

Landscape of Ebisu

Nakayama Senkyo is a group of low, rocky peaks that divide the eastern and western sections of Ebisu valley in Bungotakada. It is one of the most scenic spots in Bungotakada and popular activities include trekking the many rocky ridges known for their unusual shapes. References to Nakayama Senkyo in documents date as far back as the Heian period (794–1185).

The area is also known as Ebisu Yaba. “Yaba” refers to the distinctive peaks formed by the erosion of lava and tuff. When the Japanese philosopher Rai Sanyo visited the nearby valley of Nakatsu during the Edo period (1603–1868), he was inspired by the scenery and composed a Chinese-style poem entitled “Yabakei” (*yaba* scenery) which became the nickname of a gorge in that area. “Ebisu Yaba” reflects the influence of the name “Yabakei Gorge.”

There are many notable sights along the Nakayama Senkyo trekking path. One highlight is the area’s Mumyo Bridge (common type of bridge used for ascetic practices) which consists of just two thin stones laid across the gap in a steep cliff. Trekkers should be extremely cautious as the bridge has no railings to hold while crossing. (A detour is available for trekkers who don’t want to cross the bridge.) Another highlight is Mt. Takajo, which at 317 meters is the highest peak in the region. Trekking along the Nakayama Senkyo path will also lead to a cave called Kakureuto.

Several noteworthy spots are located near the base of Nakayama Senkyo, including the iconic temples and shrines of East Ebisu. The popular Ebisudani Onsen has spacious baths including an outdoor bath (*rotenburo*), and a restaurant offering local specialties such as soba (buckwheat) noodles on the weekend. The lookout point at the observatory at Ichiro Ikkei Park offers a panoramic view of the unique mountain formations of Nakayama Senkyo, as well as the surrounding foliage, which changes throughout the year.