



Japanese Heritage
Shikoku Pilgrimage
Temple Number 38
Kongofuku-ji Temple

The Shikoku Pilgrimage is a religious journey that has its start point in Tokushima Prefecture and then passes through Kochi, Ehime, and Kagawa Prefectures before returning to Tokushima to complete its loop. The route is 1400km long and follows in the footsteps of Kobo Daishi (Kukai), connecting a total of eighty-eight temples. Kukai (774–835), the founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism, is called Kobo Daishi, a name which means “Great Teacher of the Buddhist Faith.” The entire circuit takes approximately fifty days on foot, and the locals offer a warm welcome to pilgrims today just as they did in the past. The remarkable culture of those who live in proximity to the temples offers hospitality to people regardless of their nationality or religion.

Sada-san, Fudaraku-in, Kongofuku-ji Temple
Located on the southernmost tip of Shikoku, Kongofuku-ji Temple overlooks the Pacific Ocean. Kukai founded the temple in accordance with an imperial edict issued by Emperor Saga (r. 809–823) in the Heian period. This holy site is treasured by worshipers of the Kannon Bosatsu. Eighty kilometers separate Kongofuku-ji Temple from Iwamoto-ji Temple, the thirty-seventh temple on the Shikoku Pilgrimage route. This is the longest distance between any two successive temples on the route. The journey to Kongofuku-ji is difficult, taking four days and three nights to complete on foot. This stretch of the route is called “the training road,” a name which attests to the ascetic nature of the pilgrimage in Kochi Prefecture.

English

Japanese Heritage Shikoku Pilgrimage Temple Number 38

Sada-san, Fudaraku-in

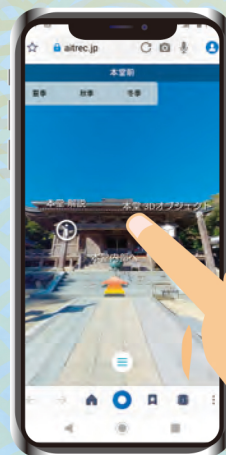
Kongofuku-ji Temple

E3D
Map
POP-UP 3D Map



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- ③ You can view the videoclip and building internal 3D model.



Spring

Sada-san, Fudaraku-in, Kongofuku-ji Temple

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Kongofuku-ji Temple is located within Ashizuri-Uwakai National Park, which contains a broad expanse of virgin forest. The temple features a large inner sanctum with an area of 120,000 m². It is located on an old ascetic practice area in the Nankai, southern Shikoku district. Cape Ashizuri was one of the major ancient ascetic sites located along the southern coast of Japan.

According to the Sadasan Historical Records, Kukai (774–835), the founder of the Shingon Sect of Buddhism, built the temple in accordance with an imperial edict issued by Emperor Saga (r. 809–823) in the Heian period (794–1185). The new temple enshrined a statue of the Thousand-armed Kannon (Avalokiteśvara) that Kukai had carved himself. "The temple grounds contain 108 Buddhist statues. The five gemstones of Tosa shine in the pond."

Cape Ashizuri

Cape Ashizuri is a holy site that ascetics began visiting in the distant past. Located on the southernmost tip of Shikoku, Kongofuku-ji Temple overlooks the Pacific Ocean.

Kongofuku-ji Temple, which sits on Cape Ashizuri, is the thirty-eighth temple on the Shikoku Pilgrimage, a route which has been designated a Japanese Heritage site. It was constructed by Kukai (774–835), the founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism.

Many legends surrounding Kukai remain popular with people on the cape today, and the area is dotted with mysterious sites known collectively as the "Seven Wonders of Cape Ashizuri."

Long ago, a land known as Fudaraku that was sacred to the Kannon Bosatsu is said to have existed far across the vast expanses of the sea. Many people believed they could reach the Kannon Pure Land by boat from this area.

Ashizuri Onehan-e

February 15 on the Lunar Calendar: The Date Buddha Entered Nirvana. The Three-faced Thousand-armed Kannon Bosatsu, the principal image, is open to public viewing.

This is the most colorful event on Mt. Ashizuri each year.

The Ashizuri Onehan-e was one of the three great festivals of Tosa (present-day Kochi Prefecture) in the Edo period (1603–1867). It remains popular among the locals today as a festival that celebrates the coming of spring.

Ashizuri Gion-e

The Ashizuri Gion-e is a Buddhist memorial service held every year on June 15 of the lunar calendar. This is the night of the full Moon in the heart of summer.

Hondo Main Hall Primary Image: The Three-faced Thousand-armed Kannon Bosatsu.

The doors and windows of a small shrine are opened to let in the moonlight. Poetry readings and stage performances take place under the light of the Moon.

Cucumber Blessing

The Midsummer Day of the Ox in the heart of summer. People use cucumbers to protect against evil diseases and to eliminate pain and sickness.

This is a secret protective art that Kukai brought back to Japan from T' ang Dynasty China (7th–early 10th century).

Those afflicted with illnesses attach human-shaped pieces of paper to cucumbers and mark the areas of the body for which they seek a cure. After reciting the Goma prayers, priests place the cucumbers next to the patients' beds in order to drive their afflictions into the vegetables. The priests then toss the cucumbers into the sea and let the tides carry them away.

The ancient beliefs and practices of this maritime people, who pray to the sea and rely on its bounty for their livelihoods, continue to endure today.



Summer
E3D Map



Hondo Main Hall

The Hondo Main Hall stands in the remnants of an eroded cave at the tip of Cape Ashizuri.

The structure was rebuilt by Yamauchi Tadayoshi, the second lord of the Tosa domain, in the early Edo period, and large-scale renovations took place in the Meiji and Heisei periods. The hall enshrines the Three-faced Thousand-armed Kannon Bosatsu, the principal image of the temple. The Kannon statue is flanked by other notable images such as statues of Fudomyo-o, Bishamonten, the Nijuhachi Bushu, Fushin Raishin.

Principal Image:

The Three-faced Thousand-armed Kannon Bosatsu

In 1342, to commemorate the opening of the land surrounded by the sea on three sides, the Fujiwara family commissioned and enshrined the image of the Three-faced Thousand-armed Kannon Bosatsu. The statue is adorned with gold paint in the moriage painting style as well as lotus-patterned kirikane gold leaf. The head and hair section of the statue is colored ultramarine, while the yoraku ornaments are gilt bronze beads. The statue displays the distinctive features of a Nanbokucho-period piece.

Nio-mon Gate

The Nio-mon Gate serves as an entrance to the Kannon Pure Land and overlooks the Pacific Ocean. Emperor Saga named the gate "Fudaraku Tomon," meaning eastern gate to the Pure Land. Statues of the guardian deities Agyo and Ungyo are enshrined to the right and left.

Tahoto Treasure House

Minamoto Mitsunaka, a warlord and noble from the mid-Heian period (794–1185) erected this structure in memory of the late Emperor Seiwa (r. 858–876).

This tower has weathered countless storms and its solemn visage on the cape stands as a symbol of the maritime people of the area.

Fudo Hall

Goma prayers are held in the Fudo Hall on New Year's Day and on the twenty-eighth day of each month. The hall is also a notable historical location where Yamauchi Tadayoshi, leader of the Tosa domain, prayed for Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu to recover from his illness.

The Fudo Hall enshrines the statue of Fudomyo-o (Acala).

Daishi Hall

The Daishi Hall enshrines a Muromachi-period (1336–1573) statue of Kobo Dashi (Kukai), the founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism, along with Heisei period (1989–2019) statues of the Eight Shingon Masters.

It is a popular site for worshipers traveling along the Shikoku Pilgrimage route.

shusho-e

The shusho-e is a ritual used to exorcise the sins and impurities of the old year and to pray for peace in the new. The first three days of the new year The Three-faced Thousand-armed Kannon Bosatsu, the principal image of the temple, is open to public viewing.

The First Kannon of the New Year

The Three-faced Thousand-armed Kannon Bosatsu is open to public viewing every year on January 18 of the lunar calendar. The Three-faced Thousand-armed Kannon Bosatsu, the principal image, is open to public viewing.

Lunar New Year's Day: Worshipers visit Ryugu Shrine in Usubae, a coastal area brushed by the Kuroshio Current, an ocean current that flows along the Pacific coast side of Japan.

Worshipers also visit shrines of the guardian deities Shirao-gongen, Hakusan-gongen, and Kumanosansho-gongen (Gongen denotes a Buddha who has manifested as a Shinto deity), where they take part in Goma prayer rituals.



Autumn
E3D Map



Winter
E3D Map

