

Old Approach to Daisenji

This path, now partly obscured by undergrowth, was once part of the main approach to Daisenji Temple. When the road was still intact, it led from the Kinmon (“Golden Gate”), which marked the primary entrance to the temple grounds, straight up to the Dai Chimyō Gongen Hall, Daisenji’s central sanctuary. Until an act by the Meiji government in 1875, worship on Mt. Daisen included both Shinto and Buddhist institutions, and Daisenji’s main hall was still on the hilltop. After 1875, Ōkamiyama Shrine replaced it at the top of the hill, where Ōkamiyama remains today.

Along the old approach, smaller roads branched off toward subtemples and monastic residences that once crowded the central complex. This route saw heavy traffic, including farmers who brought their horses and cows to be blessed by the deity Jizō Bosatsu. That practice eventually gave rise to a livestock market that became the largest in the country.

Travel along the old approach ceased, however, following a dramatic incident. During construction work on the main shrine building, the cliff walls of the Kinmon—a fairly narrow cleft in the mountainside—became an obstruction. As priests were working to widen it, the sky opened and a deluge of rain swept down the mountainside, washing away most of the path. Today only a few stone steps remain of this once-important route.