

The First *Choishi* Stone Marker

This stone pillar (*choishi*) marks the beginning of the section of the Choishi Michi (Stone Marker Trail) that leads from the Konpon Daito pagoda to Okunoin Temple, the mausoleum of the priest Kukai (known posthumously as Kobo Daishi; 774–835), via the vast Okunoin Cemetery.

The pillar's name comes from a combination of *cho*, an ancient length of measurement equivalent to 109 meters, and *ishi*, which means stone. There are 36 stone pillars placed at intervals of about 109 meters to mark the trail. Each is some 3 meters tall and sculpted in the shape of a *gorinto* (five-elements pagoda). The name of the Buddhist figure it is dedicated to is inscribed on each rock, along with the name of the sculptor and the date it was completed.