

## **Mt. Meakan and Mt. Oakan: an old married couple**

According to Japanese folklore, Mt. Meakan and Mt. Oakan are considered to be a married couple. This is often the case with two prominent mountains within the same area in Japan.

It is generally believed the larger mountain of a pair is the wife. Mt. Meakan (1,499 m) has 10 peaks and is taller than Mt. Oakan, and is called Machineshiri (“woman mountain”) in the Ainu language. Mt. Oakan (1,370 m), is smaller and has only one peak, and is called Pinneshiri (“man mountain”). The main peak of Mt. Meakan was formed between 3,000 and 7,000 years ago, while Mt. Oakan was formed around 2,500 years ago.

One of the best places to view Meakan is from the western shore of Lake Onneto, where there is an observation deck. Oakan can be seen from the town of Akanko Onsen, and there are fine views from the shores of Lake Akan. The mountain is easy to recognize because of its symmetrical, cone-like shape.