

TITLE: Koyasan Three Mountains Viewpoint (Koya Sanzan)

The three holy peaks of Mt. Mani, Mt. Yoryu, and Mt. Tenjiku are often referred to collectively as the Koya Sanzan, or Three Mountains of Koyasan. The mountains rise in an arc around the northern perimeter of Okunoin, the cemetery where Kobo Daishi (774–835), also known as Kukai, remains in eternal meditation. According to Shingon Buddhist belief, the holy peaks stand guard over Kobo Daishi's mausoleum (*Gobyo*), protecting from harm.

The sides of the mountains that face the Koyasan plateau are managed by Kongobuji Head Temple and the other temples of Koyasan to protect the unique, primeval forest growing on these sacred slopes. This forest is one of the few places in Japan where native species from northern Honshu grow naturally alongside a secondary forest of temperate zone plants.

The summits of Mt. Mani, Mt. Yoryu, and Mt. Tenjiku can be seen from numerous spots along the Nyonin Michi (Women's Pilgrimage Route). For centuries, pilgrims and travelers have enjoyed these beautiful mountains in every season, from the brilliant green foliage of early spring to autumn's fiery colors and winter's snow. Today, hikers walking the Koya Sanzan Course can follow in the footsteps of the devout, climbing these peaks and strolling through Koyasan's primeval forest.