

## **Otonomizu**

During the Edo period (1603–1867), the Tokugawa shogunate required all the daimyo lords to follow the shogunate's "alternate attendance" policy (*sankin kōtai*). This meant that the daimyo had to alternate between living in their respective domains and the capital, Edo (now Tokyo). This policy allowed the shogunate to ensure that the daimyo of each domain could not become too powerful, as the journey alone could almost bankrupt the lord, not to mention the required gifts and cost to maintain a retinue and a residence in Edo.

According to local legend, when the second lord, or *otono*, of the Tsugaru clan, Tsugaru Nobuhira (1586–1631) was traveling to Edo on the Ōmagoshikaidō road (now Route 101), he stopped his retinue in an open field to rest. In those days the lord of a domain would travel by palanquin or litter, which required frequent stops not only for the carriers but so that the lord could stretch, a practice known as *nodachi*. Feeling thirsty, Nobuhira ordered one of his retainers to bring him some water. The retainer found this spring, and when Nobuhira drank the water he is said to have cried out, "*kanro, kanro!*" meaning "sweet dew, sweet dew." The spring has been known as Otonomizu, "the lord's water" ever since.