

### **Niukanshofu Jinja Shrine**

This shrine, originally called Sarutahiko Shrine, was built in 816. It has been in its current location since 1541, when it was moved from its former location near the Kinokawa River to keep it safe from the regular flooding. After the move, the shrine's name was changed to Niukanshofu Shrine.

The site is mainly dedicated to the two guardian deities of Koyasan, the goddess Niutsuhime and her son Takanomiko (Kariba Myojin). It was the latter who, according to legend, sent his two dogs to help the priest Kukai (known posthumously as Kobo Daishi; 774–835) find the exact spot to build his center for Buddhist studies. This shrine is also home to 52 different deities enshrined within the three main *shaden* halls and smaller altars around the grounds.

The shrine is situated at the beginning of the Choishi Michi (Stone Marker Trail). Those hiking to Koyasan stop by the main hall of the shrine to pay their respects to the guardian deities before starting their journey.