

Mine no Ura

Buddhist monks and mountain ascetics meditated and trained in the area known as Mine no Ura for more than a thousand years. The area's natural and historic religious sites are connected via a hiking path, with a trailhead located near the grounds of Senjuin Kannon-do Temple, and another at Yamadera Cemetery.

Senjuin Kannon-do Temple enshrines Senju Kannon, the thousand-armed form of the bodhisattva of compassion. From the temple, a short stroll through the forest leads to Tarumizu, a site used for ascetic practices until the early 1900s. The site is marked by a hollow in a massive rock wall dotted with honeycomb-like depressions formed through erosion by water. The torii gate of Furumine Shrine stands inside, along with a small shrine to the harvest deity, Inari. A nearby cleft in the cliffside contains a statue of the Buddhist deity Fudo Myo-o, the Immovable Wisdom King.

Farther along the trail are the Shiro-iwa Nana-iwa, seven massive rocks said to resemble the outer walls of a castle when viewed together from afar. Beyond, the trail opens into a clearing surrounded by several distinct rock formations. This area was likely used for special religious ceremonies.

There is another clearing near the Yamadera Cemetery trailhead, where Mine no Ura's main temple once stood. The temple honored Amida Nyorai, the Buddha of Infinite Light. While the structure no longer remains, an archeological dig unearthed parts of the temple's foundation, artifacts dating back to the fourteenth century, and remnants of pottery from the Jomon period (10,000–300 BCE).