

Hakusan's Landscape

Mt. Hakusan is an active volcano, and its rocky lava fields are dotted with volcanic bombs that are remnants of past eruptions. Repeated rockslides and erosion by mountain streams have formed large, volcanic crater lakes and deep, forested valleys with cascading waterfalls. The three peaks that form the mountain's summit—Ōnanjigamine, Gozengamine, and Kengamine—were created by eruptions that occurred thousands of years apart.

The snow cap on Mt. Hakusan forms when warm, moist air from the Sea of Japan hits the mountain and is forced upward. In rising, the air expands and cools, allowing the moisture to condense into snow. When the snow eventually melts, it creates rivers with crystal clear water.

Plants and Wildlife on Mt. Hakusan

For half the year, Mt. Hakusan's alpine zone is covered in a thick blanket of

snow. The snow traps air and prevents the soil from freezing. As a result, over 200 species of alpine plants thrive on the mountain.

The diverse ecosystems of Mt. Hakusan support a wide variety of plants and animals. Rare raptors, such as the golden eagle, and large mammals, such as the shaggy, antelope-like serow, call the mountain's pristine broadleaf and beech forests home.