



# Mt. Monju and its Environs

Asōzu-cho/Tsunohara-cho, Fukui City

Mt. Monju serves is a popular destination for many local elementary schools' field trips, which bring eager youngsters on climbs to its summit. Long ago it earned the praise of St. Saigyō, whose poetry celebrated its beauty.



Buckwheat fields at the foot of Mt. Monju<sup>①</sup>



Mt. Monju's *Chigo no Hi*<sup>②</sup>

Mt. Monju (elev. 365m) sits on the border of Fukui and Sabae City, and has long been admired as one of the five great mountains of Echizen. As it resembles Mt. Fuji when viewed from Tsunohara, it is popularly known as the Mt. Fuji of Tsunohara. Easy to climb, it is often chosen as an outdoor field trip destination for local elementary schools, making it an integral part of local life from childhood to old age.

After sunset on April 24th, the mountain's peak is set alight, forming what is known as chigo no hi. This tradition bears a history of over 1,000 years from the time of St. Taichō, and is meant to represent the mark of the mountain's bodhisattva.



Stone monument at the base of Asamutsu Bridge (Asōzu-cho, Fukui City)



Traditional houses lining the Asamutsu River (Imaichi-cho, Fukui City)



Traditional homes and storehouses (Sugitani-cho, Fukui City)

The Asamutsu Bridge served as the point where the Hokuriku and Mino Roads diverged during Japan's Heian Period, and has received mention in essential literary works of the time such as Sei Shonagon's Pillow Book and poetic verse. Though nothing of its original pedigree remains today, a stone monument at the bridge's base bears inscriptions of a song penned by St. Saigyō and the words of famed poet Matsuo Bashō, recalling the bridge's former glory. Along the Asamutsu River remain many districts which retain a rich architectural heritage, preserving the traditional-style homes and storehouses that defined Fukui in the prewar years.

