

## **Mt. Senjō Summit**

This gently sloping grassy area is the summit of Mt. Senjō (615 m). Like Mt. Katsutagasen (1,149 m), Mt. Kabutogasen (1,338 m), and Mt. Yahazugasen (1,358 m) to the south, Mt. Senjō formed along Mt. Daisen's northern volcanic rim. The lava dome that hardened into Senjō's peak formed between 600,000 and 400,000 years ago, building upon rock laid down during Daisen's previous eruptions.

The summit of Mt. Senjō, while not as high as its neighbors, is rich in history. In 718, during the Nara period (710–794), Mt. Daisen became a center for Shugendō, a sect of Esoteric Buddhism that blends elements of Shinto mountain worship with Taoist mountain asceticism. In the Heian period (794–1185), connections were forged between Daisen and two satellite temples: one on Mt. Mitoku to the east, and the other here on Mt. Senjō. Access to the sacred peaks was restricted to Shugendō practitioners, and together the mountains were known as the “Three Peaks of Hōki.”

Some centuries later, Mt. Senjō again played a role in Japanese history. In 1332, Emperor Go-Daigo was exiled to the Oki Islands for plotting against the Kamakura shogunate, the military government that had controlled Japan since 1185. In 1333, Go-Daigo escaped and fled to Mt. Senjō, where he was aided by the regional lord Nawa Nagatoshi. Together, they encamped on Senjō's fortress-like summit, which is surrounded by sheer cliffs on three sides. The shogunate's forces attacked, but they were defeated. Go-Daigo's victory at Mt. Senjō allowed him to eventually topple the Kamakura shogunate and regain control of Japan.

Up the small rise to the east stands a stone monument, raised in 1924 to commemorate the spot where Go-Daigo once stood to admire the view from Senjō's summit. Another marker lies on the ground behind it, bearing a nearly identical inscription, but inscribed with the year 1923 and a different sculptor's name. Presumably the first monument toppled soon after installation and was replaced the following year with a different maker's handiwork.

The remains of Go-Daigo's residence on Mt. Senjō lie to the southwest, near the ruins of Chishakuji Temple. They were designated a national historical site in 1932.