

【峯の浦】

やまでら 天台のみち



4 Gorinto Cave & Honin Vestiges

五輪塔窟・本院跡

Many fallen gorinto (five-ringed towers) can be seen near the cave in front. Memorial services were held in the past when they were standing, but many towers were taken away or fell, and now the site is a mere shadow of its former self. Some of the towers carved with dates go back to the Kamakura period (1185-1333). A grassy field lays past the cedar forest. In it stands vestiges of the Honin (main temple), also called the Amitabha residence. One of the many cornerstones that can be found in the grassy field was moved to the side of the pathway to the temple. A stone shrine to worship Amitabha can be found in a corner of the vestige site, along with remains of the Sokuen-ji temple.



5 Gozutenno & Shinbonyoten Stones

牛頭天王・神母女天

This area (the old pathway to the Senju-in commune) is the entrance to the Mine-no-ura sacred grounds and the Honin vestiges. Two stones stand near the mountain's surface; "gozutenno" is carved on the first and "shimbonyoten" on the second. Gozutenno is one of hell's demon known for its bull's head. The god guardian of the Jetavana monastery and protector of villages, it is enshrined at the entrance of the commune. Shimbonyoten is one of the 28 attendants of Senju Kannon (Avalokiteshwara). It used to be tradition to offer the first cucumbers of the season to Gozutenno to pray for good harvest.



6 Hira-iwa Rock

平岩

This area takes its name "hira-iwa" (or flat rock) from the flat rock formation exposed. There are many varieties of stone monuments nearby indicating the entrance to the sacred grounds. The road here is used as the current main road to the Tokorobe and Senju-in communes and was a major artery for people of Senju-in until the Meiji period (1868-1912). The rock on the side of the road is called the "tsumugi-iwa" (or spinning rock). A folk tale says that late at night the rock makes the sound of a thread spinning, scaring the passing villagers.



1 Tarymizu Vestige

垂水遺跡

Yamabushi ascetic hermits used to live and train on those dim-lighted sacred grounds until the Taisho Period (1912-1926). The cave at the front is said to be the vestige of the accommodation used by the priest Ennin, founder of Yamadera temple (in 860), during his training. The Furumine and Inari shrines are standing near the nest-shaped holes and caves along the ridge of the facade of the massive rock wall. Water can be seen dripping from a dark opening within the large rock, in the center of which Fudo Myo-o (Acala) is worshiped. It is said that a representation of Senju Kannon (Avalokiteshwara) is incised on the rock surface on the left side. This is a place where one can experience the strangeness of nature and connect with past worshippers venerating Shinto and Buddhism.



2 Shiro-iwa Nana-iwa Rocks

城岩七岩

This is the peak of the mountain where lie the Nana-iwa. These seven rocks, i.e. Yumihari-iwa, Tate-iwa, Saru-iwa, Kagami-iwa, Shio-iwa, Toride-iwa and Ko-iwa, look like ramparts and can be observed from the Tokorobe commune located on the opposite side. The top of the mountain is flat and there are many flights of stairs along its surface. It appears like a medieval castle, reminding visitors of a hidden fortress. (It is highly recommended to look at the rock formation from the Tokorobe commune on the other side.)



3 Vestige of training grounds & Bishamonten-iwa Rock

修験場跡・毘沙門天岩

It is said that this open space is the vestige of mountain asceticism training grounds. There is a rock in front shaped like a folding screen, the Bishamonten-iwa rock on the back, the Otoko-iwa (phallus) rock on the left, the Onna-iwa (vagina) rock in the back and the Tainai-kuguri (birth canal) narrow opening down from the open space. Looking at these, it appears that this open space was a gathering spot for celebrations of mystical and deep folk beliefs. Because such religious festivals were held here, it is possible to imagine why the priest Ennin put Yamadera at the center of faith propagation for the Tohoku region.

