

## **Ishiwari-jinja Shrine**

Ishiwari-jinja Shrine stands 1,143 meters above sea level at the eighth station of 1,413-meter-tall Mt. Ishiwari. The name Ishiwari, or “Riven Rock,” refers to an enormous fractured boulder that stands behind the shrine. According to the eighth-century *Kojiki* (“Record of Ancient Matters”), the sun goddess Amaterasu Omikami once temporarily sealed herself in a cave, casting the world into total darkness. Local lore maintains that she used this massive rock to block the entrance.

According to legend, good fortune comes to those who pass three times through the narrow gap in the boulder. However, the story goes, if the boulder detects someone unworthy in the gap, it slams shut! Before testing this tradition, visitors must climb the famous 403-step stairway to the shrine, which starts just through the torii gate near the Mt. Ishiwari Hiking Course Entrance bus stop and trailhead parking lot.

## **Hiking the Mt. Ishiwari Trail**

Mt. Ishiwari is lightly forested, making its peak a good vantage point for viewing the surrounding mountains, including Mt. Fuji and Mt. Hirao straight ahead and the Minami Alps far off to the left. The trail from the parking lot to Mt. Ishiwari’s peak, across to Mt. Hirao, and back to the parking lot takes about three hours.