

No.17, december 2014

## Excursions

### Climbing up to Yarigatake

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Yarigatake is one of the most famous peaks in the Japanese Northern Alps. It was on my wish list for a longtime before I went to Japan because none of the mountains in South Korea are over 2,000 meters. And, climbing the Japanese Alps in itself is a great experience.

After leaving Toyohashi, on my first day I passed Nagoya, Matsumoto, Shinshimashima, Kamikouchi and stayed at Tokusawaen for one night because it had started to rain. The location of Tokusawaen is perfect to recover strength and prepare for the steep climb to the peak. I was aware that Mr. Yasushi Inoue, the famous Japanese writer, stayed many times at Tokusawaen when he wrote 'Hyouheki'. I enjoyed the onsen (hot spring) and hot tea and had a comfortable sleep at a reasonable price.

On the second day, I started at 7 AM and arrived at the Yarisawa Lodge after a three hour walk along the beautiful creeks. The altitude rose steeply from Oomagari next to Yarisawa Lodge and the glacier mixed with ice and snow continued. I was very impressed that the glacier still remained even in July!! The altitude difference between Oomagari and Yarigatake Sansou (lodge) is about 1,000 meters so it took over 3 hours and demanded lots of sweat and energy. It was not till 4 PM that I arrived at Yarigatake sansou. I could clearly see the magnificent shape of Yarigatake peak while I struggled to pass the steep glacier.

It started raining again when I arrived at the sansou and I had to put off climbing the peak until the next day.

On the last day, I climbed to the peak of Yarigatake in the early morning where I was lucky to be able to see the breath-taking panorama of the Japanese Alps running to the Pacific Ocean. I was able to enjoy this happy moment for 10 minutes before the weather changed. My original plan was to hike from Yarigatake to Okuhodake but I had to change the plan after discussing this with the owner of the cabin. The path for my planned hike was still covered with heavy snow and very steep and slippery. So I climbed down the route I had come along and arrived safely at the campsite of Kamikouchi.

Next day I went to Matsumoto City and visited many historic sites including the beautiful Matsumoto castle and an old elementary school. Personally I believe Matsumoto is a must-visit city in Japan because of the friendly people, unique history, delicious and reasonably priced local foods such as soba and fresh fruits and charming background of Japanese Alps from any place in the city.

As a foreigner, who needs more than this?

Let's enjoy staying in Japan!!

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Yarigatake, Japan



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