**Mt. Nishibetsu Profile**

Mt. Nishibetsu (799.5 m) is southeast of Lake Mashu and commands fantastic views of the lake from its summit, including the jagged volcanic landscape of Akan-Mashu National Park and a section of Shiretoko National Park, the peninsula that juts out into the Sea of Okhotsk. The brilliant alpine flowers that bloom across the slopes of Mt. Nishibetsu in June and July include bright pink Kamchatka rhododendrons and delicate, purple woolly geraniums. A hiking path connects the Mt. Nishibetsu Trekking Trail with the Mt. Mashu Trekking Trail, which leads to the summit of Mt. Mashu.

*Mt. Nishibetsu Trekking Trail*

The Mt. Nishibetsu Trekking Trail is a relatively easy trek for experienced hikers, but has some steep slopes and narrow, rocky paths that require a good level of fitness to climb. Reaching the summit takes around 90 minutes from the Nishibetsu-goya (mountain hut) parking lot or about three hours from Lake Mashu Observation Deck No. 1.

*Nishibetsu-goya (Mountain Hut) Trailhead*

The path from the Nishibetsu-goya (mountain hut) runs uphill through a forest of Japanese larch and broad-leaved trees. There is a break in the forest called Uguisudani around 10 minutes from the trailhead. This takes its name from the Japanese bush warblers (*uguisu*) that inhabit the area. Uguisudani also marks the beginning of a very steep section of the trail known as Gamanzaka, or “Tough-it-out Slope.” It takes around 20 minutes to climb this steep slope, which rises around 100 meters in altitude.

After reaching the top of Gamanzaka, the path levels out slightly before winding up the mountain slope for another 600 meters. This section of the trail is flanked by Erman’s birch trees. A vast meadow of alpine flowers can be found at the end of this 600-meter stretch.

The meadow ends around 500 meters from the summit. From here, the trail narrows and winds as it approaches the mountaintop. This final section is quite rocky, so caution is advised, especially in wet weather. The mountain path is well maintained, and manmade steps formed from soil-packed sacks make the ascent easier. About 1 kilometer from the top of Mt. Nishibetsu, the path forks off toward Mt. Risuke, a 787-meter peak.