

Day 3 (Anrakuji \rightarrow) Fujii-dera \rightarrow Shosanji (\rightarrow Kamiyama) Distance and elevation

Jinsei mo, chenro mo, yama mo ari, tani mo ari 人生も、お遍路も、山もあり、谷もあり: "In life, and along the pilgrimage, there are mountains and there are valleys"

Total walking distance approximately 16.5 km

Fujii-dera \rightarrow Shosanji bus stop: Distance: 16.5 km/ 10.3 miles Elevation: + 1083 / - 873 m

Overview Walking course options

RECOMMENDED WALKING COURSE:

After breakfast, transfer by **8:00am pre-reserved/paid taxi** (cost covered in the tour) to Temple #11 Fujii-dera. Buy items for a picnic lunch at a convenience store en route. Today's walk is through forests and includes some of the longest and toughest mountain trails up and over three peaks, a section that is colloquially known as *henro-korogashi*, the "pilgrim tumbler".

Ascend to Ipponsugi-an, a huge and ancient sugi cedar tree, under which serenely stands a statue of Kobo Daishi, and pass through a delightful farming hamlet before finally arriving at Temple#12 Shosan-ji, surrounded by old and venerable sugi trees. After persuing the temple grounds, descend another ~3km to the hamlet below and transfer by **reserved/pre-paid 16:30 taxi** to your accommodation in nearby Kamiyama, renowned for its healing onsen hot spring baths. Kamiyama means 'Mountains of the Gods' and you may relax with a well-earned onsen bask at accommodation here before enjoying a Japanese *kaiseki* banquet, composed of many delicious dishes.

Overview Walking course options (continued)

RELAXED COURSE OPTION: SHORTEN THE WALK

If you would prefer a more relaxed pace (or 1000m /3550 ft. of ascent is not the ideal walking menu today), you may choose to cut off the walk's initial 7km / 4.3 miles and 586m /1923 ft. of elevation gain by asking the pre-reserved taxi to take you on to **Ryusui-an 柳水庵.** To do so, please communicate or show the taxi driver the following text on arrival at Temple #11 Fujii-dera:

藤井寺を見てきてから途中の「柳水庵」までお願いしたいです。

ちょっと待っていてもらえますか?

Fujii-dera-wo mitekite-kara tochuu-no "Ryusui-an"-made onegai shitai desu. Chotto matteite moraemasu ka?

("After visiting Fujii-dera, I would like you to take me/us to

'Ryusui-an'. Can you wait please?")

*The cost of this transfer is also included in the tour, but if any confusion with the taxi driver, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

*Ryusui-an has a shelter and is the picnic lunch point on the recommended course, but you may choose another point to eat further along the trail (Shosan-ji temple also has a covered resting area in the nokyo-sho office). From Ryusui-an, you will walk 9.5km / 6 miles (approximately 500m elevation gain) along undulating forest terrain to Temple #12 Shosan-ji and the bus stop below.

SKIPPING THE WALK

If weather or health preclude you from walking today, you may take the pre-reserved/paid taxi with your luggage all the way to the next accommodation in Kamiyama. In this case, please contact our offices, so that we may confirm with the taxi company and negotiate your early arrival in Kamiyama.

Recommended Course Schedule Itinerary Summary

7:00am Breakfast *An (often loud) morning announcement will be made to alert you that breakfast is prepared.

8:00 Reserved taxi (pre-paid by Walk Japan/Japan Travel Company office).

***8:05-8:20** Buy picnic lunch at 7-11 convenience store en route

★Please remember to buy extra water on a hot day (1-1.5L recommended) as there are no vending services available on the walk until Temple #12 Shosan-ji.

8:30-8:45 Arrive at Temple #11 Fujii-dera 藤井寺

8:45-9:00am Begin you walk from Temple #11 Fujii-dera

11:45-12:00 Arrive Ryusui-an 柳水庵 temple hall/rest shelter

★LUNCH: Rest and have your picnic lunch (★This is also the alternative taxi drop-off point if you have skipped the initial 7km / 586m gain from Fujii-dera.)

12:30 (or before) Depart Ryusui-an

FROM RYUSUI-AN, IT IS APPROXIMATELY 6KM /3.7 MILES (-480M/+560M ELEVATION) TO TEMPLE #12 SHOSANJI, FOLLOWED BY 3KM /1.9 MILES AND 450M DESCENT TO THE BUS STOP (★AIMING FOR THE LONE VIABLE BUS DEPARTURE AT 16:31). IF WORRIED ABOUT TIMING, PLEASE DEPART EARLIER.

14:45-15:00 Arrive at Temple #12 Shosan-ji 焼山寺

15:15-15:30 Depart from Temple #12 Shosan-ji (3km/-450m from here to bus stop.)

16:30 Reserved Taxi at Nabeiwa hamlet (Shosanji bus stop)

(★Note: This is ~3km and -430m elevation descent from the temple. I you would prefer to be picked up at the Shosan-ji temple parking lot, please contact us in advance.)

16:45 Arrive/Check-in to accommodation: Kamiyama Onsen: Hotel Shiki-no-sato 神山温泉ホテル四季の里

*Enjoy bathing in the local onsen hot spring before dinner.

18:30/19:00 Dinner

8:00AM Reserved TAXI

A taxi will arrive in front of your accommodation at 8:00am (or before).

Please ride in this taxi with your LUGGAGE to Temple #11 Fujii-dera.

En route, the taxi has been asked to stop at a convenience store (usually 7-Eleven, five-ten minutes away) so that you may buy your PICNIC LUNCH for today. There are no other vendors/ options along the recommended walking course, so please be sure to buy enough water (1-1.5L recommended) and food for a more challenging/energy-expending day today. PLEASE CONFIRM that the taxi is stopping at the the convenience store *conbini* $\exists \forall \forall \exists$ (pronounced "cone-bee-knee"), or show them the below text in Japanese:

途中でコンビニに寄ってもらえますか?

Tochu-de konbini-ni yotte moraemasu ka?

("Can we please stop at a convenience store en route?")

*After dropping you off, the taxi will take your luggage on to accommodation.

*Please manage your time wisely and be ready for the taxi when it arrives. If worried about the pacing of the recommended course, you may ask the front desk (or call our offices) to arrange an earlier taxi pick-up. Please make sure it is the same reserved taxi paid through Walk Japan/Japan Travel Company. We do not recommend a later taxi pick-up, unless very confident in your own pace on rougher/more challenging terrain.

RELAXED COURSE OPTION: If you choose to cut off the initial 7km/586m of the walk today, the taxi will wait for you to finish your visit of Temple #11 Fujii-dera and then take you on to Ryusui-an, the rest/lunch point on the full walking course. The cost of this transfer is also covered in the tour. To do so, ask the taxi to wait in the parking lot, while you (ideally expediently) visit and get your stamp. If communication is an issue, you may point to the below sentence in Japanese:

藤井寺を見てきてから途中の「柳水庵」までお願いしたいです。

ちょっと待っていてもらえますか?

Fujii-dera-wo mitekite-kara tochuu-no "Ryusui-an"-made ongai shitai desu. Chotto matteite moraemasu ka?

("After visiting Fujii-dera, I would like you to take me/us to 'Ryusui-an'. Can you wait please?")

*If any problems with communication, please do not hesistate to contact our offices.

Overview Map (Full Course ~16.5km): Temple #11 Fujii-dera →Temple#12 Shosan-ji →Shosan-ji bus stop



• On arrival at the Fujii-dera parking lot, use the rest rooms here (last plumbing available until Shosan-ji temple). Then turn left to ascend up the concrete path to the temple grounds.





Temple #11: Fujii-dera 藤井寺

Main deity: Yakushi Nyorai

Said to be founded by Kukai in 815, but again following multiple fires, the current main hall dates to 1860. The statue of the Medicine Buddha inside is the only remnant of the original temple, said to have been carved by the Great Teacher himself...despite an inscription dating it to 1148. Kobo Daishi is also said to have planted a *fuji* (Japanese Wisteria) in front of the temple grounds, thus giving it its name. Shifting from Shingon to Zen Buddhist denomination (after a rebuliding in 1674) the temple is one of three to have done so along the pilgrimage. It is also unique among the 88 in that it is the only one to use the suffix "dera" instead of "ji", (both meaning "temple"). This is likely in homage to a larger temple in Osaka of the same name founded in 725, which is charged with protecting the nation and Imperial household.

VISIT: Entering the grounds through the Nio-mon guard gate, there is a large *biwa* (*Eriobotrya japonica*) loquat tree just before it (prized for folk medicinal benefits, these are planted on many temple grounds throughout Japan). Pass a wisteria trellis and the bonsho temple bell. A few more stairs up and the nokyo-sho stamp office is on your immediate right with the main Hondo temple hall and statue of Kobo Daishi ahead. The Daishi-do hall is also to the right here. A sub-hall dedicated to Fudomyou, the Immovable One, as well as a unique hexagonal hall dedicated to *Hakuryu-Benzaiten* 白龍弁財天 "White dragon goddess of flowing things" (*see cultural note on next page) may be found on the left.



On fuji (Japanese wisteria) in particular:

Fuji 藤 Japanese wisteria (Wisteria floribunda) may be seen flowering throughout the mountainsides in May, often intertwined with kuzu 葛 (Pueraria montana) Japanese arrowroot and shime-koroshi 絞め殺し (Ficus aurea), the Strangler fig. Native to Japan and prevalent, it is often used as a symbol in kamon family crests, no doubt due to both its beauty and persistence. Propagating the vine into a sturdy garden ornamental,

however, is another matter, as it often doesn't establish well and takes time (often years) to strengthen. The oldest examples of ornamental fuji may be found in temple gardens, as they were commonly located on mountainsides with ideal climates for growing the vine. Temples also had the capacity to grow non-edible plants (a luxury in pre-modern times). Protected well into maturity on the grounds, many temples gained a reputation for the grandeur of their wisteria arrangements... no doubt, a common villager of the Heian Period, seeing a trained fuji in full bloom, would be convinced that Buddha had a hand in the universe. Wisteria soon came to take on a greater significance in the Buddhist tradition: The plant's royal purple motif was added to the ornate garments of head priests, the hanging tendrils of the plant's flowers likened to bowing in deference to Buddha, and purple a symbol of the "welcoming approach" of Amidha Buddha to those on their death beds (riding a purple cloud to meet them). Along with pine (symbol of endurance and strength) and loquat (a traditional panacea), many Buddhist temple gardens became botanic reflections of the value and beauty of human life.

Recommended course walking directions: Temple #11 Fujiidera ~ Temple #12 Shosan-ji (~ Shosan-ji bus stop)



•After visiting Fujii-dera and obtaining your temple stamp, you will start up the mountain trail next to (i.e. left when facing) the main hondo hall. Passing by the statue of Kukai/ Kobo Daishi and a stone placard monument, pilgrim signs point up the intial stone steps and path. (*DO NOT take the path left through the Shinto stone torii gate).

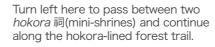


The beginning of this concrete path up is the start of a "mini-88" loop course around the temple grounds, representing the entire pilgrimage.



The "log" guard rail lining this path will stop, and you will reach a point with a wooden sign 焼山寺 ("Shosan-ji", Temple 12) pointing left.

120m







ESPECIALLY IN DAMP, LEAFY CONDITIONS, TAKE CARE TO WATCH OUT FOR ANY SNAKE ACTIVITY ALONG THE TRAIL. JAPANESE PIT VIPERS (GLOYDIUS BLOMHOFFI, マムシ MAMUSHI) ARE ESPECIALLY VENOMOUS AND SHOULD NOT BE APPROACHED. IF BITTEN, SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION.

Of cultural note, snakes (and by extension serpent/dragons) are often considered protectors of mountain springs. This life-giving water is considered a blessing for the rice fields, as well as a curse during typhoon season when flashfloods are common. The colloquial term for this flooding is *januke* 蛇抜け or "the snake coming through" and many rituals in mountain villages pertain to "appeasing the white snake"... One may imagine seeing a snake/dragon in the white waters of a typhoon flashflood as it cascades toward the village.



Remain true to the straight path and soon ascend a steep flight of log steps. The small white sign with green lettering here says $\wedge \mathcal{LS}$ \mathcal{ZSNU} henro-korogashi, or "pilgrim tumbler". This designates that one should exercise caution on rougher terrain ahead.

530m

Reach the benches and road at the top and take a breather.



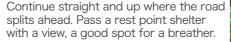
★TAKE EXTRA CARE: The stone sign at the intersecting road here may seem to point left, but as you can see, it means first go right then soon left up the trail slope opposite.

Continue ever up and soon have a view across Yoshinogawa City 吉野川市 (named after Shikoku's second largest river). Reach a concrete lane going up.

300m

FROM HERE IT IS APPROXIMATELY 6KM / 3.7 MILES TO THE RYUSUI-AN LUNCH BREAK AND 12KM /7.5 MILES TO TEMPLE #12 SHOSAN-JI.





100m

1 KM





There is a longer strech of rocky ascent (slippery in the wet) ahead and a point to rest at a henro-michi stone/ Jizo statue and larger etched rock monument. This says "right to Temple #12" in Japanese (i.e. continue straight ahead). The path flattens from here.





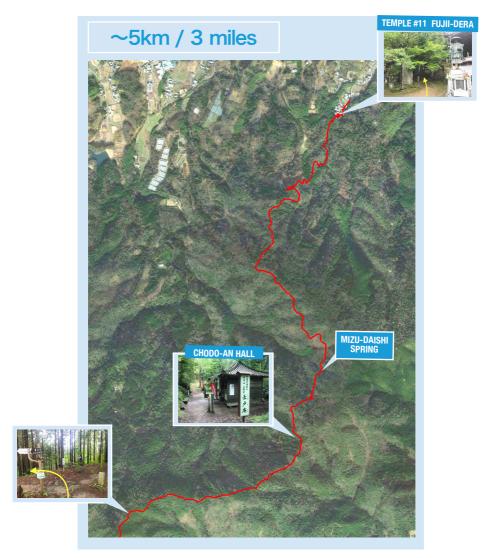
The path is gently undulating for the next 700m. Reach the **Mizu-Daishi** 水大師 water spring, one of two famous points on the pilgrimage that Kobo Daishi is said to have struck with his staff to bring forth water. Pass statues for Kobo Daishi and Fudomyo, the Immovable One, good indications that a steeper up awaits.

Vegetation Note: The sugi cedar (Cryptomeria japonica) and hinoki cypress (Chamaecyparis obtusa) timber forest here is interspersed with native varieties of cherry, beech and oak tree. Flowering camellia, dogwood, magnolia and azalea are also prevalent, and shide fern lines the trail. If lucky, you may spot manushi-gusa $\Delta \mathcal{D}\mathcal{T}\mathcal{T}$ (Arisaema serratum, literally "pit viper grass"), a Jack-in the pulpit variety that resembles the viper's pattern on its stem, as well as develops a berry/fruit shaped much like a snake's head.





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Vegetation wate: Keep your eyes peeled for the distinctive leaves (and smell) of the sansho plant (Zanthoxylum piperitum, or "Japanese pepper"), which often grows wild in this forest terrain. Both the leaves and the pepper berry/seed of this plant are used as a condiment and garnish in your evening meals.





•Continue up the steep and potentially slippery stone path soon ahead (100m), then progressively up for the next 600m before a brief down to a temple hall called **Chodo-an** 長戸庵. There is a compost **toilet** here to the right of the statue (however, the sign in Japanese says that it is reserved for women and that there is a toilet for men at the next rest stop).



700m

You have travelled approximately 3.5km from Temple #11 Fujiidera, and it is another 3.4km to Ryusui-an rest shelter/picnic spot.



•Continue straight ahead and up (IGNORE white sign with red lettering that points to the right), and reach one of the better view points of the valley, with the the Yoshino River in full relief.

300m



•The path is undulating for the next 600m, then a stiff climb up log-like concrete steps for the next 550m. *Take care on rocky potentially slippery descents, as well as roots sticking out of the path. Continue ever straight.



1.4km



★Reach a bench and a sign pointing to the left. DO NOT continue straight. Instead go left, following a sign to SYOSANJI. A sign in Japanese here points you "1.8km and approximately 35minutes" to 柳水庵 (Ryusui-an), your lunch spot.





•On gentle forest terrain for the next 600m, the path merges with another wider one. Follow signs and the intuitive path pointing right. In another 200m reach a a Jizo statue and wooden post at a fork in the path.

800m



•Follow intuitive signs/arrows right at the fork, and soon follow more signs left up the narrowing trail.

This up is short and soon becomes a narrow down on rougher terrain. Approximately 500m on, there is a final stretch of stone switchback steps down. *Another "pilgrim tumbler", please take care on slippery, moss-covered stones..



900m

Reach Ryusui-an 柳水庵 Temple Hall.

You have travelled approximately 7km / 4.3 miles (586m elevation gain) from Temple #11 Fujii-dera.



PICNIC LUNCH: Go past the temple hall and toilets and continue down (120m) to the small **pilgrim's shelter** below (*the concrete slope down here can also be slippery). This is our recommended **PICNIC LUNCH** spot. You may rest in the shelter for lunch or head 40m further down to the road side and eat by the stone monuments.

*This is also the point where you will be dropped off by taxi if you have chosen to skip the initial walk today.

*When you have finished lunch, you will continue right at the road here. The trailhead soon continues up to the left.





•Following lunch, turn right on the road below the pilgrim shelter and head briefly down the asphalt.

Follow signs to soon turn left up the trail.



From here, it is approximatley 6km /3.7 miles (-480m and +560m) to Temple #12 Shosan-ji

•The trail soon merges with a wider one above and continues up. Just over 1km on, reach a split in the path. Follow signs left along the narrower path to (Temple) **12**.

1.1km





Where this path soon meets the road, continue across and up the trail.

★ FROM HERE, IT IS A STEADY AND, AT TIMES, QUITE ROCKY/ STEEP CLIMB THROUGH CEDAR FOREST. TAKE IT SLOWLY WITH BREAKS ALONG THE WAY IF NEEDED. THE JIZO ARE ROOTING FOR YOU AND KOBO DAISHI WAITS AT THE TOP!



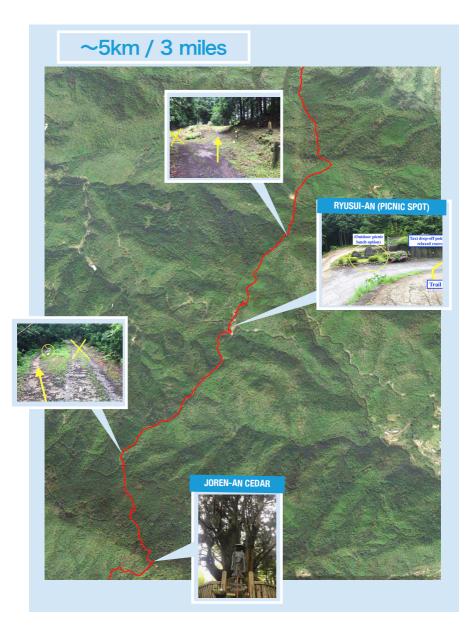
Climbing a final flight of concrete stops, arrive at the top and pay respects to the Great Teacher.

700m



Joren-an 浄蓮庵・Ipponsugi-an 一本杉庵: The Great Cedar

A statue of Kukai stands in front of a large native *sugi* tree (*Cryptomeria japonica*, often translated as "Japanese cedar", though is closer to a redwood/sequoia) that is thirty meters high and almost eight meters around. Legend has it that on his way to Shosan-ji temple, Kukai slept in a hole in the root of a tree here and Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light, appeared to him in a dream. He then built a temple hall and planted the sugi tree that now stands behind the statue. If this is true, the tree is over 1200 years old.



Pass to the right of the statue, between the temple hall buildings, and head steadily down now for . The path becomes slightly more





narrow and rocky. You will reach another Jizo statue and intersecting trail.

Follow signs to cross it (the white sign with green letters here says "The last remaining walk along Kukai's path" in Japanese) and then head sharply down left.

Another 200m down and there

is a wooden post with a pilgrim sign and red Japanese lettering. This warns of a particularly steep and rocky down section from here. Take care for 400m and reach the mountain hamlet below.

600m





Follow signs left along the hamlet lane, briefly, before cutting down right, sharply, to leave it.

35m





Continue down a narrow path, passing the foundation walls of a home, before meeting an asphalt lane.

150m





Cross the lane and follow the low road path ahead.

150m

The path forks in front of a home. Diverge left onto the narrower forest path and continue on to cross a small bridge over rapids, passing ume apricot ("Japanese plum") trees.



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•Crossing a larger concrete bridge over a mountain stream, you will soon reach the beginning of your final, longer "pilgrim-tumbler" climb.

200m

★THIS IS SOME OF THE STEEPEST ROCKY TERRAIN OF THE TRAIL, CONTINUING FOR ROUGHLY 1KM. TAKE YOUR TIME.

En route, a sign in Japanese very eloquently describes, the day: "In life and along the pilgrimage, there are mountains and there are valleys."





•Ascend until you reach a flat area and signpost/bench, and have a wellearned break.

From here, it is approximately 1km on easier terrain to Temple #12 Shosan-ji.



•Continue up the wider gravel trail and soon reach an asphalt lane with a promenade of stone lanterns running parallel ahead.



900m

Enter the promenade right and

continue straight on. Pass statues of a number of protective deities* before reaching stairs to the main gate of the temple on your right.

360m



*You may thank these deities for helping you reach this point in the pilgrimage (and in life). They are, in order: *Fudomyo* 不動明王 (the Immovable One), *Jibo-Kannon-Bosatsu* 慈母観音菩薩 (The "Benevelont Mother" Kannon), *Shaka-Nyorai* 釈迦如来 (the Historical Buddha), *Monju-Bosatsu* 文 殊菩薩 (Bodhisattva of Wisdom), *Fugen-Bosatsu* 普賢菩薩 (Bodhisattva of Practice/Good Conduct), *Jizo-Bosastu* 地蔵 菩薩 (Jizo Bodhisattva, the "earthly matrix"), *Miroku-Bosatsu* 弥勒菩薩 (the Future Buddha), *Yakushi-Nyorai* 薬師如来 (the

Medicine Buddha), *Kanzeon-Bosatsu* 観世音菩薩 (Kannon, Guanyin, Goddess of Mercy/Compassion), *Seishi-Bosatsu* 勢至菩薩 (Seishi Bodhisattva, "he who proceeds with vigor"), *Amida-Nyorai* 阿弥陀如来 (the Buddha of Infinite Light), and *Dainichi-Nyorai* 大日如来 (the Cosmic Buddha)

• You have reached the grounds of Temple #12 Shosan-ji. Congratulations! Turn right up the stone steps to the main temple gate. The nokyo-sho office is 50m ahead on the left and the main Hondo hall is another 50m directly ahead, with the Daishi do Hall to its immediate right

Daishi-do Hall to its immediate right.





Temple #12: Shosan-ji 焼山寺

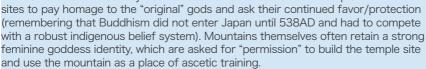
Main deity: Kokuzo-Bosatsu

Famous as the pilgrimage's first major *nansho* ("difficult place" to reach) at an elevation of 700m (2,300ft), Shosan-ji temple

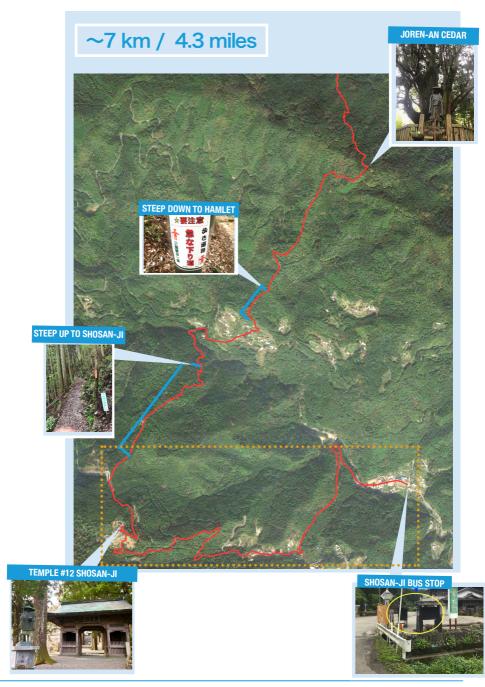
is the second highest on the full circuit. En-no-gyoja (b. 634 - d. c.700-707), founder of the Shugendo faith, visited here over a hundred years before Kukai to carry out strict ascetic practices. He was the first to take the practice of mountain worship into the depths of the mountains themselves and thought that through strict ascetic practice supranatural powers could be achieved. Local myth associated the mountain with a destructive serpent/dragon that set the mountain on fire ("Shosan" means burning mountain). Kukai was following in Enno-gyoja's footsteps in visiting Shosan-ji, and he also undertook ascetic practices here. The legend associates Kukai with the permanent containing of the destructive serpent or dragon. En-no-gyoja had contained the serpent but his powers had weakened over the course of 100 years. The serpent had caused the entire mountain to go up in flames (perhaps associated with a large destructive mountain fire). Kukai climbed the mountain and contained the serpent in a cave about half way between the Temple and the Oku-no-in (inner sanctum). En-no- gyoja is worshipped as a deity at this Inner Sanctum, and until 1911, a close to 1,000 year old serpent statue rested inside, backed by an intricate engraving of flames. The basis of the myth is that Kukai would have ended a snake cult, or cult of fear and mythic superstition, and replaced this fear with a new religion - the path of Buddha.

VISIT: Following the stone steps up through the main gate, pass an impressive array of sugi cedar trees, hundreds of years old. The nokyo-sho stamp office and a rest area is to your immediate left. Continue ahead to the main hall, with the Daishi-do hall next to it on the right. Kokuzo Bosatsu, the main deity, is a boddhisatva saint associated with granting wishes (for Kukai, it was to contain the fiery serpent of the mountain), usually pertaining to increased

wisdom and memory. Shosan-j is also unique in how prominently it includes Junisha-jinja 十二社神社, a Shinto shrine, on the grounds. This is the furthest structure to the right (a Shinto stone torii gate in front of it) and is a clear example of *shinbutsu-shugo* (the merging of Buddhist and Shinto beliefs and co-worship of deities). The shrine is also aptly named ("Juni" means 12) for the twelve iconic Shinto dieites enshrined here, as well as the obvious connection to Shosanj-ji's temple number. Shinto shrines may be included at Buddhist mountain temple







RESERVED TAXI: A TAXI HAS BEEN PRE-RESERVED AND PAID FOR BY OUR OFFICES TO TAKE YOU FROM THE END OF THE WALK AT SHOSANJI BUS STOP 焼山寺バス停 (i.e. the offical exit of the holy mountain) TO YOUR ACCOMMODATION AT KAMIYAMA ONSEN 神山温泉.

★PLEASE NOTE that the Shosan-ji bus stop is still another ~3 km (1.9 miles) and -430m (-1410 ft) elevation descent from Shosan-ji temple. If legs are not up to the final stretch, please call our offices to arrange the taxi pick you up instead from the temple parking lot (located ~400m back along the path lined by stone lantern posts and large Buddhist deity statues).



SELF-GUIDED

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