flavor.



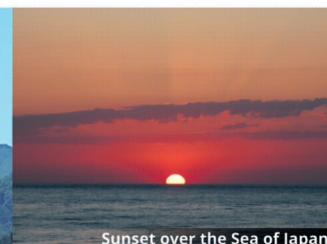
Ajigasawa Jinku Folk Music

This music for the summer Bon-odori dance was brought by Kitamae-bune from the Akita and Hokuriku regions. It is a town cultural treasure.





Fishing for ayu (Akaishi River)



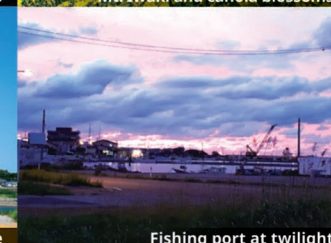
Sunset over the Sea of Japan



Mt. Iwaki and canola blossoms



Nagisa Bridge



Fishing port at twilight



Ajigasawa fishing port & Mt. Iwaki



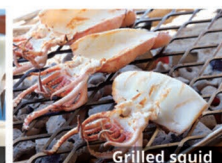
Resort Shirakami train over Akaishi River

Harvesting the natural blessings of Shirakami!

Ajigasawa, with its many mountains, rivers, and ocean coastline, is blessed with resources from the land and sea throughout the four seasons. Wild vegetables and mushrooms, as well as freshwater fish such as ayu (sweetfish) and itou (taimen fish), are nurtured by the clear water of Shirakami Sanchi. The ocean provides plentiful sea bream and flounder, as well as spear squid in winter, flying squid in summer, and salmon in autumn. Squid hung on a drying line, called a "Squid Curtain," is an iconic symbol of the delicacies in Ajigasawa.



Squid curtain



Grilled squid



Golden Sweetfish of Akaishi river

The golden ayu (sweetfish) is nurtured in the clear waters of Akaishi River. The town has successfully cultivated this species, and exports the juvenile fish to various rivers in the prefecture. In addition to the popular but simple charcoal-grilled salted ayu (shioyaki) and miso-coated baked fish (dengaku), you can also taste fish offal (uruka) or fish pickled in rice (izushi).



Itou fish over rice

Fish Delicacy "Itou"

Itou, also known as taimen or Japanese huchen, currently only inhabits one part of Hokkaido. Using the pristine waters of Shirakami Sanchi, these rare fish are being cultivated here. Known as "river foie gras," this fish can be eaten raw, grilled, or used as an ingredient in western cuisine. It is served in Ajigasawa's local restaurants together with a special sauce. Itou over rice is gaining popularity.

■ Available with reservation at: kuma-no-yu Hot Spring, Secchan's Experience no Ie, Izakaya Jiraiya, 1091 (Tregui)

■ Available on demand at: Drive-In Shiohaze
■ Available with reservation at: Hotel Granmer Sankaiso, Ajigasawa Hot Spring Inn Suigun-no-yado, Rockwood Hotel & Spa, Kappo Suitenkaku Restaurant, Izakaya Jiraiya

Famous Faces of Ajigasawa

Local Celebrities!



Mai-no-Umi Shūhei

Hometown Ambassador

Even as one of the smallest wrestlers in the world of Sumo, the Ajigasawa-born Komusubi-ranked Mai-no-Umi delighted fans with a variety of exciting distraction and evasion techniques. His technical range and ability to defeat larger opponents earned him nicknames such as "Skill Shopping Spree" and "Heisei Hero." He is currently active as a successful sumo commentator, sportscaster, and television personality.



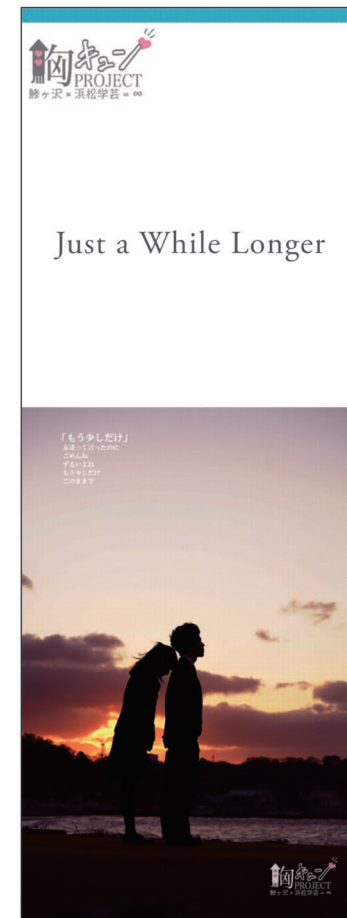
Wasao

Distinguished Tourism Ambassador

This Akita-inu dog named Wasao gained fame on the internet for his homely yet handsome face. He not only worked as the town's tourism ambassador and station conductor, but he was also a successful movie star debuting on the silver screen. On June 8th of 2020, the entire nation grieved his passing at the age of 13. Now, the important position he left behind has been inherited by the Wasao family daughter, Chome.



ちよめ



Just a While Longer

I know I said
you're just a friend,
but I don't want
this time to end.
Can we stay just a while longer?

Location: Hamanasu Park



One-stop shop for Souvenirs and Products from the Land & Sea Seaside Station Wando

Fresh seafood, produce, processed goods, and souvenirs are all gathered at Seaside Station Wando. There is a joint cafeteria and free rest area, as well as a tourist information center where information on accommodation, tours, and events is provided. Goods based on Wasao, the popular homely but adorable Akita-Inu dog, are also sold here. At the Sumo Museum on the second floor, you can learn about the tradition of Sumo and the career of hometown hero wrestler Mai-no-Umi.

■Hours: 9:00 - 18:00 (April - November)
9:00 - 18:00 (December - March); closes at 15:00 on 12/31
■Closed: January 1st - 3rd, other provisional closures ■Contact: ☎0173-72-6661



Delicious food
we take pride in.
Wando = "Us"
in Tsugaru dialect

Ajigasawa Sumo Museum (Seaside Station Wando 2F) Mai-no-Umi Hometown Gallery

This museum is dedicated to former Komusubi-ranked sumo wrestler Mai-no-Umi, as well as the successes and traditions of other locally-born wrestlers. Including informational panels and a model sumo ring, many of Mai-no-Umi items, such as his top-knot, clothing, and ceremonial mawashi loincloth, and also on display.

■Hours: 9:00 - 17:00 (April - November)
9:00 - 16:00 (December - March); closes at 15:00 on 12/31
■Closed: January 1st - 3rd, other provisional closures
■Admissions: Free; Sumo suit rental ¥500 per person



Inside JR Ajigasawa Station Ajigasawa Tourist Information Center

Tourist information for Ajigasawa Town provided here. Bicycle rental and luggage cloak service is available.

■Hours: 8:30 - 16:30
■Closed: No closures April - October
Tuesdays and Wednesdays (November - March)
Closed: January 1st - 3rd, other provisional closures
■Contact ☎0173-72-7000



Aomori Spring Golf Club

This course was once host to the JPGA Men's Regular Tour. This strategy-rich course located at the base of majestic Mt. Iwaki has stunning views over the Sea of Japan and the Tsugaru Plains.

●Course: 7,104 yards, Par 72
●Facilities: 300 yd driving range (24 spaces), clubhouse, 5-passenger carts
■Contact: ☎0173-72-1011
■Open mid-April to mid-November
■Website: <http://www.rockwoodhotel.com>



Aomori Spring Ski Resort

Located on the northern slopes of magnificent Mt. Iwaki, this ski resort is renowned for its abundant high-quality snow and long courses. With panoramic views of the Sea of Japan and the Tsugaru Plains, you can choose a wide variety of slopes for all levels. Take the leisurely beginner path winding through the beech forests, slide down the steep expert runs up to 30 degrees in slope.

●Courses: 3.4 km total length, 14 courses ●Lifts: 4 + 1 Gondola
●Facilities: Ski-in/Ski-out Hotel, Restaurant
■Contact: ☎0173-72-1011 ■Open mid-December to early April
■Website: <http://www.rockwoodhotel.com>



Whole-Body Nature Experience Ajigasawa SUP

Stand-Up Paddleboard (abbr. SUP) is a sport you can enjoy anywhere with water, whether it be a river, lake, or ocean. Decide from a wide variety of activities, such as a downstream river drift to the sea, or even a floating yoga session.

■Available June - September
■Contact: GOOD ADVENTURE ☎090-4848-1916



Trying to Lie

"You're still in love?"
"Not anymore,"
I just replied
with all my might
but not my heart...

Location: Otakayama General Park



New Local Food

Ajigasawa Specialty Ajigasawa Flounder Bowl

The high-quality flounder that can be caught in Ajigasawa almost year-round grow and mature in the Sea of Japan, fed by the pristine waters of Shirakami Sanchi. These choice flounder are marinated and heaped atop bowls of rice to make the Ajigasawa Flounder Bowl, the local specialty cuisine. Each store that offers it uses their own house blend of marinade for a unique and delicious experience every time.



Flounder and Bowl

Abundant Seafood



Cantaloupes and Watermelons

Ajigasawa, Renown Melon Producer

Located facing the Sea of Japan, many of Ajigasawa Town's fields are comprised of sandy soil, ideal for cultivating melons. The large temperature variations and abundance of sea-borne minerals, which are carried by the wind and precipitate into the fields at the base of Mt. Iwaki, allow cantaloupes and watermelons to develop a rich sweetness. Please try some of our melons, our pride and joy!



Hasegawa Farm
H. GreenWork
Mr. Takateru
Hasegawa



Our local products are available through the Furusato Nozei tax program.



Furusato Choice



Furu-Navi



Rakuten
Furusato Nozei

Also available through auPAY Furusato Nozei, Furusato Premium, and Saison Furusato Nozei.



Rice



Apples



Asparagus from
foothills of Mt. Iwaki



Humans, animals, and nature in harmony Relaxing Farm Hasegawa Natural Farm

Our pigs are fed our house blend of fermented feed instead of the standard concentrated feed. By allowing the pigs to mature naturally over 10 months instead of the standard 6 months, our pork is especially rich, juicy, and sweet in flavor. Our free-chicken eggs also have a uniquely snappy elasticity and complex flavor.



Contact / ☎0173-72-6579

ABITANIA Jersey Farm

Our popular soft-serve ice cream is made from the rich milk of our Jersey cows that graze and develop among nature. Yogurt and mozzarella cheese made from this milk are exquisite too. You can try them all at the cafe on site.

So tasty!



Contact / Café MiMu
☎0173-72-1727



Ajigasawa's local cuisine!

Here are the choice sweets and snacks loved and valued by the local residents. The "Cake du Daifuku" is a mochi-wrapped cake made by longstanding Jpanaese sweets store Yamazaki. The "Chicken Stick" is a street treat from Takoyaki Saikai, which locals have been sinking their teeth into since childhood. The exquisite "Banana Boat" at Sweets Factory TATUYA is made from smooth, moist, and fluffy sponge cake and filled with whipped cream.



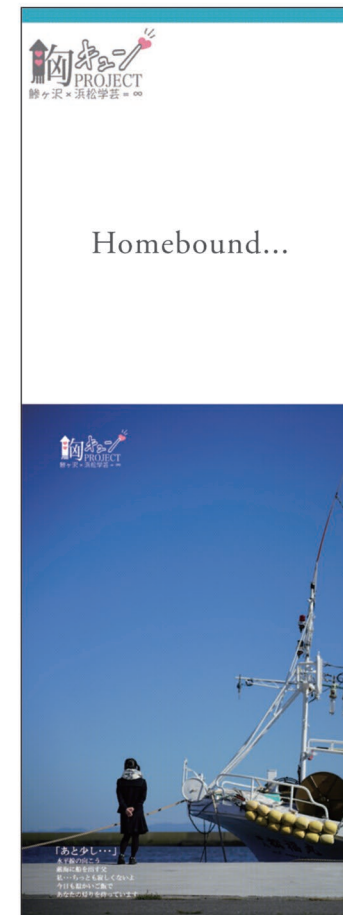
Cake du Daifuku



Chicken Stick



Banana Boat



Homebound...

My father sailed off on his boat
beyond the horizon on rough waves.
I quell my fear and solitude,
just warm my meal and calmly pray
the sea will not become his grave.

Location: Ajigasawa Fishing Port



Ajigasawa Hot Spring Hotel Grandmer Sankaiso

Hotel



The Grandmer Hotel stands atop a hill overlooking the Sea of Japan. Both western and Japanese-style outdoor baths are available, with stunning views over the Sea of Japan's ever-changing seasonal scenery. Meals are expertly prepared by experienced chefs and made from stingingly selected ingredients.



- Contact: ☎0173-72-8111
- Access: 5 min from Ajigasawa Station by car
- Website: <http://www.hotel-grandmer.com/>
- Internet / WiFi Access

Ajigasawa Highlands Hot Spring Rockwood Hotel & Spa

Hotel



The Rockwood Hotel & Spa is situated with a panoramic view of the Tsugaru Plains and Sea of Japan, with the grand Mt. Iwaki, known as the Fuji of Tsugaru, in the background. The view from the large public bath is fantastic, and you can relax your mind and body surrounded by natural scenery. A ski resort and golf course are on site.



- Contact: ☎0173-72-1011
- Access: 20 min from JR Ajigasawa Station by car
- Website: <https://rockwoodhotel.com/>
- Internet / WiFi Access

Ajigasawa Hot Spring Suigun no Yado Inn

Hotel



This warm and inviting wooden Japanese-style inn, just beside Ajigasawa Station of the popular JR Gono Line, feels like a hidden retreat full of nostalgic history. The hot spring water is comprised of ancient "fossilized" sea water, a rare and valuable resource. Enjoy meals made from fresh seasonal seafood and produce.



- Contact: ☎0173-72-6511
- Access: 3 min from Ajigasawa Station by car
- Website: <http://suigunnoyado.com/>
- Internet / WiFi Access

Minshuku Toyo Akabane

Guesthouse



This inn is embraced between the salty spray of the Sea of Japan and the natural beauty of Akaishi Stream sourced from Shirakami Sanchi. It is complete with a warming Japanese-style "irori" hearth, and is the perfect lodging for a fishing trip. Meals at different price points are available. Be sure to try the deep-fried "mebaru" perch, a specialty at this inn.



- Contact: ☎0173-72-5371
- Access: 10 min from JR Mutsu-Akaseki Station by foot, 10 min from JR Ajigasawa Station by car
- Website: <http://toyoakabane.net/>

Ono Ryokan

Japanese Inn

This homestyle inn is just in front of Ajigasawa Station. The gracious proprietress is very accommodating and will make you feel at home.



- Contact: ☎0173-72-3038
- Access: 1 min from JR Ajigasawa Station by foot

Kuma-no-Yu Onsen

Japanese Inn

This inn nestled in the woods is located just alongside the Akaishi Stream that flows from Shirakami Sanchi. The proprietor, the last of the "Akaishi Matagi" traditional hunters, is an expert in stream fishing and knowledgeable about Shirakami Sanchi. Listen to his fascinating stories and discover something new. You can enjoy cuisine made from local wild vegetables, golden sweetfish, and trout.



- Contact: ☎0173-79-2518
- Access: 30 min from JR Ajigasawa Station by car
- Open from June 1st - October 30th

Ajigasawa Camping Park (Nagadai Youth Traveler's Area)

Campsite

Located in the foothills of Mt. Iwaki in the Nagadai Highlands, this campground is a sanctuary of nature. Pitch a tent at the tentsite, or use the bungalows and log cabins to enjoy an authentic outdoor experience. Also try the pizza-making, breadmaking, crafting, and tree-climbing experiences.



- Open from April 28th - October 31st
- ※Log cabins open all year
- Contact: ☎0173-72-1571

Dogs welcome.
Dog run on site.



Passerby



We climbed these stairs
so long ago.

I see your gaze,
how you have grown.

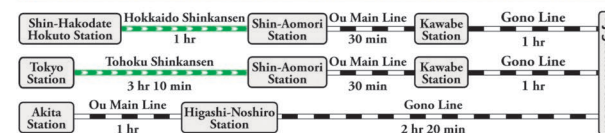
My candid thoughts yet still unknown.

Location: Hiderita Takakura Shrine



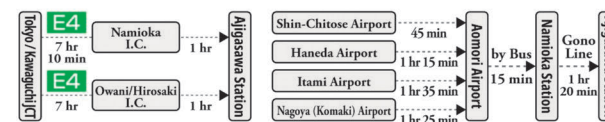
● Travel times are estimates. Please refer to official timetables for more details.

JR

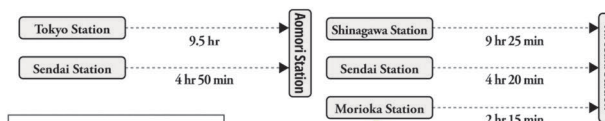


Tohoku Expressway E4




by Air



Highway Bus



Legend

 Shinkansen
 by JR Train
 by Expressway



An Empty Space



Can we be sincere
in only our dreams?
We put up a facade
and pretend not to see
the timetable for our honesty.

Location: Aijigasawa Station