

Geography, Natural Environment, History and Culture

The Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve extends across Ishikawa Prefecture, Gifu Prefecture, Toyama Prefecture and Fukui Prefecture. The area is centered around Mt. Hakusan (2,702m in elevation), and is surrounded by the Sho River on the east side, the Tedomi River on the west side, and the Ono Basin and Kuzuryu River on the south side. Since it is located on the Sea of Japan side of Japan's main island, it catches snow clouds from the Sea of Japan and in the winter-time a large amount of snow accumulates from the summit down to the foothills.

A typical vertical distribution of vegetation from the warm-temperate zone to the alpine zone can be observed from the foothills to the summit of Mt. Hakusan. In the cool-temperate zone, beech forests thrive and large mammals can be found, including Japanese macaques, Japanese serows, Asiatic black bears, and raptors such as the golden eagle. In the subalpine zone, there are widespread forests of Maries' fir, Japanese hemlock, and Erman's birch. The alpine zone of Mt. Hakusan is located at the western extent of Japan's alpine zones. Communities of dwarf stone pine and

alpine meadows have developed there.



Ogimachi Settlement in Shirakawa-go



Hakusan Chukyo Shrine



Heisenji Hakusan Shrine



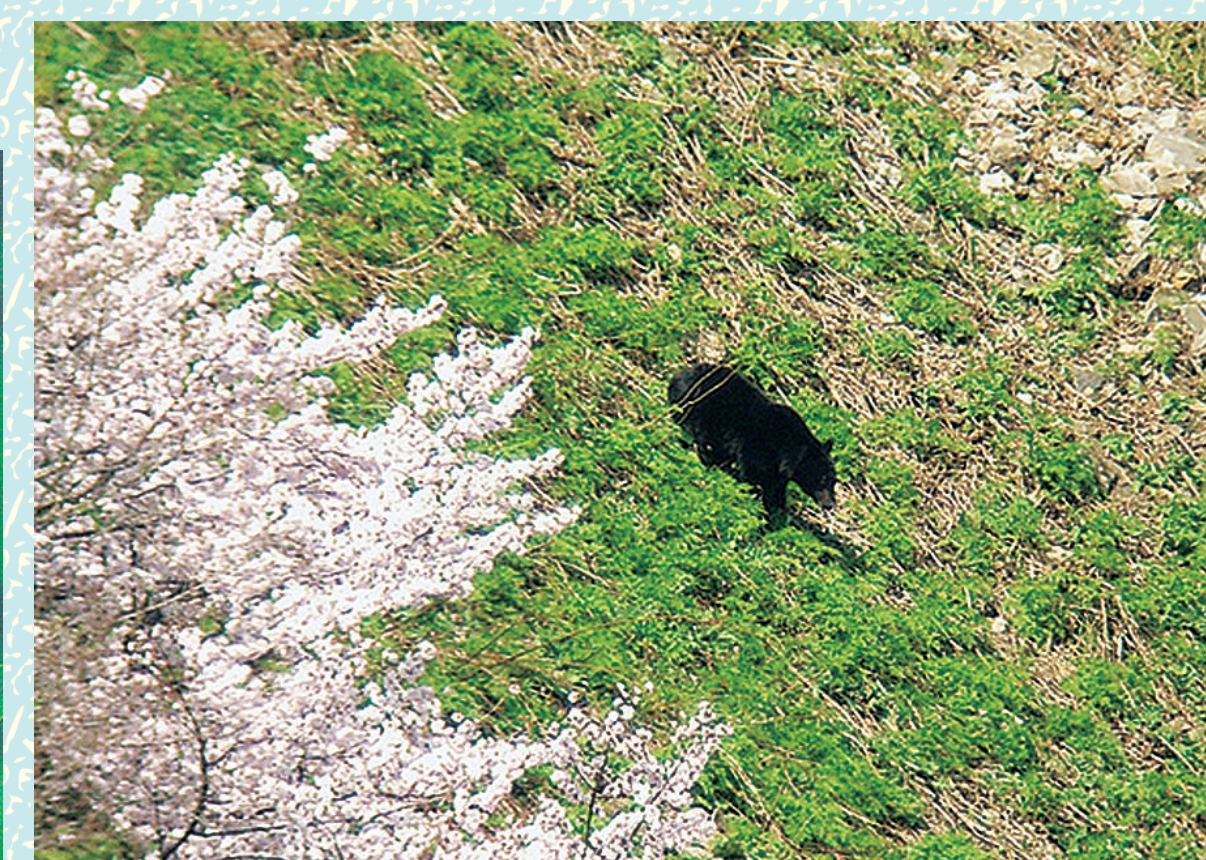
Suganuma Settlement in Gokayama



Hakusan Chidori



Japanese macaque



Asiatic black bear



Kamchatka lily

Mt. Hakusan is also known by the large number of plants that include "Hakusan" in their Japanese names, such as Hakusan Kozakura (*Primula cuneifolia* var. *hakusanensis*), Hakusan Ichige (*Anemone narcissiflora*) and Hakusan Chidori (*Dactylorhiza aristata*).

In the foothills, people have adapted to live in these natural environments. One of the symbols of this traditional habitation is the "Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama" which have been inscribed on the World Cultural Heritage List of UNESCO since 1995.

Mt. Hakusan is also a mountain that has drawn people of faith for a long time. The trails for climbing up Mt. Hakusan were established from three directions: Kaga (Ishikawa Prefecture), Echizen (Fukui Prefecture) and Mino (Gifu Prefecture). In addition, about 3,000 Hakusan Shrines have been spread out all across Japan.

Activities in the Biosphere Reserve (Regional Development Measures)

In the Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve, we are aiming to promote the entire Circum-Hakusan Area. We are collecting the information on various activities carried out in the area, such as conservation, education, and local development. On these basis, we will set up the management plan for the whole biosphere reserve. We would like to share "Hakusan" as a model case to the world, demonstrating how people honor, conserve and utilize nature.

Contact Us

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