

## **TITLE: Fudozaka Guchi Nyonindo Hall**

The Fudozaka Guchi Nyonindo Hall is the last remaining *nyonindo* hall (women's hall) on Koyasan. It sits near the first bus stop after Koyasan station, just west of the gates that once marked the limit beyond which women could not pass until after the start of the Meiji period (1868–1912). Before that time, religious restrictions prevented women from entering the sacred precincts of Koyasan. In addition to providing shelter for female pilgrims, the Fudozaka Guchi Nyonindo Hall served as a meeting and resting place for people of all ages traveling on the Fudozaka Pilgrimage Route or along the Nyonin Michi (Women's Pilgrimage Route).

According to local history, construction of the first Fudozaka Guchi Nyonindo Hall at this location was arranged by a nun named Kosugi, who grew up in Echigo (now Niigata Prefecture). After its completion, Kosugi lived at the *nyonindo* hall, offering care and lodging to female pilgrims. Today, she is considered a guardian deity of the Fudozaka Guchi Nyonindo Hall.

The hall fell into disrepair during the Meiji period, but has since been restored and is now a functioning temple. The Fudozaka Guchi Nyonindo Hall, as it exists today, is larger than many of the women's halls that stood in other places along the Women's Pilgrimage Route. Inside, it houses a collection of historical artifacts, including photographs, relating to the building and its history.

Historical documents and paintings reveal that numerous buildings stood at this location at different times during Koyasan's history. In addition to the *nyonindo* halls, small shops and shrines were constructed here to meet the needs of travelers and pilgrims.

Three hiking courses converge at this location, including the Nyonindo Halls Course (approx. 7 km) and the Koya Sanzan Course (approx. 9 km), which together comprise the historic Nyonin Michi (Women's Pilgrimage Route) encircling the sacred Koyasan plateau. In addition, the Fudozaka Course, which pilgrims once used to climb the mountain from Gokurakubashi, terminates at the Fudozaka Guchi Nyonindo Hall.