

Okuaizu

Where is
Oku Aizu?



There are hundreds of wild greens in the mountains.
Udo is covered with soft hair and grows tall to the sky.
When I brake it, the fragrance of early summer is released.
I can hardly wait for the meals this time of year brings.
We've lived through winter and can now enjoy the gift of
this season.



Playing in the field

(Containers made out of walnut branches)



In the middle of May, *Suiba* plant seeds can be found. Children used to make sheath-like containers out of the bark of the walnut branches. This season was the only time these containers could be made because of how rich with water the trees are. The children would play in the mountain with salt in their containers looking for mountain vegetables, like *Suiba*, to eat.

Cooking Okuaizu

Salted Japanese Bird
Cherry Seeds



The bloom of the Japanese Bird Cherry flower creates a wonderful fragrance in the wind.

The seeds salted and mixed with lemon juice and sunflower oil make a tasty dressing. Chopping the seeds and boiling them with miso and mirin is used as a dressing for many foods like tofu, konnyaku and other vegetables.



A SEASON FULL OF MOUNTAIN VEGETABLES

I can find *Udo* by the river bank and *Shiode* at the edge of the vegetable field.

Kogomi is another I eat often. The mountain is full of things to eat!

Animals in Okuaizu

Kibitaki - Flycatcher

Kibitaki is a flycatcher with a bright orange throat and lightly colored chest.

In Okuaizu, this bird was once called Hiakashi (meaning torch in Japanese). Its red throat looks like a torch in the dark forest. They live in the deciduous forest. You can find them amongst the beech trees in early summer. *poppi piri, poppi piri*, is the rhythmic tune they sing. *Kibitaki* is Fukushima's prefectural bird.



Photo & essay by Isamu Nikkuni



Tools of Living

Photo & essay
by Yoshikazu Takeshima

Three scarecrows protect these small rice fields. It's been a long time since people left Sanjo village. There is no longer anyone to care for the remains of the crops. The rice grows untamed with many tadpoles swimming in the paddy fields. *Korogashi*, is a weeding tool used to cut in between the rows of growing rice but it is of no use in these fields.

(Sanjo, Kaneyama-town June 1981)