

Mt. Nanakura

For over 1,300 years, Mt. Nanakura has been worshipped as a local deity (kami). According to one local legend, the mountain is a sleeping dragon, and its seven peaks are the boney plates along the dragon's back. The word *nanakura* means "seven seats," and another legend says that its name comes from the seven generations of kami that appeared after the creation of the world in Japan's classic mythology. The mountain continues to be worshiped by some of the residents of Futatsui today. The line of peaks that comprise Nanakura block the path of the Yoneshiro River, causing it to make a large bend around the head of the metaphorical dragon.

In 1788 the Great Kyoto Fire devastated the ancient capital, and lumber from Akita was shipped to Kyoto for use in rebuilding. Most of the old-growth cedar forests around the Yoneshiro River were felled, and the people of Futatsui decided to preserve Mt. Nanakura as a sacred mountain. Many of its cedars have been protected ever since. Some are over 300 years old, and the mountain is still deeply interwoven with the spiritual traditions of the region.

Hiking trails have been built on the mountain, passing through the length of the cedar forest. They are narrow and may be dangerous following heavy rains. A shrine to the seven peaks of Mt. Nanakura is located at the end of the road that runs along the river at the foot of the final mountain.