Tarobogu Shrine

Tarobogu Shrine is located about halfway between the base and the summit of Mt. Akagami, a mountain west of Higashiomi that is considered sacred and believed to be inhabited by deities. The shrine dates from around 600 CE and because of its lofty perch is often called “the shrine in the sky.” Within the shrine grounds today are about 150 wooden torii gates and several buildings that are dedicated to the deities enshrined there, which include the god of victory.

On foot, the shrine can be reached by a flight of 742 stone steps. The grounds command an impressive view of the rural landscape, the city of Higashiomi, and the Suzuka Mountains in the distance. Before the urbanization of the area, the site also afforded excellent views of Okinogahara, the field where the *oodako* (giant kites) were flown. Depictions of Mt. Akagami, Tarobogu Shrine, and *oodako* in flight over Okinogahara can be seen in many *hanga* wood-block prints dating from the

early eighteenth century, demonstrating the long history of kite flying culture in Higashiomi.

Today, many people visit the shrine to pray for victory, happiness, protection against disaster, good luck, or success in business.