

### **【Shigayama Tozan Course】**

The Shigayama Tozan Course is an intermediate mountain trail that connects the Kidoike, Ōnumaike Iriguchi, and Suzurikawa bus stops. Completing the entire 6.5-kilometer course requires approximately four and a half hours. Alternatively, hikers can switch to the Ikemeguri Course at the Forty-Eight Pond Wetlands and continue on to Ōnuma Pond. This alternate route is 12.6 kilometers long, with a change in elevation of 300 meters, and requires about five and a half hours to complete. Between the three starting and ending locations and multiple split trails, the course can be tailored to fit a variety of schedules and difficulties.

Taking either route will bring climbers to the summit of Mt. Shiga (2,035 m), from where there are panoramic views of the surrounding mountains, the Forty-Eight Pond Wetlands, and a variety of Shiga Highlands' distinctive mountain ponds. One of these ponds is named the Devil's Sumo Ring (*oni no sumōba*) for its resemblance to a *gunbai*, the fan carried by sumo referees.

The peak also has clear views of Ōnuma Pond, which is turned cobalt blue by copper sulfate runoff. On the right shore, Daija-jinya Shrine's red *torii* gate stands out against the blue water. Daija is a mythical dragon portrayed in area folklore as a guardian of the Shiga Highlands. In August, the shrine is the site of the Daija Festival, during which local residents row across the pond in smoke-spewing boats topped with huge dragon puppets.