

Oshiage Rock (Lifted Rock)

This massive rock looming over the path plays an important role in one of the many legends about the life of the priest Kukai (known posthumously as Kobo Daishi; 774–835), the founder of Koyasan.

The story goes that Kukai's elderly mother traveled all the way from the island of Shikoku to visit her son and see the temple complex he had created. She began the ascent despite her advanced age, but as she crossed the sacred border at the Kesakake Rocks, a violent lightning storm struck. To protect his mother from harm, Kukai lifted this huge rock with his bare hands so she could take shelter underneath. Some claim that a close look at the rock's surface reveals indentations resembling handprints.

The storm was taken as a clear sign that women should not be allowed past the Kesakake Rocks, and Kukai's mother was forced to make her way back down the mountain. The small stream nearby the Oshiage Rock is said to have been formed by her tears.

Many of those on the Choishi Michi trail stop at this monument to filial piety to say a quiet prayer for their mothers.