

## **Water Fountains of Yuya and Shitajima Onsen**

The outdoor drinking fountains of Yuya Onsen and Shitajima Onsen provide a different way to experience Gero's hot springs. Hot springs are generally thought of as settings for bathing and relaxation, but some of the waters can be drunk safely. Some traditional inns in the Hida-Osaka area of Gero use spring water for preparing dishes such as boiled tofu, rice porridge, and shabu-shabu.

These two fountains are modest in size, with a spout over a basin and ladles nearby. The water that gushes from the spouts is warm. It is naturally carbonated, and has a metallic taste and a slightly brown tinge due to high levels of carbonic acid and iron.

People have bathed in the hot springs of Yuya Onsen for around 400 years, and documents from the Edo period (1603–1867) mention that drinking the water can cure digestive disorders and other ailments. The hot springs of Shitajima Onsen have a history of approximately 300 years. The waters of these two areas are believed to be beneficial when consumed in small quantities and are part of the folklore that established Gero as a destination for healing and rejuvenation.