

## Walking Trails Up Yashima

There are four main walking trails to the top of Yashima, each with its own landmarks and points of interest.

The most popular path is the paved *henromichi* pilgrimage route, which begins near Katamoto Station and leads to Yashimaji Temple. The path is approximately 1.5 kilometers long and the walk takes roughly 30 minutes one way. This is the route favored by travelers undertaking the 88-temple Shikoku Pilgrimage, and it has many sites connected with the Buddhist priest Kukai (774–835), who inspired the pilgrimage. Among these is the Kajisui (“incantation water”) at the base of Yashima, a natural spring that is said to have burst from the ground when Kukai prayed for water. The *henromichi* ends at the gate of Yashimaji Temple.

On the north side of Yashima is the steeper Hokurei Tozando (Northern Summit Trail), which leads from a spot near the Nagasaki no Hana promontory up to the Yukakutei lookout. This 1.5-kilometer trail takes about 30 minutes to climb, but the ground can be uneven, so it is not recommended for all. Along the way, the trail provides views of Mt. Goken and several of the islands in the Seto Inland Sea, including Naoshima. At the top, the Yukakutei commands a panorama of the islands and the sea.

Visitors interested in history may wish to climb the mountain via the Kyu Henromichi (Old Pilgrimage Road), which begins on the east side of Yashima, beside Yashima Higashi Elementary School. Like the modern pilgrimage route, this 1.8-kilometer trail ends at Yashimaji Temple. Along the 40-minute trail are a shrine to Emperor Antoku (1178–1185), the young monarch who reigned during the Genpei War (1180–1185), and a monument to Sato Tsugunobu, a warrior who sacrificed his life for his commander during the Battle of Yashima in 1185. The trail is often used to descend the mountain by pilgrims traveling from Yashimaji Temple to Yakuriji Temple, the next stop on the Shikoku Pilgrimage route.

Yashima Nishi Kodo (West Yashima Old Road) is the longest and most difficult of the trails. The 2-kilometer route begins in a park on the west side of Yashima, and the trek to the summit takes around 40 minutes. It is steep and uneven at points, but has several lookout spots with views over the city of Takamatsu.

The Yashima Skyway, the road for vehicles to the top of Yashima, is also open to pedestrians.