

## **Lake Saiko**

Lake Saiko lies to the west of Lake Kawaguchiko. There was no road around the lake until the 1960s. Before that, even travel between villages on the shore was done by boat. Researchers believe that most of the pilgrims performing the Eight-Lake Circuit (Hakkai Meguri) traveled across the lake by boat as well.

On the southern shore lies a lava cave called Ryugu Doketsu. “Ryugu” means “dragon palace,” and local residents believed this cave was the residence of a water deity in the form of a dragon. In ancient times, they prayed to the dragon god for rain in times of drought, making this an example of an extant sacred spot which the Fuji-ko incorporated into their own rituals. Today the cave is also known as Senoumi-jinja Shrine, which hosts a Ryugu Festival on August 2 each year.

Mt. Junigatake rises to the north. According to tradition, En no Gyoja, the legendary founder of Shugen asceticism, climbed this mountain before he climbed Mt. Fuji.