**Gon: “Kobo Daishi’s Dog”**

This statue was raised in memory of Gon, a stray dog who spent over a decade of his life walking the Choishi Michi (Stone Marker Trail). The friendly pup began accompanying pilgrims and hikers along the trail from Jisonin Temple, encouraging them up the slopes to the Daimon Gate, the official entrance to Koyasan. There he would turn around, returning to the temple in the evening. Gon made the almost 50-kilometer round trip every day.

 According to legend, two canine companions of the god Takanomiko (Kariba Myojin), one white and one black, led the priest Kukai (known posthumously as Kobo Daishi; 774–835) to the location at Koyasan where he would establish his center for Buddhism. Because Gon was white, many people who were deeply touched by his daily journeys referred to him as the reincarnation of the god’s white dog, or as “Kukai’s dog.”

 Although Gon passed away in 2002 after many years walking the trail, he remained in the hearts of the pilgrims he accompanied along the Choishi Michi, many of whom donated funds for this memorial in his honor.