

**Hokire Jizo: The Cut-Cheek Jizo Statue**

This stone carving has been watching over pilgrims and hikers making their way to Niutsumi Shrine or Koyasan since the late Heian period (794–1185). The sculptor refined the natural shape of the stone to make it resemble a small pagoda with a Buddhist figure on each of the three sides.

The central figure is Dainichi Nyorai, the Cosmic Buddha, the deity who brings light to the universe. A crack in the stone across the Buddha's face looks like a scar; this is the *hokire*, or "cut cheek," of the carved stone's name. Those suffering from illnesses that affect the head and face come to pray to this serene figure. The other sides of the stone depict Shaka Nyorai, the historical Buddha, and Amida Nyorai, the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life.