

TITLE: Kuroko Pass

Located between the sacred summits of Mt. Mani and Mt. Yoryu, Kuroko Pass is one of two historical approaches connecting Koyasan with Nara Prefecture. The other, Kotsugi Pass, is approximately 1.4 km farther along the path, on the opposite side of Mt. Yoryu. Although the trails that led from Nara to the Nyonin Michi (Women's Pilgrimage Route) are now defunct, this was once a well-traveled road used by religious pilgrims and for the transportation of people and goods between Koyasan and other places in the Wakayama region.

A small wooden shrine at Kuroko Pass houses a statue of the bodhisattva Jizo. Originally known by the Sanskrit name Ksitigarbha, Jizo is the protector and patron of travelers, children, and those in need, including the souls of the deceased. Jizo statues were often placed near crossroads to protect travelers, who customarily stopped to leave offerings and pray at these roadside shrines.

A shortcut path to the crossroads at a landmark named "Ipponsugi" (Single Cedar) branches off from the Nyonin Michi at this location, near a set of railroad tracks once used to carry lumber down from Koyasan. Although this forest railroad fell into disuse during the 1960s, its tracks are still visible in places along the trail.