

Sunrise ceremony on the peak

As Mt. Hakusan is one of the most sacred peaks in Japan, it is no surprise that the mountain is the site of sacred rites. One particularly dramatic ritual leads many climbers to wake before dawn to catch the sunrise at the top of Gozengamine (2,702 m).

On days when the weather is cooperative, a drum will sound from the shrine at Murodo one hour before sunrise. A Shinto priest will then hike up to the summit, navigating the steep path in high wooden geta clogs. At the peak, he will climb up onto the rocks and lead those who have gathered in shouting *banzai!* as they face toward the sunrise, to welcome the birth of a new day and pray for world peace and safety on the trails. This is a memorable way to start the day and experience the power of this sacred peak.