

Yashima: Shishi no Reigan

The Shishi no Reigan (“lion’s head ridge”) observation point affords visitors some of the most impressive views on Yashima. Below the steep ridge lies the port of Takamatsu, where ferries depart for the islands in the Seto Inland Sea, while the city itself extends inland, past the historic Ritsurin Garden and toward the horizon. Across from Shishi no Reigan, beyond the opposite edge of the city, towers the lush Goshikidai Plateau, while the Seto Ohashi Bridge is visible in the distance. Looking out toward the sea, visitors can spot the twin islands of Megijima and Ogijima, and beyond them the “art island” of Naoshima. The views are particularly striking at dusk, when the setting sun paints the panoramic scenery in dramatic shades, and after dark, when the lights of the city and the islands can be seen twinkling below.

Shishi no Reigan gets its name from a large rock beneath the cliff. Said to resemble the head of a roaring lion, this rock appears in a well-known local legend. In the story, the Buddhist priest Kukai (774–835), considered the originator of the Shikoku 88-Temple Pilgrimage, sought to build the main hall of nearby Yashimaji Temple in a single day—an impossible undertaking for the average person. Kukai, however, decided to extend the length of the day itself: standing on the “lion rock,” he used a hand fan to wave at the setting sun, imploring it to stay above the horizon until the temple hall could be completed.