

Q-11 Green Village in Minou Mountains

Kurume City and Ukiha City (Fukuoka Prefecture)—Minou Mountains, Byways of Planting-tree, Gardens of Camelia and Azalea—

The Chikugo Plain is located in the southern part of Fukuoka Prefecture, with the Chikugo River flowing in the central part and the Minou Mountains lying in the south. The Chikugo River is the largest river in Kyushu, and Minou Mountain Range is a series of mountains formed along the fault of the earthquakes in 679 (see photo below).

Kurume City and Ukiha City are local cities that are sandwiched between the above two and line up in the direction of the Kuju Mountains from the Ariake Sea. The scenic path area called "Green Villages in Minou Mountains" is built in this region, and the whole is shown in the figure below.

That is, the scenic spots are scattered Kurume City and Ukiha City, and are divided into three large zones as shown on the map. A common highlight of these zones is the Minou Skyline, which is parallel to the active faults. Along the road, you can enjoy a mountainside suburban hike, and there are many scenic spots comparable to other scenic highway routes, such as the burial mounds of the Kusano family which flourished in the Middle Ages.

(Access). The access points for this scenic byway area are Fukuoka Airport, and Kurume Station on the Kyushu Shinkansen. You can enter the Kyushu Expressway from Fukuoka Airport via the urban motorway. Then, heading south and getting off the Kurume interchange, you will arrive at the starting point of the scenic tour.

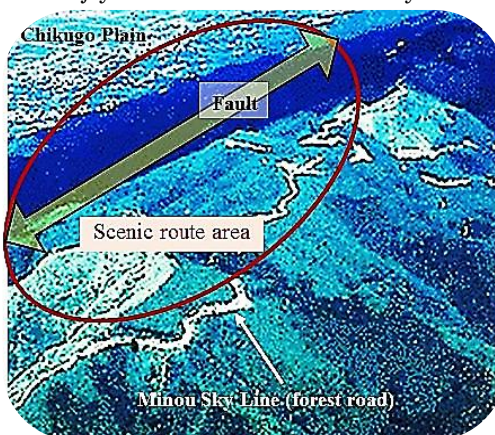
On the other hand, if you take National Route 210 to the east from Kurume Station, you will arrive at Kurume IC in about 20 minutes. You can

also use Nishitetsu Omuta Line, JR Kagoshima Main Line, and National Route 3.

In short, this scenic road area is located on the suburbs adjacent to Fukuoka City. As mentioned earlier, the area is rural cities, but has good transport links and no problem accessing by car or public transport.

(Main Road). The main route of this scenic byways area is National Route 210, which is parallel to Prefectural Road 151. In addition, as shown in the map, the Oita Expressway and JR Kyudai Line complement the main road.

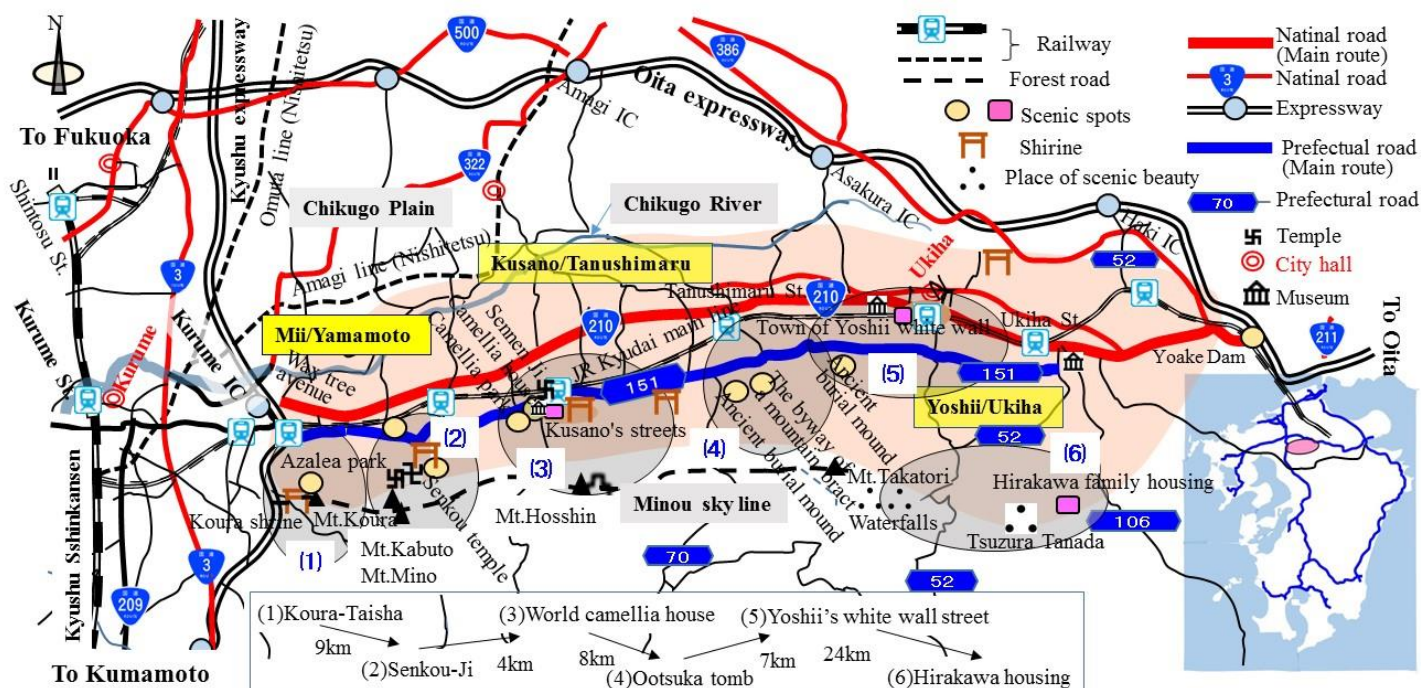
(Scenic Resources). By the way, the view of the route from the train window is the farmland at the foot of the mountain. Paddy fields have developed in the waters of the Chikugo River and have spread to the Chikugo Plain. But such a distant view is very different from what you see up close.



Minou Mountains and Scenic Byways Area

Different types of trees and flowers are planted on the mountain slopes. Cherry blossoms in full bloom in spring can be seen everywhere in parks, roadsides, riverbanks and so on.

The azalea park and the camellia garden (photo (3)) are famous as flower attractions. More than 5000 pieces of hydrangea can be seen at Senkouji temple in June, and autumn leaves, at another temple in the fall. You can also



find the red wax trees in some sections of the farm road. In short, this scenic village is adorned with many seasonal flower gardens and arboretums.

On the other hand, the agricultural land is characterized by the development that connects the flatlands and the mountainous areas, and rice, orchards, and vegetables are actively produced. These items are sold in large quantities at a roadside station (photo (2)), and are purchased by many shoppers.

This scenic area is also known as the birthplace of gardening technology.

*** Roadside Station (Michi-no-Eki)** is a convenient facility for taking a break when using a general road, obtaining information on the road or traffic, and purchasing local foods and products.

①. Zones of Mii & Yamamoto ((1) and (2))

The zone of Mii and Yamamoto is on the east side of Kurume IC on the Kyushu Expressway. By car, you can go around many spots, while using Kurume Roadside Station as a base.

(1) Kora Taisha Shrine and Minou Skyline Road (Kurume City)

The best scenic spot in the Chikugo area is Kōra-Taisha Shrine in the southeastern part of Kurume IC, and is a national important cultural property. The area around the shrine is crowded with golden bamboo, and in spring, the red flowers of old azaleas are in full bloom.

Driving from there to the summit, you can enjoy the view from the forest road “Minou-Skyline” which is parallel to the fault on the hillside.

(2) Yamamoto Machi District in Kurume City

Heading east National Route 210 from the Kurume IC, you will reach Senkō-Ji Temple that is well known as a hydrangea temple, in about 20 minutes.

There are many other temples and shrines decorated with flowers or trees. At the end of April, more than 20,000 azaleas will bloom at the World's Azalea Center. Hikes during the flower season bring a truly gorgeous atmosphere to tourists.

②. Zone of Kusano & Tanushimaru ((3) and (4))

Since the 12th and 13th centuries from the Kamakura period, the Kusano family has contributed the prosperity of the town and the formation of a unique regional culture.

(3) Kusano-Machi District in Kurume City

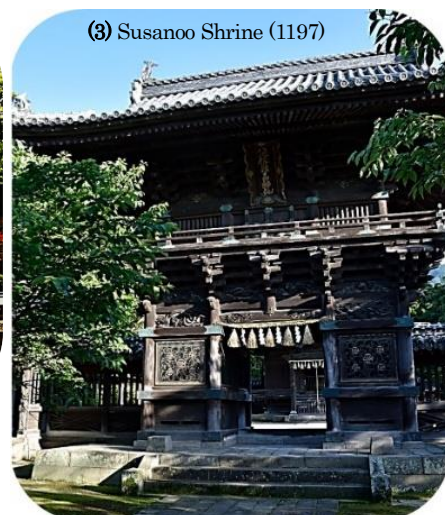
The Kusano-machi is located in the eastern part of Kurume City and the main scenic spot in this area is the heritage of the Kusano family, which has a medieval atmosphere. The red-colored Sennen-Ji Temple which is called Nikko of Kyushu, was



(1) Kōra-Taisha Shrine



(2) Sales corner in Roadside station, Kurume.



(3) Susanoo Shrine (1197)



(4) Tanushimaru Otsuka Tomb

built in 1204 and rebuilt in 1911. The important statue of Amidbha is enshrined. As shown in photo (3), the Susano Shrine adjacent to the other side of the road was built in 1197 and is luxurious. If you visit them, you can see the glory and development of the former Kusano family at the foot of the mountain..

During the Edo period, Kusano Town developed as the main town along the Hita Kaido road, and the old townscape remains.



(6) Terraced Paddy-Field in Summer



(1) & (2) Kurume Azalea in full Bloom in Spring

As you walk along the street, you will find some buildings of Taisho era. As shown in the photo (3), one of them is a two-story wooden building that was originally a hospital (1914) and is now the Yamabeno-Michi Culture Center. Traditional cultural materials of Kusano are collected and displayed.

In 2014, the World Tsubaki (camellia) Hall opened along Prefectural Road 151. You can enjoy a variety of camellia flowers, but you can also visit the adjacent outdoor Tsubaki Park.

(4) Tanushimaru-Machi in Kurume City

There are four scenic spots in this area: Kofun (ancient burial mound),

Yamazuto-no-michi (road of farm and souvenirs), the birthplace of gardening technology, and the Kappa's town.

○ From the Tanushimaru district of Kurume City to Yoshii-cho district of Ukiha City, you can see the ancient tombs on the south side of prefecture road 151. They were created in the second half of the sixth century for the clan chief. The Otsuka burial mound in the Tanushimaru area is estimated to be the largest in Kyushu. In addition, the Mezurashitsuka Tumulus in Ukiha City has an unusually colorful painting wall.

○ The Tanushimaru area is the birthplace of gardening technology and its designers. In other words, during the Edo period, farmers, who had many natural disasters or suffered from heavy land tax, planted azaleas, camellias, and peony as side jobs. And today, there are many garden shops and orchards in the area. You can fully enjoy the planting technology cultivated in the garden village along the mountain path.

○ You can also visit the winery brewery and the Shochu storage, along the way. The farm road that runs parallel to prefecture road 151 is called "Yamazuto-no-Michi (road)", and was a mountain path that carried souvenirs wrapped in straws. Now, there are a large selection of local products.

○ The town around JR Tanushimaru Station is arranged under the theme of Kappa, a mythical creature that lives in water. As shown in photo (4), there are many sculptures of Kappa on roadsides and bridges over the waterway. Also, the building of JR Tanushimaru Station has a design with a Kappa motif. Kappa with a variety of funny gestures welcomes all travelers. It would be fun to explore with the city while touching these statues and talking to the Kappa.



(5) Mezurashitsuka Mounded Tomb with Wall of Colored Painting



(2) Hydrangea in Senkou Ji Temple (Kurume City)



(3) A group of Flower Magnolia in Spring.



(2) Sone Cherry Tree in Asai District of Yamamoto-Machi (Kurume City)



(3) World's Tsubakikan (Camellia Hall) in Kurume City



(3) Sennen Ji Temple (1204)



(3) Yamabe-no-Michi Culture Center (1914).

(3). Zones of Yoshii & Ukiha ((5) and (6))



Storage of Shochu Liquor in Mountain.

Kyoho (Large Grain of Grape).

Kyoho Winery.

(4) Shochu storage and wine brewery at Tanushimaru district of mountain area. (Kurume City).



(4) Statue of Kappa Decorated in a Road or a Bridge

(4) JR-Tanushimaru Station Building of Motif of Kappa

Zones of Yoshii and Ukiha are attractive country towns or quiet villages.

(5) Yoshii Town in Ukiha City.

Yoshii was a town of merchants during the Edo period, but in the Meiji era thrived in commerce, finance and breweries. As a result, fire-resistant white-walled houses were built in the city as symbols of wealth after the Great Fire in 1869 and are still preserved. The picture on the outer white wall was drawn by the plasterer using a trowel and is a craftsman's technique. The area is designated as a conservation area of traditional buildings.

From February to April, the Hina dolls that have been passed

down for generations will be exhibited at a private house on a white wall as a festival for girls. There are two types of dolls, a hand doll and a boxed doll, which are open to the public during the period. There are various ways to decorate, but in general it is decorated in the image of the wedding ceremony of the Heian aristocrat. Although the number of stages is odd, the upper stage is decorated with dolls of married couples, the dolls of servants and musicians are arranged below, and miscellaneous items are placed in the lower stage.

(6) Therapy Road in the Forest in Ukiha City.

Zone (6) is the area of mountainside. When proceeding along Prefecture Road 106 from National Route 210, you will find "House of Hirakawa Family" in about 20 minutes by car. As shown in photo (6), this house was built in the late 18th century. The two buildings on the right are connected in a U-shape, and the house on the left is a barn. In 1971, it was designated as a national important cultural property.

Next, driving along the Prefecture Road 52, you can stop by the Tsuzura terraced rice field, and arrive at a mountaneous area with four waterfalls. The road in this section is a mountain path, also called "Forest Therapy Road". It is quiet, and you can enjoy a refreshing feeling by taking a walk while enjoying the cool breeze in summer.



(5) Doll Display of Private House in Yoshii Town.



(5) White Wall Town in Yoshii-Machi (Ukiha City).



(6) Tsuzura Paddy Terraced Fields in Ukiha City.



(6) Hirakawa Family's House of the U-shape.

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