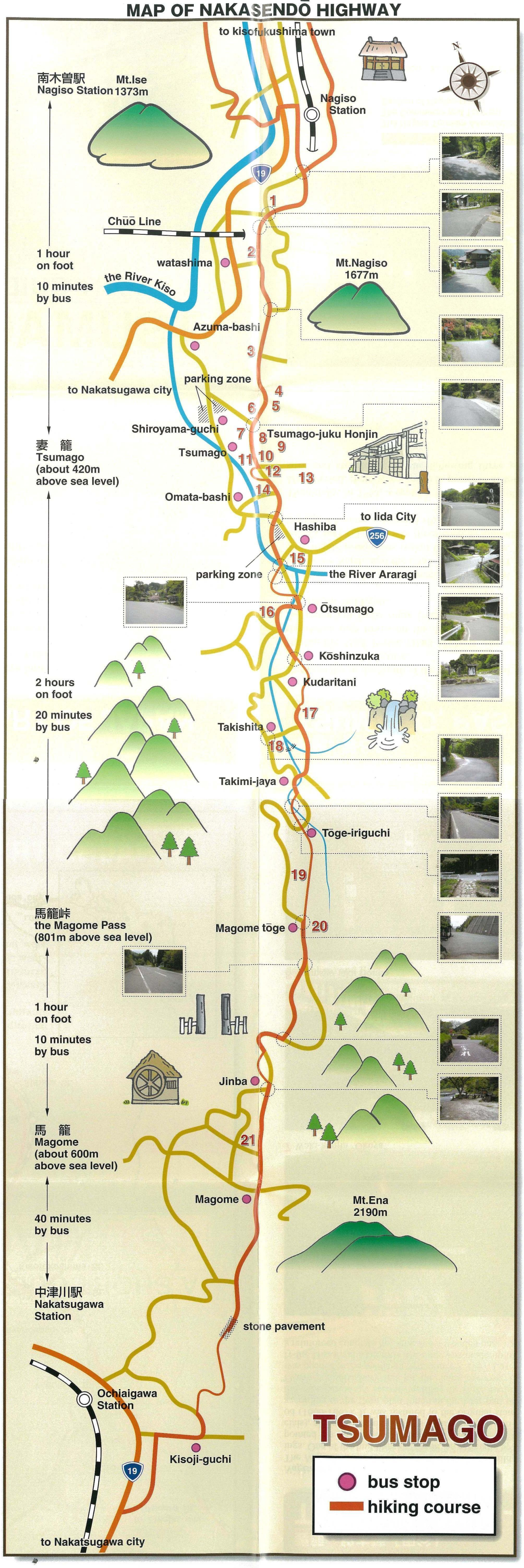
MAP OF NAKASENDŌ HIGHWAY



1 かぶと観音 *Kabuto-kannon* (Goddess of Mercy's helmet)

The great "General of the Rising Sun," *Yoshinaka Kiso*, of the *Genji* Clan, lived from the early age of two in the northern part of the *Kiso* district (*Miyanokoshi* or *Kiso-fukushima*). In 1180 he was given permission to attack the *Heike* Clan. His plan was to travel northwards passing through *Hokuriku* into Kyoto and in 1183 he was successful in becoming a *shōgun* (general), if only for a short time. Before his departure to Kyoto, he erected a citadel at *Tsumago* to guard the *Kiso* district against attacks from the south. He prayed for victory by removing the image of the *kannon* (Goddess of Mercy) from the top of his *kabuto* (helmet).
The small temple of *Kabuto-kannon* was built on this spot. The general might have even sat down on the stone nearby.

2 一里塚 *Ichi-ri-zuka* (a "milestone")

In the *Edo* period there was a "mound" placed every one *ri* (a unit of distance, about two and a half miles) to tell the travelers how far they had traveled.

3 妻籠城跡 *Tsumago-jō-ato*, 「城山」 *"Shiroyama"* (the ruins of *Tsumago* Castle)

From here (521m, above sea level) one can enjoy a panoramic view of *Tsumago*. To the South is *Midono* and to the North, and directly below, the River *Kiso* flows down from the plains. Standing on the top of the mountain one can easily imagine the strategic value of this spot in days gone by and the struggles for power. The origins of this castle are vague. However, it is recorded that a fierce battle took place here in 1584, at the time of the "*Komaki* and *Nagakute* War" (in *Aichi* prefecture).

4 鯉岩 *Koi-iwa* (Carp rock)

This rock resembled the carp to such an extent that it was featured in an old book entitled "Famous Places of *Kiso-ji*" (1805), but unfortunately the rock was damaged during the violent earth quake which occurred in 1891. Several houses nearby have been restored to their former state.

5 口留番所跡 *Kuchidome-bansho-ato* (watchhouse ruins)

A watchhouse once stood on this spot; its purpose was to survey the trees taken from the *Kiso* district (see #19). It was built some time during the *Tenshō* period (1573-1592). However, ten years after *Kisofukushima* was designated as the main check-point for the whole line of the *Nakasendō* (highway), the watchhouse was removed farther south to *Kudaritani*.

6 御高札場 *Gokōsatsu-ba* (notice board)

A notice board proclaiming the laws and prohibitions of the *Tokugawa* Government. It has been restored to its original state (1711).

7 脇本陣「奥谷」 *Waki-Honjin "Okuya"*

See overleaf.

8 妻籠宿本陣 *Tsumago-juku Honjin*

9 銀木犀 *Ginmokusei* (Osmanthus asiaticus)

Registered as a natural treasure (protected species) of *Nagano* Prefecture since 1968.

10 観光案内所 *Kankō-annai-jo* (Tourist Information Office)

Tel. 0264-57-3123 (Japanese spoken only.)

11 桝形 *Masugata*

In order to provide a better defence against the enemy the road was intentionally constructed to turn at a right angle, or *masugata*.

12 延命地蔵 *Enmei-jizō* (Guardian deity for childrens' longevity)

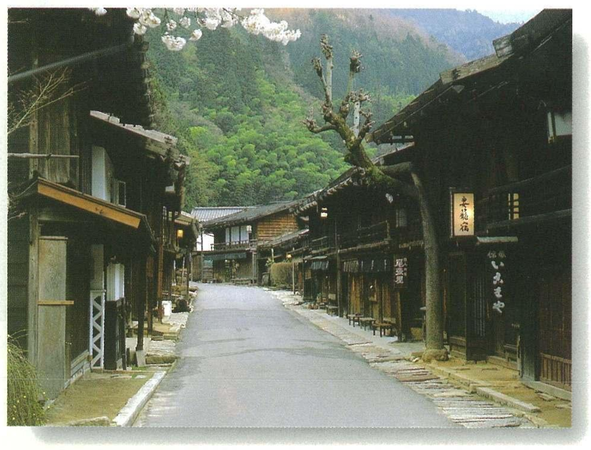
A sleeping image of *Jizō*, carved on a large stone, was found in 1810 in the nearby River *Araragi*. Since that day a festival has been held here every April.

13 光徳寺 The *Kōtokuji* Temple

This temple was founded in 1500, the main deity was added in 1599. The main building, with a singing floorboard, was donated by the old master of the *waki-honjin "Okuya"* in 1725. Here is a unique *o-kago* (palanquin) with wheels, devised by the old priest himself.

14 寺下の町並 *Terashita-no-machinami* (row of houses in *Terashita*)

The beauty of *Tsumago* lies in the row of dwellings lining the road (see introduction). Note should be taken that *Shimo-sagaya* was a type of house usually inhabited by common people. *Kami-sagaya* (built sometime during 1751-64) was once a cheap lodging house for travelers. An inn has existed in *Ikomaya* for nearly 200 years. At *Matsushiroya* the old sign boards inviting travelers to stop can still be seen on the upper storey of the inn's entrance.



15 石柱の道標 *Sekichū-no-dōhyō* (stone guide post)

A large guide post at the fork of *Nakasendō* and *Iidakaidō* (highways), erected in 1881.

16 大妻籠 *Ōtsumago*

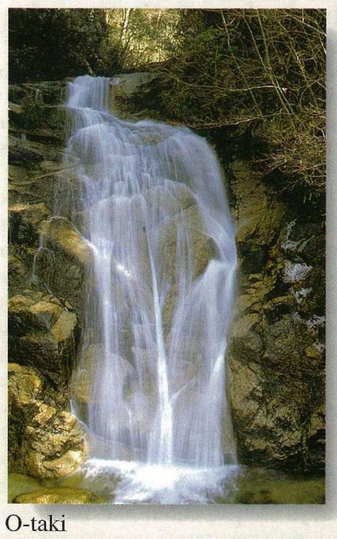
Several houses have been preserved to show the visitor what they used to be like in days gone by.

17 倉科祖霊社 *Kurashina-soreisha* (Shrine for the soul of *Kurashina*)

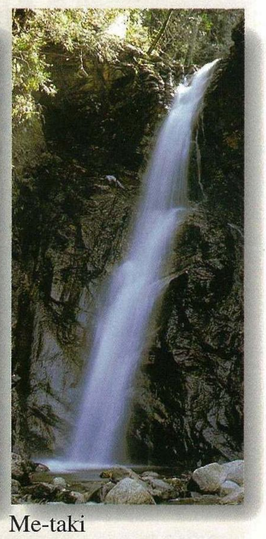
This small shrine was built to house the soul of *Shichirōzaemon Kurashina* who was murdered here in 1586.

18 男滝 女滝 *O-taki* and *Me-taki* (male waterfall and female waterfall)

Popular writer *Eiji Yoshikawa* (1892-1962) chose these waterfalls as a fitting background for the romance between the great swordsman, *Musashi* (1584?-1645) and his sweetheart, *Otsū*, in his famous book *"Miyamoto Musashi."*



O-taki



Me-taki

19 一石栃白木改番所跡 *Ichikokutochi-shirakiaratame-bansho-ato* (Checkpoint ruins)

This Checkpoint functioned between 1749 and 1869 to keep a control on the removal of "five species of trees" for which *Kiso* was famous, i.e. *hinoki* cypress, *sawara* cypress, *kōyamaki* (umbrella pine), *asuhi* (hiba arborvitae) and *nezuko* (Japanese arborvitae), and a few other varieties such as *keyaki* (zelkova), chestnut or pine trees. Thanks to the strict controls enforced during the *Edo* period, the *Kiso* district is now full of beautiful trees.

20 馬籠峠 *Magome-tōge* (The *Magome* Pass)

The journey between *Tsumago* and the *Magome* Pass takes about two hours on foot, following the old footpath through the shady forest (the *Nakasendō*). It is an unforgettable experience. At the top of the *Magome* Pass there is a monument on which is written a *haiku* (verse) by *Shiki Masaoka* (1867-1902);

Shirakumo ya	These white clouds evoke
Aoba wakaba no	Memories of my long walk
Sanjū ri	Under fresh green leaves

21 馬籠 *Magome*

This was situated at the southern most part of the eleven post towns in the *Kiso* district. *Tōson shimazaki* (1872-1943), who was one of modern Japan's greatest authors, was born here and spent most of his childhood here before leaving in 1881. He wrote about many aspects of life in *Kiso* including *"Yoakemae"* (Before the Dawn) which is his best and most famous novel. In it he describes Japan before and after the *Meiji* Restoration from the view-point of the twin city *Magome* and, in particular, shown through the eyes of *Hanzō Aoyama*, the character of which was based on his own father who, in turn, was a master of the *Honjin*. In 1947 the *Tōson* Memorial Hall was built on the former site of the *Honjin*.
The *Eishōji* Temple is not only depicted in *Yoake-mae* but mention is also made in the children's story *"Gen to Fudōmyō-ō"* (Gen and the God of Fire) by *Shizue Miyaguchi*.
Two miles further south you can enjoy a walk on the old stone pavement.