

The First *Choishi* Stone Marker

This stone pillar (*choishi*) marks the beginning of the section of the Choishi Michi (Stone Marker Trail) that connects Jisonin Temple to the Konpon Daito pagoda in the Koyasan temple complex. Technically, this marker is actually the 180th stone pillar, as pilgrims and hikers count down from the official “first pillar” located near the Konpon Daito pagoda.

The term *choishi* comes from a combination of *cho*, an ancient length of measurement equivalent to 109 meters, and *ishi*, which means “stone.” There are 180 stone pillars placed at intervals of about 109 meters along the trail. Each of these is 3 meters tall and sculpted in the shape of a *gorinto* (five-elements pagoda), inscribed with the name of the Buddhist figure it is dedicated to. Like most of the pillars along the route, this one was carved during the late Kamakura period (1185–1333), when craftsmanship in stone carving was highly regarded.