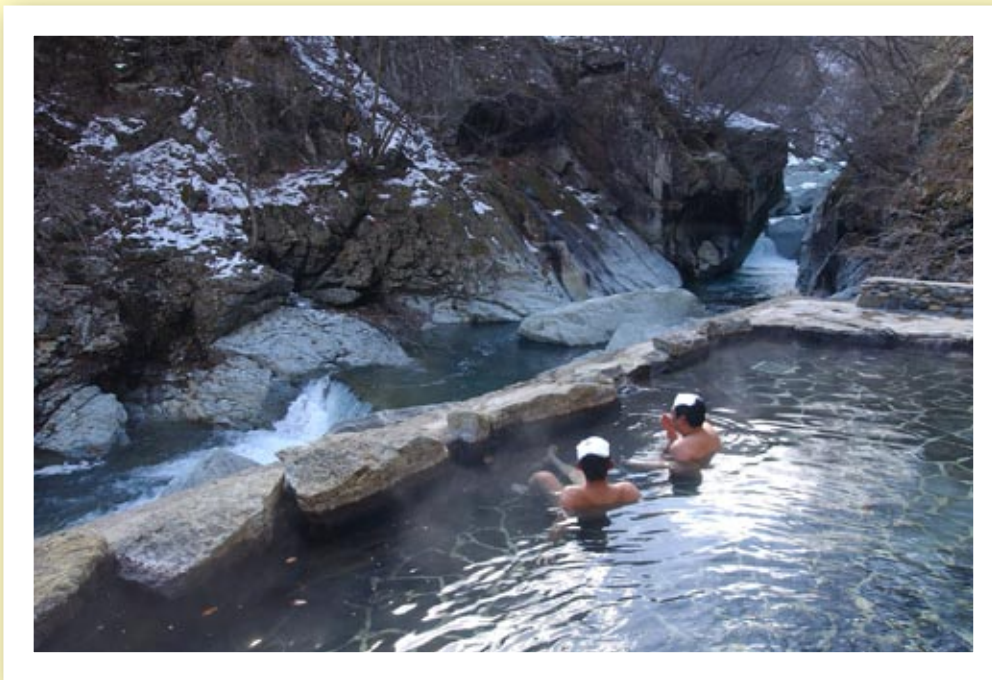


Japanese people love to bathe in *onsen* (hot springs). Japan has more than 3,000 hot spring resorts from Hokkaido in the north to Okinawa in the south, and inns and hotels with communal bathrooms or open-air baths where guests can bathe in hot springs attract many visitors.

Soaking in hot springs is a Japanese tradition. Not only does it have a relaxing effect on the body and mind, but the minerals contained in hot springs are believed to possess a range of health and beauty benefits, such as properties for healing wounds at a rapid rate and beautifying the skin. As such, some people recuperating from illness stay in hot spring hotels for long periods of time.

There are many unique hot springs too. Jigokudani Hot Springs in Nagano Prefecture is famous for the Japanese macaques that bathe in them, drawing many tourists from Japan and overseas. And at Shikaribetsu Hot Spring in Hokkaido, an open-air bath is created on the frozen surface of the lake during the winter season.

A hot spring is produced by groundwater that has been heated by terrestrial heat, and this terrestrial heat is also being used for geothermal power generation. Japan ranks third in the world for its geothermal power genera-

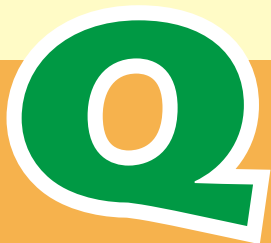


A riverside *onsen* in Niigata Prefecture

ONSEN

tion potential, with recent years seeing Japan develop geothermal power generation as a source of energy that does not produce carbon dioxide emissions, which contribute to global warming.

Monkeys enjoy the hot water at Jigokudani Hot Spring.



1: At Owakudani (photo), a famous hot spring resort in Hakone, Kanagawa Prefecture, it is said that if you eat a certain food that has been boiled in the hot spring you will live seven years longer. What is that food?



A: Fish

B: Rice

C: Egg



2: Ibusuki Hot Springs in Kagoshima Prefecture is famous as a hot spring that uses something other than hot water. What is it?



A: Grass

B: Rock

C: Sand

Ibusuki City

See the back page for answers.