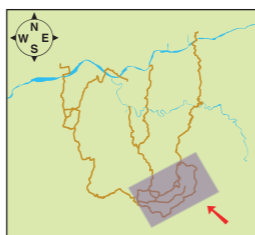
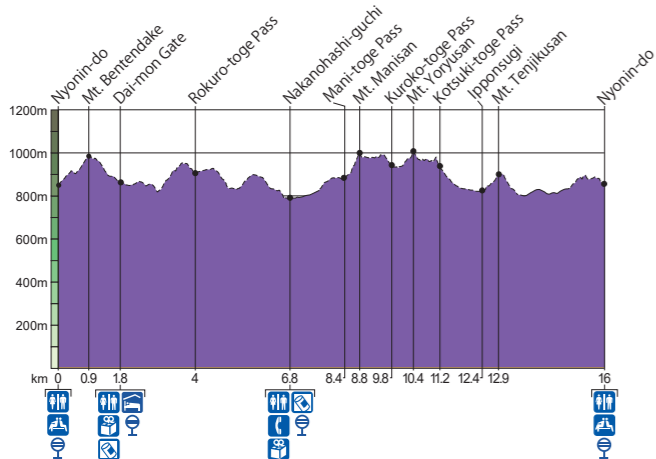


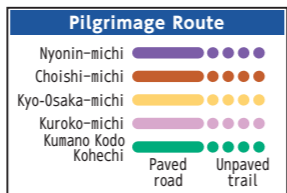
# Nyonin-michi

## 女人道



**Nyonin-michi**  
 Distance (km) : ~16  
 Time (hr) : 6.5~8  
 Total Elevation Gain (m) : ~1010  
 Total Elevation Loss (m) : ~1010

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



	Distance (km)	Time (hr)	Total Elevation Gain (m)	Total Elevation Loss (m)
Nyonin-do ~ Mt. Bentendake ~ Dai-mon Gate	~2	1	~160	~150
Nyonin-do ~ Dai-mon Gate ~ Nakanohashi-guchi	~7	3~3.5	~420	~480
Dai-mon Gate ~ Rokuro-toge Pass ~ Nakanohashi-guchi	~5	2~2.5	~270	~330
Nakanohashi-guchi ~ Mt. Tenjikusan ~ Nyonin-do	~9	3.5~4.5	~590	~530

# Nyonin-michi

The Nyonin-michi 女人道 or Women's Pilgrimage Route is a trail that circumnavigates the perimeter of Koyasan and was used extensively by women who were banned from entering the precincts. This ~16 km route linked the seven entrance gates to Koyasan, of which many featured women's halls. These trails were busiest in the Edo period (1603-1868).

## Walking Options

Present day the route connects different walking courses and are popular walking excursions in and around Koyasan. This trail has many access points, so it is easy to walk smaller sections. A popular starting point is from Nyonin-do going counter-clockwise to Dai-mon Gate. From here the trail skirts the south side of town to Nakanohashi-guchi entrance to Okuno-in. The northeast loop over Mt. Manisan, Mt. Yoryusan, and Mt. Tenjikusan is a more isolated mountain trail. This section is called the Koya Sanzan Route.

## Nyonin-do (Fudozaka-guchi Nyonin-do)

Traditionally women were not allowed to enter into the Koyasan sanctuary—which was common practice in Japanese monasteries—to eliminate distractions to spiritual training. In 1872 the new Meiji government decreed the banning of women terminated but Koyasan did not follow until 1906. But women were still drawn to this sacred site to worship, which led to the creation of women's halls around the perimeter of Koyasan (mostly near the seven gates) to cater to these female pilgrims. These served as resting, meeting, and lodging sites. Only one of the seven women's halls that remain today (current construction is from 1871), is the Fudozaka-guchi Nyonin-do 不動坂口女人堂. It was built by request of a female pilgrim named Kosugi, who had a very hard life, and wished that she could somehow comfort and support other women in similar circumstances. Venerated as the guardian deity of the temple, she now is fulfilling her goal for eternity.



Legend			
Toilet	Public Wi-fi	Onsen (Hot spring)	Shrine
Public phone	View point	Station	Temple
Convenience store	Covered shelter	Bus stop	Other Unpaved trail
Grocery store	Michi-no-Eki rest area	Parking	Other Paved road
Shop/Store	Choishi	Post Office	
Vending machine	Stamp	Police Station	
Drinking water	Accommodation	Fire Station	
Information	Camping	School	

## Benzaiten

On the section of the Nyonin-michi between the Nyonin-do and the Dai-mon Gate is the Mt. Bentendake peak. It is believed that Kukai enticed the Benzaiten 弁才天—the goddess of water, time, words, music, etc; everything that flows—to this mountain top to protect the precincts.



## Dai-mon Gate

The vermilion Dai-mon 大門 outer gate is the main western entrance to Koyasan, a massive 2 tier wooden structure over 25 m tall. The three large wooden signs with the characters of Koyasan 高野山. Above these are intricate swirling wave decorations to ward off fire. Originally it was a torii style gate which was destroyed by fire. The current structure was built in 1705. Two muscular Nio Guardian Kings stand tall and fearsome in the side bays protecting the premises. Plaques with classical Chinese characters allude to Kukai's eternal state of meditation stating: "Kobo Daishi emerges each morning from his meditation to watch over Koyasan and offer us salvation."



## Nio Guardians

Nio 仁王 are powerful and menacing guardians sometime referred to as "Benevolent Kings" often found in temple gates with the important duty of protecting the sanctuary. Their poses are dramatic and threatening—glaring down those that pass—and are believed to have protected the historical Buddha. One has mouth open for the "a" sound the other for the "n" sound which are the first and last syllables in Japanese and symbolizes beginning and end—birth and death—creation in its entirety.

