【**Kiyotsu River**】

The pristine Kiyotsu River flows through Mitsumata into the Shinano River, which flows out to the Sea of Japan. The river’s headwaters are on Mt. Shirasuna (2,140 m) and are fed by streams from three neighboring mountains.

The presence of char and *baikamo* in the river testify to the purity of its waters. Char, a genus of the salmonid family, is a cold-water fish that has a dark body with small scales and light cream, pink, or red spots. *Baikamo* (“plum flower water plant”) is an aquatic perennial plant belonging to the buttercup family that is native to northern Japan. It prefers sandy soil and fast-flowing, chilly water between 15 and 25 degrees Celsius. The stem of the *baikamo* grows to almost a meter in length, and the plant’s strand-like leaves are about half a millimeter wide and up to six centimeters long. Its five-petaled white flowers bloom between early summer and early autumn.

Char and *baikamo* both flourish in the stream at Ime Jinja Shrine and other locations in Yuzawa. Streams with water pure enough to grow *baikamo* are increasingly rare, and the plant is listed as an endangered species in some prefectures. It is used in goldfish bowls and is often served at meals with vinegar or in miso soup.