Worship of Mt. Hakusan

Mt. Hakusan is one of Japan's Three Sacred Mountains, alongside Mt. Fuji and Mt. Tateyama. The snow that falls on Mt. Hakusan tends to linger on its peaks year-round, giving the mountain its name: "white mountain." Its pure white peaks are visible from as far away as Kyoto and have attracted worshippers throughout recorded history.

A Buddhist priest named Taichō Daishi (682–767) was the first person to climb the mountain in 717. In the centuries that followed, pilgrims and mountain ascetics established multiple routes to reach the summit. Sections of these trails are part of the modern Hakusan trail system.

Mt. Hakusan and the 3,000 Snakes

According to legend, the Buddhist priest Taichō Daishi arrived at Mt. Hakusan to find the sacred mountain crawling with 3,000 snakes. Taichō resolved to subdue the wicked snakes and save the surrounding villages. His spiritual power gave him the strength to capture the snakes and seal

them away in three locations around the mountain. These sites are Jazuka (“snake mound”), Karikomiike (“reaping pond”), and the frozen crater lake called Senjagaike (“pond of a thousand snakes”). All of these places can be visited today.