**The Stone Path of Hachiya-Toge Pass**

In the middle of a forest teeming with birdlife, a secluded stone footpath is a reminder of countless historical journeys over the Hachiya-Toge Pass. The 2-meter-wide and 80.4-meter-long stone-paved stretch is located in woodland in Gero’s Norimasa area. It is a section of the historical Nanboku Kaido trail that connected Gero with the town of Nakatsugawa, some 50 kilometers to the southeast.

The Nanboku Kaido (“north-south highway”) was colloquially known as the Kamakura Kaido because it conjoined with other routes going towards Kamakura, the seat of shogunal power during the Kamakura period (1185–1333). This highway also provided access to the Tosando Hida Branch Road, alternately known as the Hida Kaido, a major trading route for rice, salt, fish, and other goods, running through present-day Gero north to historic Etchu Province, part of present-day Toyama Prefecture.

Hachiya-Toge Pass was used for centuries by both local officials and commoners. Flat stones were laid to make the road traversable even during snow and heavy rains. It is located approximately 10 minutes by car from Gero Station, off Prefectural Road 440.