

### **Miyagino Kiga Onsen Summer Festival**

*Mushiokuri* is a summer custom, practiced in agricultural communities throughout Japan, of driving away harmful insects to prevent damage to crops before the harvest season. This traditional event is the highlight of the annual Miyagino Kiga Onsen Summer Festival that takes place on August 14 and 15. Participants walk around the village at dusk, bearing torches with which they scare off bugs and steer them into boxes. These containers are then burned at the end of the evening as part of a prayer for an ample harvest. While the *mushiokuri* practice has ancient origins, the associated festival has only been held in Miyagino-Kiga since the 1960s. The village is lit by traditional-style lanterns on both evenings, when music, dance, and street performances, as well as food and drink stalls, attract local residents and tourists alike.