

\*Summit of Gozengamine Peak and Okumiya

# Mt. Hakusan Faith: The Mountain Where Gods Dwell

## San Banba and Zenjodo

### The Establishment of Mt. Hakusan Worship and Its Spread

#### Hakusan Shrine: Japan's Most Numerous Shrine Name

Mt. Hakusan is said to have been opened to worship in 717 by the great Buddhist monk Taicho Taishi. Mt. Hakusan stands alone—it is not a part of any mountain range, nor is it surrounded by high peaks.

Because of this, Mt. Hakusan can be seen from as far away as Nagoya and Kyoto, and it has been revered and worshipped by people in the capital since long ago.

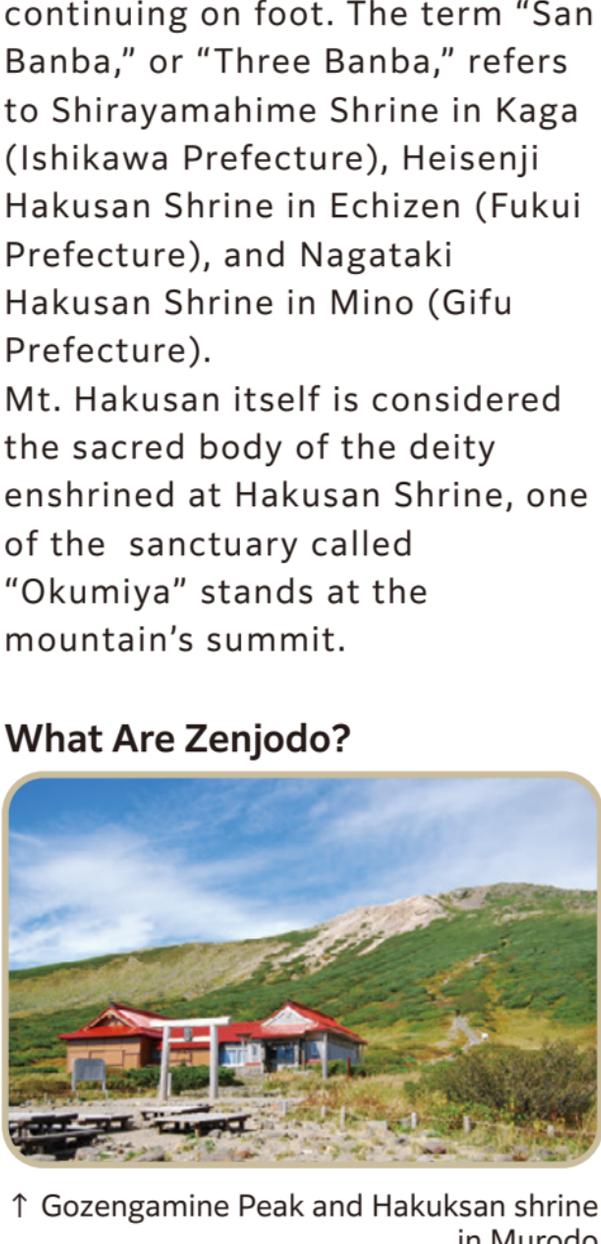
It is not clear when the Mt. Hakusan Faith began, but with its heavy winter snowfall, Mt. Hakusan is a source of abundant water, and it also serves as a landmark from the sea.

Accordingly, it is seen as a god of water and guardian deity of the sea.

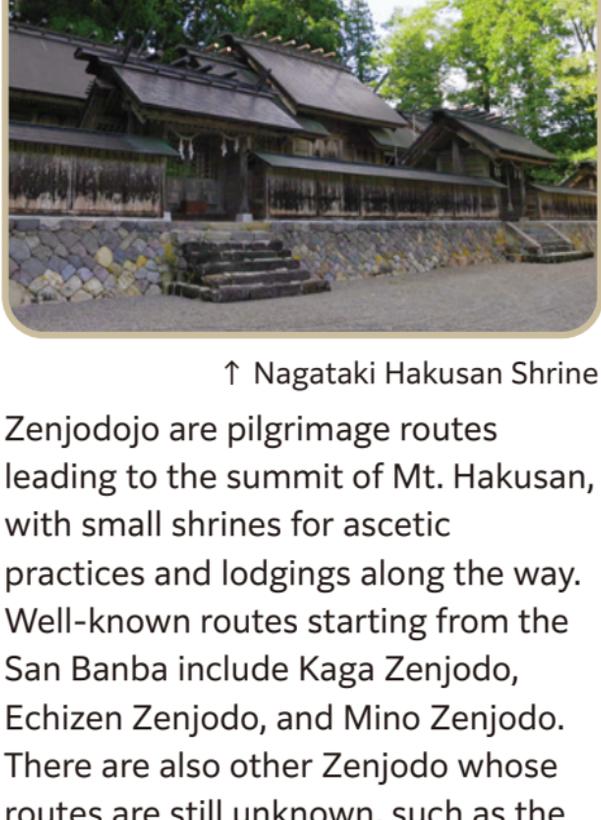
Today, there are approximately 3,000 Hakusan Shrines nationwide, stretching from Aomori Prefecture in the north to Kagoshima Prefecture in the south.

### San Banba and Zenjodo

#### What Are "Banba?"



↑ Shirayamahime Shrine

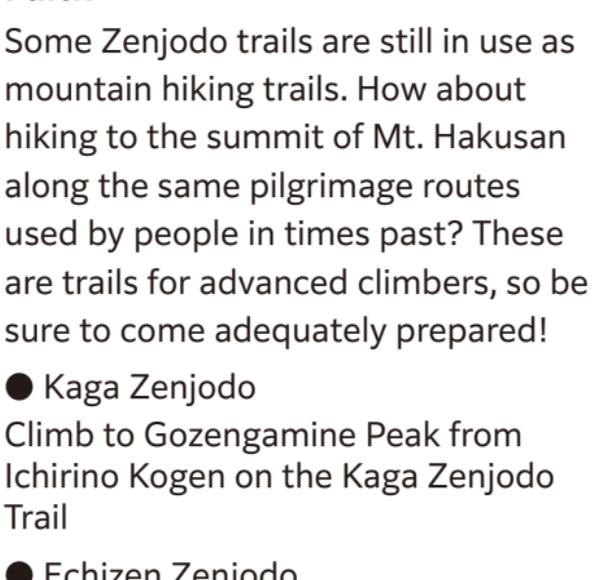


↑ Heisenji Hakusan Shrine

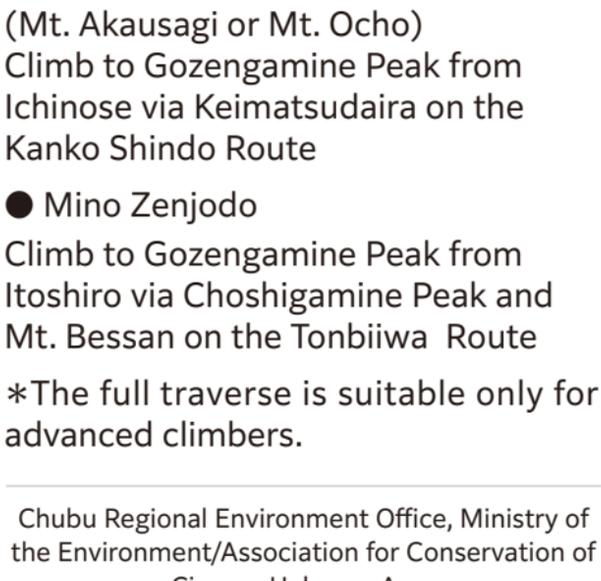
Banba were traditional starting points for climbing Mt. Hakusan. The name comes from the fact that people would leave their horses there (banba literally means "horse place") before continuing on foot. The term "San Banba," or "Three Banba," refers to Shirayamahime Shrine in Kaga (Ishikawa Prefecture), Heisenji Hakusan Shrine in Echizen (Fukui Prefecture), and Nagataki Hakusan Shrine in Mino (Gifu Prefecture).

Mt. Hakusan itself is considered the sacred body of the deity enshrined at Hakusan Shrine, one of the sanctuary called "Okumiya" stands at the mountain's summit.

#### What Are Zenjodo?



↑ Gozengamine Peak and Hakuksan shrine in Murodo



↑ Nagataki Hakusan Shrine

Zenjodojo are pilgrimage routes leading to the summit of Mt. Hakusan, with small shrines for ascetic practices and lodgings along the way. Well-known routes starting from the San Banba include Kaga Zenjodo, Echizen Zenjodo, and Mino Zenjodo. There are also other Zenjodo whose routes are still unknown, such as the trail that passes Mt. Ogasa. In earlier times, pilgrims followed these Zendojo as their paths to the peak of Mt. Hakusan.

#### Visit the San Banba

Even today, many people visit the San Banba shrines to worship. They are also easily accessible to tourists. Each shrine preserves the solemn atmosphere that has been handed down through the centuries. Why not visit all three Banba shrines and experience the spirit of the time-honored Mt. Hakusan faith?

#### Climb the Path of Mt. Hakusan Faith

Some Zenjodo trails are still in use as mountain hiking trails. How about hiking to the summit of Mt. Hakusan along the same pilgrimage routes used by people in times past? These are trails for advanced climbers, so be sure to come adequately prepared!

##### ● Kaga Zenjodo

Climb to Gozengamine Peak from Ichirino Kogen on the Kaga Zenjodo Trail

##### ● Echizen Zenjodo

Climb to Mt. Houonji from Heisenji Hakusan Shrine or the Houonji Rindo Forest Trail

Ohara Rindo Forest Trail to Ohara Pass (Mt. Akasagi or Mt. Ocho)

Climb to Gozengamine Peak from Ichinose via Keimatsudaira on the Kanko Shindo Route

##### ● Mino Zenjodo

Climb to Gozengamine Peak from Itoshiro via Choshigamine Peak and Mt. Bessan on the Tonbiwa Route

\*The full traverse is suitable only for advanced climbers.