

## Visitors' Guide 1

# Omote Daisetsu Area

Omote Daisetsu Area is in the northernmost region of this park, near Mount Asahi. Ropeways run up to the midpoints of Kurodake and Mount Asahi, and the climbing is relatively easy. Please refer to pages 24-25 on sightseeing in the Sounkyo Gorge and Tenninkyo Gorge. Asahikawa City is the starting point. You can get to the park either by bus, or by combination of train and bus.

## Kurodake (1,984m)

From Sounkyo Hot Spring, you can reach the summit by taking the ropeway, and then a ski lift up an elevation of 1,500m. From there, you climb the remaining 480m on foot. The summit offers an impressive view of the central vent of Daisetsuzan. Although the summit is rather narrow, the wide mountain ridge is extending from their ahead. There is a wide variety of plant species such as the Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra peregrina*) across the entire area. The most popular route of trekking Omote Daisetsu area is to start at Kurodake, going around the fringe of Mount Hokuchin along the edge of the Ohachidaira crater, then go down through Susoaidaira to the Mount Asahi ropeway. Although it involves more ups and downs, you can take another course, by going around the other side of the Ohachidaira crater, then passing Mount Asahi and getting to the Mount Asahi ropeway.



Ohachidaira



## Numanodaira



A view of Numanodaira from Tomanokkoshi

You can reach Numanodaira by climbing up from Aizankei Hot Spring, located to the north of Asahidake Hot Spring. It is a tranquil wetland expanding about halfway up Mount Aibetsu. The marshes are beautiful. From Numanodaira, passing through Tomanokkoshi, you can get to Susoaidaira.



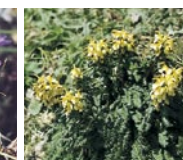
From Aizankei to Numanodaira

## From Ginsendai to Mount Akadake (2,078m)

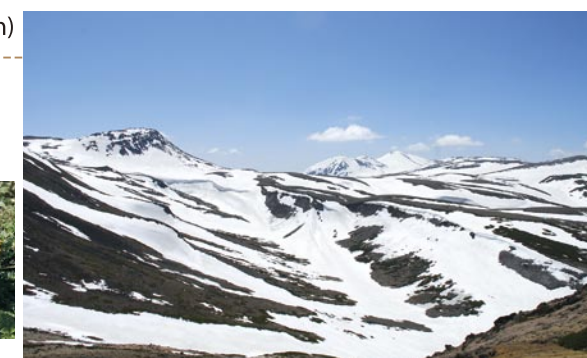
The bus runs from Sounkyo Hot Spring to Ginsendai, situated at the base of Mount Akadake. If you climb Mount Akadake after passing the first and second flower gardens, you can view the mountains of Omote Daisetsu. Many rare plants, such as the Rishiri Gentian (*Gentiana jamesii*) and the Crimson-tipped Lousewort (*Pedicularis oederi*) grow in the area between Mount Akadake and Mount Koizumi, which formed a long time ago.



Rishiri Gentian (*Gentiana jamesii*)

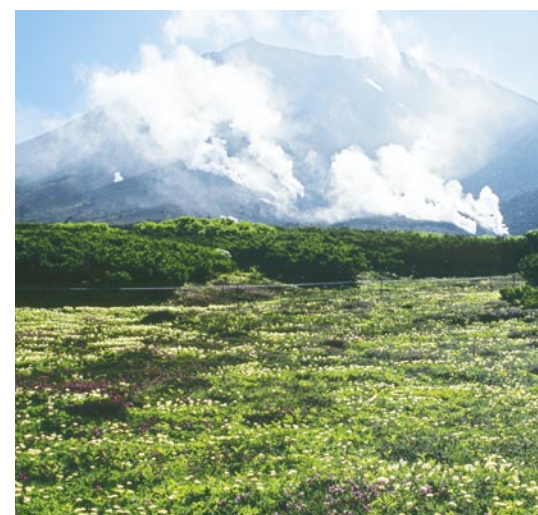


Crimson-tipped Lousewort (*Pedicularis oederi*)



View of the Mount Asahi area from the summit of the Mount Akadake

## Mount Asahi (2,291m), Susoaidaira



Mount Asahi (Asahidake) and Aleutian Avenas (*Sieversia pentapetala*)

The ropeway runs from Asahidake Hot Spring to Sugatami Station at an elevation of 1,600m. The horseshoe-shaped vent of Mount Asahi, which frequently releases smoke, can be seen straight ahead. This is the starting point for mountaineering in the directions of Mount Asahi and Kurodake. However, for a quick tour, there is a sightseeing trail that goes to Sugatami Pond and the Meoto Pond nearby, with Susoaidaira stretching ahead. There is a huge cluster of Aleutian Avenas (*Sieversia pentapetala*) in Susoaidaira, and it is magnificent during the flowering season and in the fall when the leaves change color. There is also a walkway between Sugatami Station and Onsen Station at the base. The path to Mount Asahi is sand, with little vegetation. After passing Mount Asahi and reaching the Ohachidaira crater edge, you can go in either direction around the crater to reach Kurodake.



The view from the fifth station of Kurodake

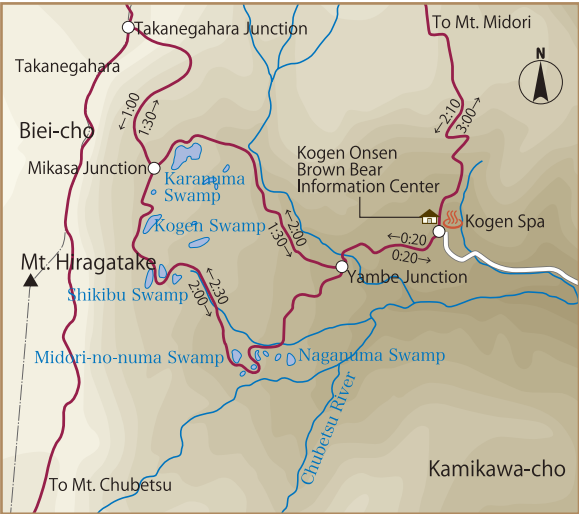


## Kogen Hot Spring and Swamp Tour

There are numerous small lakes and swamps in the forests extending below Takanegahara. A tour of the swamps starting at Kogen Hot Spring is a highly popular trekking route especially during the fall when the leaves are changing color. There is a restriction on private cars during this season, so you should check on the road conditions before you go. The bus runs from Souunkyo Gorge to Kogen Hot Spring. Before your departure, make sure to attend an orientation lecture at the Brown Bear Information Center located at the entry point of the walkway. Walkways may be closed when the likelihood of encountering brown bears is high.



Hikers at Kogen Hot Spring



## Autumn Leaves that Color the Entire Mountain

The leaves change color early in Daisetsuzan, beginning with the alpine zone around mid-September. Tiny plants such as Urashima Azaleas (*Rhododendron tsutsuji*) and Aleutian Avens (*Sieversia pentapetala*) become burning red. The color change descends quickly and eventually enters the forest zone, where trees such as Japanese Rowans (*Sorbus commixta*), Erman's Birch (*Betula ermani*), Miyabe's Maple (*Acer miyabei*), and the Japanese Judas (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*) turn red, orange, and yellow, adorning the entire mountain with a bright brocade. This sumptuous bouquet of colors occurs just before the snow covers everything. The autumn colors around Kogen Hot Spring are particularly vivid.

Autumn descends quickly in Daisetsuzan



## Mount Tomuraushi Area

The area between Takanegahara and Mount Tomuraushi, located to the south of the central vent of the volcanoes in Daisetsuzan, is known as Kamuimintara—The Playground of the Gods. This celestial world includes a grand plateau, flower gardens extending as far as the eye can see, and periglacial landforms at various spots, among other things.

This area requires at least an overnight trip. Visitors may either sleep in the shelters, or bring their own tents. In the Daisetsuzan region, encompassing the Tokachi Mountain Range and others, there are no well-equipped mountain huts like those in the Japanese Alps. There is a manager during the summer at Kurodake Ishimuro and the Mount Hakuun shelter. However, the evacuation huts at other locations such as Mount Chubetsu and Hisago Swamp are unmanned. Moreover, camping is prohibited at locations other than those designated, so you should plan your mountaineering trip carefully after obtaining the latest information from local visitor centers. The major routes are not difficult during periods without snow, but they are long, and better suited for experienced climbers.



From Numanohara to Mount Tomuraushi



Mountain trails at Mount Tomuraushi



Flower garden at Mount Ponkaun

### Column

#### Glacial Remnants in Hokkaido

The cirques (shallow semi-circular valleys created by small-scale glaciers) in the Hidaka Mountain Range situated to the south of Daisetsuzan are well known glacial structures in Hokkaido. There are various cirque-like geographical features present in Daisetsuzan, which is at a higher elevation than the Hidaka Mountain Range. Although there are accumulations of materials resembling moraines (unconsolidated glacial debris), there is debate over whether they are actually cirques, and not all researchers agree. This is because the volcanic activity in Daisetsuzan which created the present mountains, is thought to have continued into a warmer period after the last glacial period, when many of the glaciers developed. In addition, explosive vents are also known to form structures similar to cirques.