

A Sacred Mountain

The summit of Mt. Hakusan is covered with snow for half the year. Its lofty, pure white peaks can be seen from a great distance, and the mountain has inspired worship for all of recorded history.

Mt. Hakusan is considered the home of Shirayama Hime (“lady of the white mountain”), a powerful deity said to bless the lowlands with rain, snowmelt, and spring water. Both Shirayama Hime Shrine in the Tsurugi district of Hakusan and its rear shrine (*okumiya*) near the summit are dedicated to Shirayama Hime.

The first person to climb Hakusan was Taichō Daishi (682–767), a Buddhist priest and mountain ascetic. He established the act of climbing Mt. Hakusan as a form of religious training in 717, and this practice continued for over a thousand years. Three pilgrimage routes once led to the summit from different shrines at the mountain’s base. Portions of these routes are now part of the modern trail network.

Blessings of Nature

Residents of nearby towns have long revered Mt. Hakusan for its blessings.

The clean water that flows from its snowy peaks is used to irrigate wasabi,

green onions, and other crops, while magma-heated springs provide

relaxation and healing. The mountain's forests supply food in the form of

wild ferns, shrubs, bamboo, and other plants (collectively called *sansai*).

Sansai sprout in early spring, just as winter food stores run low and before

new crops can be harvested.