**TITLE: Mt. Yoryu**

Mt. Yoryu (1,009 m) is one of the Koya Sanzan, or “Three Mountains of Koyasan”*—*three neighboring peaks that surround the northern end of the Koyasan plateau. It is believed that these three mountains stand guard over the mausoleum (*Gobyo*) at Okunoin where Kobo Daishi (774–835), originally known as Kukai, the Japanese Buddhist priest who founded Koyasan, remains in eternal meditation.

Like many holy places in Japan, Mt. Yoryu is considered sacred to both the Buddhist and Shinto faiths. The small Buddhist shrine on the summit of Mt. Yoryu contains an image of Kannon, the Buddhist goddess of mercy, that dates back to at least the Edo period (1603–1867). Nearby, a small wooden Shinto shrine venerates the native deities of the mountain.

For centuries, travelers on the Nyonin Michi (Women’s Pilgrimage Route) have stopped atop Mt. Yoryu and other holy peaks to pray and make offerings to the deities enshrined here. Visitors are recommended to stop on the mountaintop to enjoy the unique primeval forest that grows on the Koyasan Sanzan, which showcases growth patterns that are rarely found in Japan. This is one of the few places where native trees from northern Honshu grow naturally alongside a secondary forest of temperate zone plants.