

Daimon-zaka Slope

Daimon-zaka Slope is one of the most picturesque and evocative parts of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route. It rises more than 100 meters over a 600-meter run, and has a total of 267 stairs. At the top of the slope are Kumano Nachi Taisha Grand Shrine, Seiganto-ji Temple, and Nachi Waterfall.

Getting There

Follow this road to the stone staircase at the end. Climb the stairs, and keep following the paved path at the top until you arrive at a large stone torii gate. Beyond the torii is the bright vermillion Furigasebashi Bridge. The bridge was the boundary between the secular world and the sacred realm. From Furigasebashi Bridge onward, even pilgrims who arrived on horseback had to dismount and proceed on foot.

On the Slope

The entrance to Daimon-zaka Slope proper is marked by a pair of massive *meoto sugi* (husband-and-wife cedars) believed to be around 800 years old. Just beyond the cedars on the right is a stone monument on the former site of Tafuke-oji. An *oji* was a subsidiary shrine along the pilgrimage route. There were nearly a hundred of them when the route was at its busiest, and Tafuke-oji was the last one pilgrims encountered before reaching Nachi Waterfall.

Further up the slope is a small wooden sign marking the former location of a tollgate. The toll was 11 *mon*, which was slightly less than the price of a bowl of noodles. The tollgate site also has a clear view of Nachi Waterfall.