1. Kibitsu-jinja (Goddess of Mercy’s helmet)

The great “General of the Rising Sun,” Yoshitsune Siko, of the Genji Clan, Israel from the early ages of two to the northern part of the Kiso district (Miyashita or Kiso-hakusan). In 1180 he was given permission to attack the Hida Clan. His plan was to travel northward passing through Kobasaka into Kyoto and in 1183 he was successfully avenge a slayer (general), if only for a short time. Before his departure to Kyoto, he was ordered to return to Tsu 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 helmet. The small temple of Kibitsu-jinja was built on this spot. The ground nearby may have sat down on the stone nearby.

2. “kiri-n-zuka” (a “milestone”)

In the historical period there was a “holiday” placed every one of it (a unit of distance, about two and a half miles) to tell the travelers how far they had traveled.

3. Tsu no yagura, “Shirinoye” (the ruins of Tsu no yagura Castle)

From here (1731, above sea level) one can enjoy a panoramic view of Tsu no yagura. To the South is Mino and to the North, and directly below, the River Etomo flows down the plains. Standing on top of the mountain one can easily imagine the strategic value of this spot in days gone by and the struggles for power. The origin of this castle is vague. However, it is recorded that a fierce battle took place here in 1566, at the time of the “Kusatsu and Ako no War” (in Ako prefecture).

4. Kourin (Carp rock)

This rock resembled the carp such an extent that it was fastened to an old book as “Famous Places of Kiso” (1803), but unfortunately the rock was damaged during the violent earthquake which occurred in 1911. Several houses were however restored to their former state.

5. Kuchinose-honsha-ato (watchhouse ruins)

A watch tower once stood on this spot; its purpose was to survey the terrain taken from the Kiso district (see #1). It was built some time during the Tsukuri period (1575-1592). However, ten years after Kuchinose was designated as the main check-point for the whole line of the Nakasendo (highway), the watchtower was removed further south to Kukiinenta.

6. Tsumago-juku (notice board)

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

7. Washinokura “Oya”

See overview.

8. Tsumago-juku Honjin

9. Glishsana (Osmanthus asiaticus)

Registered as a natural treasure (protected species) of Nagano Prefecture since 1966.

10. Kanto-anmin-juku (Tourist Information Office)

Tel. 0260-97-2035 (Japanese spoken only)

11. Masago

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

12. Enmeyada (Guardian deity of children’s longevity)

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

13. The Koshino Temple

This temple was founded in 1500, the main dolly was added in 1599. The main building, with a cypress floor, was donated by the old master of the waka-dori “Oguri” in 1725. His poem is a serene o-tage (poemgram) with wheels, devised by the old poet himself.

14. Tanashi-zaka (row of houses in Tanashi)

The beauty of Tanashi lies in the row of dwellings lining the road (see introduction). Note should be taken that Shimofu-ya was a type of house usually inhabited by common people. Kawa-nagaya (built sometime during 1775-1804) was once a cheap lodging house for travelers. An inn has existed in Tanimsa for nearly 300 years. At Makurazoshi the old sign board inviting travelers to stop still can be seen on the upper storey of the inn’s entrance.

15. Sekki-ro-dōbyō (stone guide post)

A large stone post at the foot of Nakasendo and Kibitsu-jinja (highways), erected in 1881.

16. Otsutago

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

17. Kurashiki-inbo (Shrine for the soul of Kurashiki)

This small shrine was built to honor the soul of Shigechika-no-rin Kurashiki who was murdered here in 1586.

18. O-kawara (Black and white water and female waterfalls)

Popular writer Eiji Yoshikawa (1892-1962) chose these waterfalls as a setting background for the romance between the great samurai, Musashi (1584-1645) and his wife Otsutanh, Otsu-in his famous book “Musashi Musashi.”

19. Inakukage-cho Hatokenkei-bashi (Checkpoint ruins)

This Checkpoint functioned between 1749 and 1899 to keep a count of the number of “travellers of all sorts” for which Kiso was famous, i.e. Akohu cypress, namanji cypress, k-storya- do (umbrella plant), craoe (white arborvita) and yozakura (japa- nese arborvitae), and a few other varieties such as kasho (ink- oak), cherry or oide timbers. Thanks to the traffic control ensured during the Edo period, the Kiso district is now full of beautiful trees.

20. Magome-toge (The Magome Pass)

The journey between Magome and the Magome Pass takes about two hours on foot, following the old throughpath through the steep forest (the Nakasendo). It is an unforgettable experience. At the top of the Magome Pass there is a monument on which is written a haiku (verse) by Sotaro Maeda: (1607-1693):

Shibakiri no naka
Shibana (cypress)
Ashe wakashio no
Kasai ni
Ushino izumi

21. Magome

This station is situated at the southern part most of the eleven post towns in the Kiso district. It was founded in 1873 (1872-1843), 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 “Tosabe-
wa” (Before the Dawn) which is his best and most famous novel. In it he describes Japan before and after the Meiji Re-
formation from the view-point of the twin city Magome and, in particular, shown through the eyes of Hagiwara kazama, the char-
acter of which was based on his own father who, in turn, was a master of the fencing. In 1943 the Town Memorial Hall was
 built on the former site of the ftonts. The “Enishi” Temple is not only depicted in Tosabe-wa but mention is also made in the children’s story “Genji to Tsuwano ni” (Genji and the God of Fire) by Sotaro Maeda.

Two miles further south you can enjoy a walk on the old stone pavement.

**MAP OF NAKASENDO HIGHWAY**

**TSUMAGO**

- Bus stop
- Hiking course

**Otsu**

**Ishikawa**

- Shiba-ko (see overview)
- Inakukage-cho Hatokenkei-bashi

**Magome**

- Memories of my Song walk
- Under fresh green leaves