

## Mt. Sanbe

Mt. Sanbe is part of the Daisen-Oki National Park because of the sustainably managed grasslands covering the foot of the mountain, which supports a diverse ecosystem. The local farmers have since long ago used these grasslands as pastures for cattle grazing. A process of controlled burning called *hi-ire* encourages growth of new grass and also maintains the environment and provides habitat for a rich diversity of plants and animals.

## Mountain Grasslands

When Mt. Sanbe was incorporated into Daisen-Oki National Park in 1963, the mountain was almost completely covered with grasslands used to pasture cows and horses. Managed grasslands like these support a unique ecosystem and biodiversity. This habitat has become rare in Japan, but is being preserved at Mt. Sanbe.

## Benefits of Mt. Sanbe's Grasslands

As an environment shaped through human interaction with nature, the grasslands of Mt. Sanbe provide a wealth of essential ecosystem benefits. The grasslands store water, and supply food for livestock, organic compost for crops and raw material for traditional thatched roofs. They serve as vital habitat for threatened species of plants, like *yusuge* daylilies (*Hemerocallis citrina* var. *vespertina*) and pasque flower (*Pulsatilla cernua*), as well as insects like the horned dung beetle (*Copris ochus*).

## Conservation Activities

Local people maintain and protect the vital ecosystems on Mt. Sanbe. Children at nearby elementary schools plant and care for *yusuge* daylilies (*Hemerocallis citrina* var. *vespertina*) and pasque flower (*Pulsatilla cernua*) in the grassland areas. Each spring, *hi-ire*, a controlled burning that encourages new growth and maintains the grassland ecosystem, is carried out on the western plains. The grasslands are regularly mowed, and trees that invade the area are cut down. Some of the proceeds from sales of the resulting firewood are reinvested in the conservation programs.