

# Bunka Gakuen Nagano Junior & Senior High School, Grade 9

## Promoting the Charm of Nagano: A Regional Discovery Project

Students from Class 3-1 at Bunka Gakuen Nagano Junior High School launched the Nagano Promotion Project with the goal of rediscovering and sharing the charm of their home prefecture with audiences in Japan and abroad. They explored a wide range of regional resources, including tourism, history, sports, and food culture, and presented their findings in a fun and accessible quiz-style format.

### Natural Beauty and Tourism Appeal

Nagano Prefecture is known for its rich natural environment, with forests covering approximately 80% of the land. It attracts visitors from both Japan and overseas with its stunning landscapes. In particular, Hakuba Village is renowned as a mecca for winter sports, thanks to its high-quality powder snow and easy accessibility. However, students also learned about the challenges of overtourism and the importance of balancing tourism with environmental conservation.

### Historical and Cultural Diversity

The project featured Zenkoji Temple, with a history spanning over 1,400 years, and the snow monkeys at Jigokudani Monkey Park – both of which have gained international recognition. Students also explored how Zenkoji's long-standing embrace of gender equality connects to themes in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), helping them see the relevance of global values in local traditions.

### Sports and Culinary Attractions

The students highlighted the lasting impact of the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics, which helped promote winter sports in the region. They also explored how Nagano's hot spring culture complements ski tourism. To showcase local cuisine, they introduced dishes like oyaki (stuffed dumplings), nozawana pickles, and Shinshu soba noodles, all of which reflect the region's unique food culture.

### Looking to the Future

The project served as a culmination of the students' learning, encouraging them to take pride in where they live and develop the skills to communicate Nagano's appeal to the world. It also inspired them to take an active interest in solving tourism and environmental challenges, positioning them as future ambassadors for their community.