

A look into Eco-tourism and its Impact

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Kamikochi is basically a basin surrounded by the Northern Japanese Alps. As a place famous for its beautiful natural scenery, Kamikochi receives thousands of visitors every year during the brief moment of which it is open to the public. Kamikochi is considered a sacred place where the gods live, unscarred and untainted by the rapid modernization of Japan. But due to its ever increasing popularity and visitors, we are beginning to see traces of impact on the environment.



On the first of the trip, we hike around Kamikochi with a guide. We were told about the strong force of water which crosses this mountain Alps and carve traces of rivers into the ground. Along our hike, we observed that the river was split in two and that the flow was random. We were told by our guide that depending on amount of rainfall and season, the river flow changes occasionally. We finally arrive at the final destination of our hike which was a lake of fresh spring.

At night, the weather took a shape dive and it was very cold. But it was also great to experience the outdoors without technology surrounding us all the time. Just chatting and having fun around the camp fire was a good way of communicating non-electronically.

The next day, we left the scenic Kamikochi for Matsumoto city. Here we visited a monument marking the importance and success of Japanese silk industry in the past. Unfortunately, due to increasing competition and mass production, the Japanese silk industry suffered and is now a mere history.

We also visited Matsumoto castle and was given a guided tour of the place. We learned about the history of feudal Japan and the purpose of certain architecture designs in castles across Japan. Lastly, we made a trip a wasabi farm for lunch. We were told that wasabi needs really clean water to grow and so it is a delicate process to grow wasabi in large numbers.

Overall, the trip was education and eye opening. The scenic view of Kamikochi's nature was overwhelmingly beautiful. It gives us an idea of what we are trying to protect and what we should protect. We are able to see what beauty nature has to offer and the importance of protecting it.