

## Lake Kirikomi and Lake Karikomi

Lake Kirikomi and Lake Karikomi are small, twin lakes located in northern Oku-Nikko. The lakes are connected by a narrow channel, which makes them look like a gourd. The shape of the lakes is believed to have been made long ago by lava flows from Mt. Mitsudake. The names of the lakes are linked to myths surrounding the great priest Shodo (735–817), founder of the temples and shrines of Nikko. It is said that he hunted down and killed an evil snake. In Japanese, *kiri* means to cut, *kari* means to hunt, and *komi* means to push down. Surrounded by subalpine forest, the lakes are relatively unknown, even though the environment is pristine. The lakes can be accessed and explored on a hiking trail that links the Yumoto Onsen and Kotoku Onsen hot spring areas of Oku-Nikko, passing through immaculate coniferous forest.