**Kushifuru Shrine**

Kushifuru Shrine is dedicated to the *kami* deity Ninigi no Mikoto, or Ninigi, the grandson of the sun *kami* Amaterasu Omikami. According to Japanese mythology, Amaterasu charged Ninigi with the rule of the islands of Japan, and so he descended from the heavenly realm in a procession of *kami* deities. In 1694, a shrineto honor these deities was built on the mountain where they are believed to have arrived. Prior to this, the mountain itself was considered a residence of divine presence, and was thus venerated as sacred. Ninigi is a significant deity in Japanese mythology, as he is the mythical great-grandfather of the first emperor of Japan, and the mythological origins of Japan’s imperial line are traced back through him.

Nature trails around Kushifuru Shrine lead to various sacred and mythological landmarks in the surrounding area. These include “The Peak of the Four Imperial Sons (*Shiojigamine*),” “The Far Precinct of the Heavenly Realm (*Takamagahara*),” “The Takachiho Monument (*Takachiho-hi*),” and “The Fudoki-Man’yo Hill.”

**Kushifuru Peak**

It is written in the *Kojiki,* Japan’s oldest extant chronicle and collection of myths, that the sun deity Amaterasu directed her grandson Ninigi to descend from the heavenly realm and govern the earth. He did just that in a great procession of *kami* deities, and arrived at Kushifuru Peak. This myth is known as *Tenson Korin* (translated as “The Descent from the Heavens”). A shrine to honor Ninigi was established on the Takachiho mountain referred to today as Kushifuru no Mine (Kushifuru Peak). In the Takachiho area, this mountain is believed to be the location of Ninigi’s divine arrival, and before a shrine was built, the mountain itself was considered a residence of the *kami* deities and therefore sacred ground.