

【Yumemidaira Hiking Trail】

The Yumemidaira Hiking Trail winds through an area south of the Sasagamine Dam that is heavily wooded with Japanese beech and Japanese white birch, and it also passes through the site of a former lumber mill that was in use until the early 1950s. Walking in the forest, it can be hard to imagine that the entire area was a lakebed some twenty-five thousand years ago. Mt. Yake (2,400 m), from which smoke still rises occasionally, can be seen from the top of the stairs leading up from the dam.

(Note: toilet facilities are only available at the beginning of the Rabbit Course and along the Fox Course.)

Rabbit Course (3 km, 2 hours)

A short way into the course is a pond where frogs and Japanese black salamanders lay their eggs every June, as hinted by the stone frog statue nearby. The path then straightens and runs along an old rail line, where horse-drawn carts once transported lumber to what is now Kurohime Station, 20 kilometers away. In spring, two symbols of the season, *mizu-bashō* (literally, “water-banana”; *Lysichiton camtschaticensis*) and Asian fawn lilies (*katakuri*), come into bloom along the course.

Farther along is a shrine to Inari Ōkami that was discovered in 1991 and is thought to date to the Edo period (1603–1867). The shrine was originally located halfway up Mt. Shindō, but after its discovery it was relocated to a spot lower down the mountain to watch over hikers.

Fox Course (10 km, 4.5 hours)

The beginning of this course is dominated by two groves of Japanese larch trees (*karamatsu*), which are prized as lumber for the sturdiness of their wood. Near the rest facilities, a dead-end path leads to a 300-year-old *katsura* tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*).

(Note: taking this path will add another hour to the hike.)

Beyond the rest facilities is the site of a former lumber mill, which operated for around 20 years beginning in 1932. The mill’s residential area included an elementary school and extended to the shrine beside the old charcoal kiln.