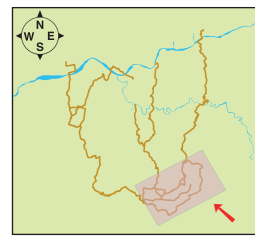
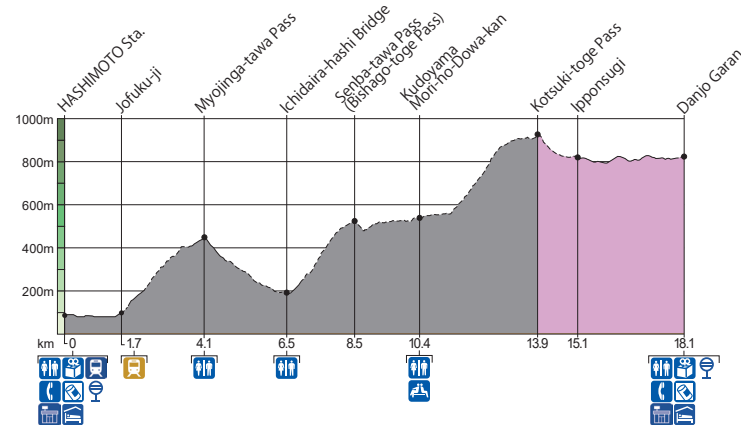


Kuroko-michi (Kotsuki-toge Pass ~ Danjo Garan) 黒河道(粉撞峠～壇上伽藍)



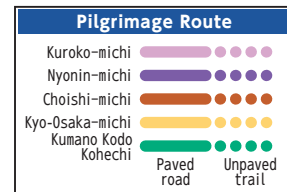
Kotsuki-toge Pass ~ Danjo Garan

Distance (km) : ~4.5
Time (hr) : 1.5~2
Total Elevation Gain (m): ~100
Total Elevation Loss (m): ~200

HASHIMOTO Sta. ~ Danjo Garan

Distance (km) : ~18.5
Time (hr) : 8~10
Total Elevation Gain (m): ~1300
Total Elevation Loss (m): ~570

----- Unpaved trail
 ————— Paved trail



Danjo Garan

The Danjo Garan 壇上伽藍 is the central precincts of Koyasan, the primary ceremonial center where the first buildings were constructed. The design of the compound comprises both functional and symbolic significance, with each building serving a religious purpose.

The geographical representation of the Dual Mandalas has its epicenter here radiating inward: the peripheral eight mountains are the cardinal petals of the lotus flower in the Womb world, and in the center of this is the Diamond world with Dainichi placed in the middle of the Konpon Daito stupa.

Konpon Daito

The Konpon Daito 根本大塔 is the central great pagoda of Koyasan, the main shrine of Dainichi Nyorai.

It is a Japanese esoteric tahoto stupa rich with symbolism, including a three-dimensional representation of the Womb and Diamond world mandalas; The grove of pillars inside the hall are painted with the 16 Bodhisattvas from the Womb world, which surround the four Buddhas of the Diamond world with Dainichi at the center.

Portraits of the eight great patriarchs of Shingon Buddhism are painted on the interior walls, including one of Hui-kuo, who was Kukai's mentor.

Kukai began its construction in 816 but did not live to see its completion in 887. Instead his successor Shinzen Daitoku was in charge of the final stages.

The Konpon Daito has been periodically rebuilt because of fires. The current structure is from 1937, made of reinforced concrete. It is ~50 m tall and ~30 m on each side. The distinctive bright orange paint makes the building easy to identify.



The symmetrical 15 m by 15 m building has a subtle and gentle cypress bark roofline, with lanterns under its graceful eaves.

Fudo-do

The Fudo-do 不動堂 is the oldest extant building on Koyasan and registered as a National Treasure.

The first building was commissioned in 1198 by the daughter of Emperor Toba, the Imperial Princess Hachijo-no-in. It was moved to the present site in 1908 and most recently refurbished in 1996.

Sanko-no-Matsu

When Kobo Daishi departed China in 806 it is said that he threw a golden three-pronged vajra ritual implement towards Japan praying for guidance:

"Go before me [to my native land] and find the appropriate place for Esoteric Buddhism."

Twelve years later, glowing in the soft evening light he found it perched in the branches of a pine tree in Koyasan. The 5th generation of this pine tree is in front of the Meido and is now called the "Sanko-no-Matsu" or "Three-pointed Vajra Pine Tree".

Notice that the needles are in clusters of three, just like the three-pointed Vajra.

Chu-mon Gate

Just south of the Kondo stands the newly built two-tiered inner, or middle, gate called Chu-mon 中門, the entrance to the sacred precinct. It burnt in the great fire of 1843 and was rebuilt in 2015 to celebrate the 1200th anniversary of the founding of Koyasan.

Statues of the Four Heavenly Kings—guardians of the world's four cardinal directions—are consecrated in the gate: Jikokuten 持国天, Tamonten 多聞天, Komokuten 廣目天, and Zochoten 增長天. The first are original statues saved from the fire, and the latter two are newly created masterpieces.

Kongobu-ji

Kongobu-ji 金剛峯寺 is the administrative and spiritual headquarters of Koyasan and its more than 3000 affiliated temples. The name directly translates as "Diamond Peak Temple".

The famous warlord, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, built the original temple in 1593 for the repose of his deceased mother.

The main gate is the oldest structure in the expansive grounds dating from that time. Upon passing through the gate the impressive temple hall dominates the view.

In the back of Kongobu-ji is the Banryu-tei 蟠龍庭 rock gardens, where two giant dragons fly through a sea of clouds—with their backs breaking through the surface—protecting the shrine.

