

Chūgoku Nature Trail: Kawadoko to Ikkōganaru Trail Guide

This 9-kilometer segment of the Chūgoku Nature Trail is a beautiful hike that also gives visitors a sense of Mt. Daisen's long history. The trail travels part of the former Kawadoko Road, the steepest of four paths that formerly led to Daisenji Temple. The Kawadoko Road connected Mt. Daisen to the areas of Akasaki, Sekigane, and Kurayoshi. When traditional Japanese Buddhist asceticism (Shugendō) was at its height in the early Heian period (794–1185), the Kawadoko Road formed an artery between the Shugendō temple on Mt. Mitoku, to the east of Kurayoshi, and the central Shugendō training center on Mt. Daisen.

The section of trail from Kawadoko to Ikkōganaru features some of Daisen's loveliest scenery. The central stretch around Ōyasumi Pass travels through an area of old-growth Japanese beech forest. Mt. Daisen has the largest stands of these trees in western Japan, which are home to the greater part of its wildlife, particularly birds. The trail also takes hikers to Daisen Falls, a nationally recognized waterfall that cascades 42 meters into Jigoku Valley (literally, "Hell Valley").

The trail begins near the Ikkōganaru Campground, where there is a visitor center in addition to restroom facilities and a large parking lot.