

TITLE: Otaki Guchi Nyonindo Hall Site

The Otaki Guchi Nyonindo Hall stood near Rokuro Pass, at the gate that connected Koyasan with Kumano, another region of great historical and spiritual importance in Japan. For centuries, people have traveled on foot through the Kii Mountain Range, including Koyasan, on religious pilgrimages. While traveling along the Nyonin Michi or Women's Pilgrimage Route, some of these pilgrims would have stopped to rest, or spend the night, at the Otaki Guchi Nyonindo Hall or one of seven other halls constructed along the roughly circular, approximately 16-km trail. Although small, the halls provided important meeting and resting spots for pilgrims and other people traveling the Nyonin Michi.

Before the mountain's forests became part of protected heritage and wildlife areas, the timber was regularly cut and used for construction and repair of temple buildings and halls like the *nyonindo* halls. Although protected forests now obscure some portions of the view, the Otaki Guchi Nyonindo Hall once offered one of the best viewpoints of the Koyasan plateau and Kumano mountains. Visitors wishing to experience the breathtaking Kumano peaks today can find a spectacular overlook just five minutes' farther along the Women's Pilgrimage Route, on the way to the Ainoura Guchi Nyonindo Hall Site.