

## **Sawando Onsen**

The area that is now Sawando Onsen was once a post town on the old highway network that connected various parts of the country with the city of Kamakura, the seat of the shogunate during the Kamakura period (1185–1333). The name “Sawando” roughly translates as “across the stream,” and the area was known as a crossing point between the old provinces of Hida and Shinshu (present-day Gifu and Nagano Prefectures, respectively).

*Onsen* means “hot spring,” and development of the hot-spring facilities started in 1998, when construction of the Abo Tunnel through the Northern Japanese Alps tapped into a previously unknown source of geothermally heated water. The water is clear, smells faintly of sulfur, and stays at around 70°C even as it is piped 7 kilometers down the mountains to the baths.

Located at the lower edge of the Chubusangaku National Park and Northern Japanese Alps, and with direct access to the city of Matsumoto in the east, Sawando Onsen is a gateway for sightseeing and outdoor sports in the area. Notable locations include the highland valley of Kamikochi, the Norikura Kogen highlands, the hot springs at Shirahone Onsen, and the town of Nagawa.