

Kakenuke-michi Route

The Kakenuke-michi route is a steep climb up 749-meter-high Mt. Myohozan to Amida-ji Temple. At certain spots along the climb, Nachi Waterfall can be glimpsed through the trees to the north. Spaced along the trail are 23 stone markers, one for each *cho* (a unit of measurement about 109 meters long) of the route. The climb takes about an hour.

The word *kakenuke* comes from a verb meaning “to run through,” and the route is a shorter and more intense challenge than most other parts of the Kumano Kodo. It began as a path used by *yamabushi*, Shugendo mountain ascetics. Later, the *yamabushi* began acting as guides for lay pilgrims. In the 500-year-old painting called the Nachi Pilgrimage Mandala, a *yamabushi* dressed in red can be seen leading two white-clad pilgrims up the Kakenuke-michi in single file. Climbing to Amida-ji Temple was often considered a supplement to the 33-temple Saigoku Kannon Pilgrimage.

The Circuit Route

The recommended circuit route follows the Kakenuke-michi Route up to Amida-ji Temple and returns via the more modern, paved road to the west. This paved road also passes Okuno-in, another part of the Amida-ji Temple complex, as well as the Fujimi-dai View Point, on the way back to Nachi Kogen Park. Since descending a steep slope can be trickier than ascending, it is also a safer way to return. The complete circuit takes just over two hours to complete on foot.