

## **The Legend of Lake Onami-ike**

According to local legend, in ancient times a village head and his wife lived at the foot of a mountain. Though wealthy, there was one thing they both desired over anything else: a child.

After many years of wishing, hoping, and praying, the couple was finally blessed with a beautiful baby girl, whom they named Onami. They doted on her and she grew up kind and gentle. She became more beautiful and graceful with every passing day. As she reached adulthood, Onami began to receive offers of marriage from all over the land. But when her parents brought up the topic with her, she simply smiled sadly.

One night, as the moon shone brightly through the Kirishima forest, Onami suddenly announced, “I want to go to the mountain.”

Her father begged her not to go, but Onami insisted, so he accompanied her on the journey. They wandered through the trees, finally arriving at a lake. Onami’s eyes lit up as soon as she saw it. She suddenly broke free from her father’s grasp and jumped into the lake. As the ripples in the bluish black lake disappeared, the forest fell silent. In that moment Onami’s father realized she was not coming back and became mad with grief, calling her name.

He paced around the lake’s perimeter, but no matter how much he searched, Onami was never seen again.

It was only later that it became apparent that Onami was actually the dragon king of the lake. He had heard the village head and his wife’s desperate wish for a child and pitied them. To make their wish come true, the dragon king had turned himself into the couple’s child, if only for a while.

Since that day, the lake has been known as Lake Onami-ike.