

## **Mt. Karakunidake: View of Mt. Ioyama**

This is the third station of Mt. Karakunidake, about 1,410 meters above sea level, where the forests of red pine and winter hazel (*Corylopsis glabrescens*) found on the lower slopes have largely thinned out. The fuming, yellowish-white peak now visible to the northwest is Mt. Ioyama, an active volcano. It was formed by an eruption from the flank of Mt. Karakunidake in 1768, making it the youngest mountain in the park. Pools of yellow water still bubble and steam inside its shallow crater, which is 100 meters across. From 1897 to 1962, sulfur was harvested here. Although climbing the mountain is currently prohibited for safety reasons, you are encouraged to take this rare opportunity to look down on a smoking, active volcano.

Since Mt. Ioyama erupted in 2018, fumaroles (openings that release volcanic gases) have periodically opened and closed on and around the mountain. As a result, hiking trails and roads are sometimes temporarily closed. From this vantage point on Mt. Karakunidake, the fumes are usually visible as white plumes accompanied by a distant roar and the smell of sulfur.

To the right, beyond Mt. Ioyama, is Mt. Koshikidake, so named because its flat summit resembles the top of a type of rice steamer called a *koshiki*. On the other side of Mt. Ioyama, to the left, is Mt. Shiratoriyama, location of the Ikemeguri Nature Trail. Turn to the southeast and you will see the explosion crater that opened up Mt. Karakunidake's own crater on the northwest side, creating a horseshoe-like shape.

From here to the 1,700-meter summit, the view to the south gradually opens out to include Lake Onamiike, Mt. Shinmoedake, and the Ebino Kogen Highlands. There are also large clusters of Miyama-Kirishima azaleas (*Rhododendron kiusianum*) and dwarf bamboo (*Sasa nipponica*).