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Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage



22 Days/21 Nights

Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage

Tour Overview

The Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage tour is perfect for those people searching for an active, off-the-beaten-path, culturally immersive Japanese experience. Pilgrimages have been considered the heart and soul of Japanese spirituality for more than 1,000 years. In addition to authentically participating in the pilgrimage, this is also a great way to see the beautiful, rural island of Shikoku. Shikoku has been blessed with a rich cultural and natural heritage, friendly locals, soothing hot springs, and delicious cuisine.

Destinations

All 88 Temples of the Shikoku Pilgrimage, Osaka, Tokushima, Shishikui Onsen, Kochi, Uwajima, Matsuyama, Dogo Onsen, Niihama, Takamatsu

Tour Factors

Cultural Immersion
★★★★★

Pace
★★★☆☆

Physical Activity
★★★★☆

Tour Details

It is not clear how the pilgrimage began, but it is thought that Kobo Daishi established the pilgrimage in the 9th century by either creating or visiting many of the temples on the pilgrimage today. The pilgrimage became popular during the 17th century when the first guidebook was published. It is said that as you follow the pilgrimage route, Kobo Daishi will accompany you and will always be there for comfort and protection.

The objective of the Shikou 88 temple pilgrimage (also called “Henro”) is simple: retrace the footsteps of Kobo Daishi whille traveling the approximately 800 miles (1200 kilometers) and visit all 88 temples. The motives for doing this pilgrimage are varied. Some come for religious reasons, some to pray for healing or safety in the home, or some in memory of those who have passed away. Or some come just to get away from regular life, some for recreation, or some to spend time in reflection and to find oneself.

One of the most charming attributes of the pilgrimage is “o-settai”, or gift-giving. For hundreds of years, locals have supported the pilgrims by giving pilgrims small gifts of food and drinks. This gives you numerous opportunities to meet with the locals one-on-one, making the pilgrimage and this tour a once in a lifetime experience you will treasure forever.

What is the Shikoku 88 Temple Pilgrimage Tour?

This tour is not a highlights tour. You will be visiting all 88 temples by van.

This tour is also a great way to see the beautiful, rural island of Shikoku. We have included a free day in the island’s four major cities of Tokushima, Kochi, Matsuyama and Takamatsu.

Tour Highlights	✔ Visit all 88 Temples ✔ Free Day in Tokushima, Kochi, Matsuyama and Takamatsu
Tour Inclusions	✔ Travel Guard Gold Policy (for American tour members only) ✔ Meeting service at the arrival airport ✔ Sending service to the appropriate train station ✔ Electronic version of Tour Handbook and Japanese History
Tour Exclusions	✖ Airfare is NOT included. ✖ A printed itinerary is not included ✖ Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included

Optional Visit to Koyasan

After finishing the pilgrimage, It is common practice to visit Koyasan to report to Kobo Daishi the fact you completed the pilgrimage, and to thank him for a safe journey.

We are offering a visit to Koyasan to do this. You will need to add an additional day to the tour as we will be visiting Koyasan as a day trip from Osaka on the scheduled departure day (Day 22). The one day optional tour will include the following:

One extra night lodging in Osaka
Transportation from hotel in Osaka to Koyasan and return
All transportation around Koya-san
Shojin-ryori (Buddhist vegetarian) lunch at a local restaurant
Temple admission fees

Cost per person: $300 USD

Single Supplement: $100 USD

Map



Tour Destinations

Osaka

Tokushima

Shishikui Onsen

Kochi

Uwajima

Matsuyama

Shikoku Chuo

Takamatsu

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Osaka

You will be staying overnight in the city of Osaka. You will be met at Osaka's Kansai Airport or Osaka's Itami Airport, and escorted to the hotel in Osaka. We will leave a message for you at the hotel informing you of the meeting time for the next day. If you would prefer to arrive in Tokyo, contact us for the details. No meals included.

Travel: 1-1/2 Hours; Walking: Light

Day 2 Drive to Pilgrimage Goods Shop in Kobe, Purchase Pilgrimage Items, Drive to Tokushima, Overnight in Tokushima

After breakfast, we will start the day with a Welcome/Orientation meeting. We begin our adventure by driving to Tokushima on the island of Shikoku. On our way to Tokushima, we will stop at Ryozenji, Temple #1 of the 88 temples. There is a shop here selling all of the items you will need for the pilgrimage. We will provide a recommended checklist of the items you will need to purchase, and will provide assistance with purchasing the items as well. After arriving in Tokushima, we will enjoy a dinner of Tokushima Ramen, a local specialty. Because pork (another local specialty) is so easily obtained, the broth is created from pork giving it a dark brown color. After that, the rest of the day is free to prepare for your adventure which will begin tomorrow. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant are included.

Driving Time – 3 Hours
Overnight: Tokushima

Day 3 Temples 1 to 7

After breakfast, we will drive to Temple 3. After arriving at Temple 3, we will park our van and travel by taxi back to Ryozenji, Temple #1 for the beginning of our adventure. We will discuss all of the normal procedures done at each temple, and it will be up to you to decide what to do at each temple. You will also be given some time to walk around each temple as well. At the end of the day we will drive back to our hotel in Tokushima. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Driving Time – 1 Hour 45 minutes
Overnight – Tokushima

Temple #1 – Ryozenji (Vulture's Peak Temple)

Ryozenji is a very pleasant temple with a small pond filled with Koi and a statue of Kobo Daishi watching over the pond, a small pagoda and some interesting statuary. Besides being famous as the start of the pilgrimage, the main statue here is famous with high school students for promising academic success at the university level.

Temple #2 – Gorakuji (Pure Land Temple or Paradise Temple)

Kukai visited this temple and carved the temple's main diety – the diety of light. According to legend, long ago it was difficult for fisherman in nearby Naruto Bay to catch fish because of the bright light from the main statue of the temple. To prevent this, the fisherman built a small artificial hill behind the main hall to block the light.

Temple #3 – Kosenji (Golden Well Temple)

The temple was founded by Gyoki in the 8th century, but it was renamed Konsenji (Golden Well

Temple) by Kobo Daishi when a golden stream of water sprang out of a well he dug by thrusting his staff into the ground. If you can see your reflection in the golden well next to the Daishi Hall, you will live the age of 92. If not, you will die in 3 years. In the temple yard is a large stone called the Benkei Stone and the tomb of Emperor Chokei, a 14th century emperor of the southern court. Legend states that Benkei (a legendary 12th century warrior priest and bodyguard for Yoritomo Yoshitsune) lifted the stone to demonstrate his strength when he and Yoshitsune stopped here in on their way to a battle at Yashima Plateau near Takamatsu.

Temple #4 – Dainichiji (The Temple of the Great Sun)

The first three temples are surrounded by urban sprawl, but temple #4 is located at the base of the mountains with a green forest behind it. Kobo Daishi founded this temple, and it has been destroyed many times, the last time being in the late 16th century. Since that time, the temple has gone through continuous cycles of disuse and reconstruction.

Temple #5 – Jizoji (The Earthbearer's Temple)

Kobo Daishi founded this temple in 821 on the order of Emperor Saga. What makes this temple different is the long U-shaped building behind the main hall that houses 200 statues of Rakan (enlightened followers of Buddha). Each statue has a different facial expression, and, in keeping with Rakan traditions, are generally humorous. All 200 statues were carved out of wood by two Buddhist monks in the 18th century.

Temple #6 – Anrakuji (The Temple of Everlasting Joy)

The temple was originally founded by Kobo Daishi about 2 km north of its present location. Legend says he struck his staff into the ground creating a hot spring with curative waters. Since then, people have used the hot spring water to cure illnesses.

Temple 7 – Jurakuji (The Temple of Ten Joys)

Kobo Daishi founded the temple in the 9th century. The temple complex was, at one time, very large but many buildings were burned down in a large fire in the 16th century. The present day main hall was rebuilt in the Meiji Period (late 19th century to early 20th century). To the left of the main hall is a Jizo statue which is said to cure eye problems.

Day 4 Temples 8 to 12 by van

Today we will visit temples 8 to 12 by van. Temples 10 and 12 will be our first introduction to mountain temples. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Driving Time – 4 Hours
Overnight – Tokushima

Temple 8 – Kumadaniji (Bear Valley Temple)

Temple 8 is set back in a valley and its main gate is considered to be one of the finest of all the temples on the pilgrimage. It was built in 1688 and it is said a band of robbers were once thought to have lived in its second story. The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi. On at least one occasion the Daimyo of Awa Province (current day Tokushima Prefecture) was known to have visited this temple during the Edo Period for a moon viewing party with his warriors.

Temple 9 – Horinji (The Dharma Wheel Temple)

The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi and its main statue is the only surviving example of a reclining Buddha on the Shikoku pilgrimage. In fact, it is rare in all of Japan. It was carved by Kobo Daishi and survived a 16th century fire that destroyed the temple. The main statue is locally popular for healing and curing illnesses of the feet and the waist.

Temple 10 – Kirihataji (Cut Cloth Temple)

Temple #10 is the first introduction to a mountain temple, however, it is not far from the urban sprawl. Kobo Daishi founded the temple in honor of a girl he met while performing religious activities for seven days at a hut on the mountain. Legend states she supplied all of his needs for the entire seven days. When Kukai asked for some old cloth, the young woman presented him with a brand new kimono. The woman told Kukai she would like to become a saint and help save people. Shortly thereafter she changed into a Senju Kannon. The large tower was moved here from Sumiyoshi Shrine in Osaka in 1873.

Temple 11 – Fujiidera (Wisteria Temple)

Kobo Daishi founded this temple, and carved the main statue which is registered as a National Treasure, the highest ranking of Japanese antiquities. The temple complex has been destroyed by fire numerous times, but the main statue has always escaped damage. Therefore, it is a popular object of worship for those who wish to escape disaster. The temple converted to a Zen temple during the Edo Period, and today is one of only three Zen temples on the pilgrimage. On the hillside directly behind the temple, there are 88 monuments, one for each temple on the Shikoku 88 temple pilgrimage. If you stop in front of each monument, it has the same effect as performing the actual pilgrimage.

Temple 12 – Temple 12 – Shosanji (Burning Mountain Temple)

Located at 800 meters above sea level, Shosanji is the first true mountain temple on the pilgrimage. Kobo Daishi visited this temple to perform ascetic training. However, he found a serpent had set fire to the entire mountain. While chanting sutras and under the protection of a Kokuzo Bosatsu statue, he was able to climb the mountain and confine the dragon in a cave. The cave, which remains today, can be found on the way to the Inner Sanctuary.

Day 5 Free Day in Tokushima

Today is a free day to tour Tokushima or to just rest. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Day 6 Walk from Temple 13 to Temple 17

After breakfast, we will take a city bus to Temple 13. From there, we will walk to Temple 17, and then a bus back to Tokushima. After the mountain temples (Temples 10 to 12), Temples 13 to 17 are back in the urban sprawl of Tokushima City, and are all located on the opposite side of the mountains from Temples 1 to 10. Breakfast at the hotel is included.

Travel Time – 1 hour 15 minutes
Overnight – Tokushima

Temple 13 – Dainichiji (The Temple of the Great Sun)

The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi while performing a ceremony here. Until the Meiji period, the temple was associated with the Ichinomiya Shrine, located across the street. The two were officially separated at the beginning of the Meiji Period. The current restoration was built in the later part of the Meiji Period. There are two statues of Dainichi here, one carved by Kobo Daishi and the other carved by Gyoki. The one by Gyoki is housed in the shrine across the street.

Temple 14 – Jorakuji (The Temple of Everlasting Peace)

This temple has one of the most unusual courtyards of the entire pilgrimage. Where most courtyards are beautifully landscaped with gardens and ponds, this temple was built on an uneven rock bed. Miroku Bosatsu (the future Buddha) revealed himself to Kobo Daishi here, so Kobo Daishi carved a 2 foot 6 inch statue of him and founded the temple. This temple features the only statue of the Miroku Bosatsu on the pilgrimage. It is said if a diabetic prays here and drinks the boiled leaves from the yew tree next to the main hall, they will be cured.

Temple 15 – Kokubunji (The Official State Temple)

The temple was founded by Gyoki and became the official temple of Awa Province (today's Tokushima Prefecture) on the order of Emperor Shomu in 741. The temple was destroyed by fire in the 16th century by Chosokabe and his armies. It was rebuilt in 1742 and converted to Soto Zen Buddhism at that time. There is a paper amulet sold here that you can stick on the walls of your bathroom to ward off termites and other bad luck.

Temple 16 – Kanonji (Avalokitesara Temple)

Some say this temple was first built in 741 by Emperor Shomu to promote Buddhism, and some say Kobo Daishi founded the temple. On the temple grounds there is a picture of a 19th century woman on fire. The legend states the woman, named Shiyo, had beaten her mother-in-law in the past with burning sticks. She burned herself here when trying to dry her hakui (coat) over an open fire. She realized this was Kobo Daishi punishing her for the sins of her youth and she repented her sins. Shiyo, herself, donated the painting to the temple in the hope this would help others from repeating the same mistakes.

Temple 17 – Idoji (Well Temple)

The temple was founded by Emperor Tenmu and got its name from when Kobo Daishi dug a well overnight with just his staff to provide a water source for the local farmers, which is how the temple got its name. It is said that if you can see your face in the water at the bottom of the well you will have a good future. If you can't, you will meet with misfortune within a few years.

Day 7 Temples 18 to 23 by van; Overnight at Shishikui Onsen

Today, we will check out of our Tokushima and leave the urban area of Tokushima and begin our first adventures in rural Shikoku. We will drive about 30 minutes south to the first temple (Temple #18), and then continue visiting temples until Temple #23. After that we will drive to a small onsen on the ocean where we will be staying overnight. Breakfast and dinner at the hotels included.

Travel Time – 3 Hours 45 minutes
Overnight – Shishikui Onsen

Temple 18 – Onzanji (The Temple of Gratitude Mountain)

When Gyoki founded this temple in the eighth century, Buddhist law forbid women from entering the temple because the temple was located on a sacred mountain. One hundred years later, Kobo Daishi's mother, Tamayori, came to visit him while he was training here. For seventeen days he performed an esoteric rite at the temple gate. At the end of the seventeen day ritual, the ban against women climbing the mountain was lifted and Kobo Daishi's mother was allowed to enter the temple precincts. Once she entered the temple, she shaved off her hair and became a nun. Because Kobo Daishi took care of his mother after she became a nun, the temple came to be known as Onzanji, a temple of gratitude to one's parents.

Temple 19 – Tatsueji (The Temple of Arising Bay)

Gyoki built the temple on the order of Emperor Shomu in the eighth century. While the temple was being built, a white heron (shirasagi) landed on what is now called Shirasagi Bridge and this was considered to be a very auspicious sign. Legend states that, in the 19th century, a woman named Okyo came to Shikoku with her lover to escape the authorities. They had killed the man she had been a mistress to before she had met the man she was now with. To escape the authorities, they disguised themselves as henro and were following the other henro around the pilgrimage. When they reached the main hall of Temple 19, as she tried to ring the bell to start her prayers, Okyo's hair suddenly stood on end and got entangled in the bell's rope. After struggling, she got herself free but all of her hair, and part of her scalp, remained entangled in the rope, leaving her with the monastic tonsure. Taking this as a sign from Kobo Daishi, the couple both became devout

Buddhists, she becoming a nun and he a monk. She lived the rest of her life in a small chapel owned by the temple and devoted her life to prayers while he became a temple laborer. Okyo's hair and scalp can still be seen at the temple in a little glass-encased shrine just off the walkway.

Temple 20 – Kakurinji (Crane Forest Temple)

When Kobo Daishi visited this temple in 798, he saw two white cranes, one male and one female, protecting a small 2 inch (6 cm) statue of Jizo Bosatsu with their wings. Kobo Daishi then carved a larger (90 cm or 3 feet) statue of Jizo Bosatsu, placed the smaller Jizo statue inside the larger statue and enshrined them as the main statue of the temple. The crane is considered a symbol of longevity and good fortune and its appearance is considered an auspicious sign. Because of the crane sightings, Emperor Kammu gave the temple the title of Imperial Office Temple (Chokugansho). Located at 550 meters altitude (1,800 feet), this temple is unique in Tokushima Prefecture in having escaped the ravages of fire over the years.

Temple 21 – Tairyuji (Great Dragon Temple)

Kobo Daishi performed the Gumonjiho (reciting the Mantra of Kokozo one million times) at the age of 15 on the summit of Mt. Tairyu. He later built this temple on the same location on the order of Emperor Kammu. It took Kobo Daishi fifty days to recite the Mantra of Kokozo on the peak of this mountain. Yet, according to his writings, he was unsuccessful and didn't find the enlightenment that he was desperately searching for. He did, though,receive some spiritual encouragement from his experience and made a vow to go to Cape Muroto to continue his training. The large temple grounds are covered with large cedar trees which create a mystic atmosphere. The temple is located at 620 meters (2,100 feet), and is called the "Western Koyasan" because its buildings were constructed similar to those at Mt. Koya. In 1992, a ropeway was built from the valley floor to the temple.

Temple 22 – Byodoji (The Temple of Equality)

The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi, and the main statue is said to have appeared through a cloud of five colors. The mountain is called Hakusuizan (White Water Mountain) because of the milky-white holy water which sprang up out of a well dug by Kobo Daishi during the temples consecration. The temple is called the Temple of Equality because Yakushi saves all beings from disease, regardless of age, sex, rank, or race. Consecrated water from this temple is supposed to be especially good for diseases of the eyes and is the same water in which Kobo Daishi took a bath.

Temple 23 – Yakukoji (Medicine King Temple)

It is said that this is one of the most popular temples on the pilgrimage, with half a million people visiting it each year. Founded by Gyoki in the 8th century, this temple is known as the temple for protecting yourself from the dangers of misfortunes (Yaku-yoke) due to your age. It is thought that you can turn aside ill fate (yaku) and bring good fortune by, in part, by reciting the Mantra of Yakushi and placing a coin on each of the steps as you walk up the stairs leading to the temple on Yakuyoke hill (42 steps on the men's side and 33 steps on the women's side). The temple is also dedicated to the safety of sailors and the numerous model ships around the temple compound represent ships saved by the power of Yakushi. Yakukoji offers a beautiful view of Hiwasa Bay and Hiwasa Castle from the viewing area around the pagoda. The small islands in the bay make for a great picture.

Day 8 Cape Muroto; Temples 24 to 29 by van; Overnight in Kohchi

After breakfast, we will start the day by driving along the southeastern coastline of Shikoku to Cape Muroto. We will stop at Mikurodo, a cave where Kobo Daishi reached enlightenment. We will also walk along an easy trail that winds it way along the rocky coastline as well. After that, we will visit Temples 24 to 29 by van. After visiting the temples, we will drive to Kochi where we will be staying for the night. In the evening, we will enjoy a dinner Katsuo Tataki (fresh bonito seared over a rice straw fire), the specialty of Kochi. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant

included.

Travel Time – 4 Hours 45 Minutes
Overnight – Kochi

Temple 24 – Hotsumisakiji (Cape Temple)

Kobo Daishi was 19 when he came to this area, and found a cave to meditate in at sea level on the East side of the tip of the cape. He moved in and said that he wouldn't leave until he had his goal to reach enlightenment. Three years later, when he was 22 years old, Kobo Daishi achieved enlightenment and dedicated his life to the salvation of all mankind. To commemorate his achievement, he took the name Kukai and built Cape Temple on the top of the hill at the tip of the cape. The marble statues here of Nyoirin Kannon, Gakko, and Yakushi are considered National Treasures. In the temple grounds is a large boulder about 3′ high and 4′ wide with small, palm-sized stones laying in depressions along the top. When you strike the boulder with the smaller stones, you can hear musical tones. Not just the sound of one stone hitting another, but a sound accompanied by a distinct musical tone, with different sized rocks producing different tones.

Temple 25 – Shinshoji (The Temple of the Illuminating Seaport)

The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi in 807. The local fishermen usually call the temple Tsudera, Port Temple, and the main statue is known as Kajitori Jizo, or the Helmsman Jizo. It is said this statue will protect fisherman. Legend says that Lord Yamanouchi of Tosa Castle was saved from shipwreck because of his devotion to Jizo. During a severe storm Jizo took the helm of his floundering ship and steered him to safety. The main hall is located above the rest of the temple, at the top of a long set of stairs.

Temple 26 – Kongochoji (Vajra Peak Temple)

The temple was founded in 807 by Kobo Daishi. When he first arrived here, he found a tengu (flying hermit) who had been living here for 100 years. Kobo Daishi entered into a debate with the Tengu, and after losing, the Tengu was told to leave and was confined to Cape Ashizuri-misaki. Of interest at the temple is a museum which houses a display of whaling tools. The areas was once quite famous as whaling district.

Temple 27 – Konomineji (God Summit Temple)

Gyoki founded this temple in the 8th century. The temple burned down in the beginning of the Meiji Period and the main statue was moved to Temple 26 until 1912. Because there was a law at that time forbidding the construction of new temples, local residents found an unused temple called Jizo-in in Ibaraki Prefecture, dismantled it, and moved it to this location. The main statue was then returned from Temple 26.

Temple 28 – Dainichiji (The Great Sun Temple)

The temple was founded by Gyoki, and Kobo Daishi visited the temple in 806 and carved the main statue. He carved the Yakushi Nyorai (Healing Buddha) from a camphor tree using his fingernails. This deity is called the "Fingernail Yakushi", and many henro (pilgrims) believe that this temple cures illnesses above the neck.

Temple 29 – Kokubunji (The Official State Temple)

This temple was built by Gyoki in 739 on the orders of Emperor Shomu, like all other state temples in the 8th century. At the time it was built, its official name was Konkumyo Shitenno Gokokuji. The statue of Kobo Daishi is called Hoshiku Daishi because Kobo Daishi performed the Rite of Astral Festivity here when he was 42 years old. Two Yakushi statues and a bell are considered Important Cultural Treasures.

Day 9 Visit Temples 30 to 36

Today we will visit Temples 30 to 36 by van all of which are located in or near the city of Kochi. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Travel Time – 3 Hours 30 Minutes
Overnight – Kochi

Temple 30 – Zenrakuji/Anrakuji (The Temple of True Joy/The Temple of Everlasting Joy)

There are two temples that have called themselves Temple 30 in the past, and the complicated feud between them over which temple is the rightful Temple 30 started at the beginning of the Meiji period. The original Temple 30, Zenrakuji, was built on the orders of Emperor Shomu and reestablished by Kobo Daishi. Zenrakuji was built on the grounds of the Shinto Shrine, but the temple was damaged at the beginning of the Meiji period and the name was changed to Anrakuji. In the 1930's, supporters of Zenrakuji transferred a temple from Tokyo, and rebuilt it next door to Anrakuji. Since then, there were several switches back and forth, but in the 1970s, the new Zenrakuji was established as the official Temple 30, and Anrakuji was established as the inner sanctum of Zenrakuji.

Temple 31 – Chikurinji (Bamboo Forest Temple)

Gyoki founded the temple in 724 on the orders of Emperor Shomu. Emperor Shomu commanded Gyoki to find a place similar to the famous Mt. Godai-san in China. Gyoki also carved the main statue and it is considered to be one of the three best statues of Monju Bosatsu in all of Japan. The temple garden and 19 images of Buddhist deities are classified as National Treasures.

Temple 32 – Zenjibuji (The Temple of Ch'an Master's Peak)

The temple is located on a small hill by the seashore and was founded by Kobo Daishi to safeguard ships at sea. The hill is said to be shaped like Mt. Potalaka, the dwelling place of Kannon Bosatsu in southern India and known as the Pure Land of Kannon. Early in the 9th century, Kobo Daishi visited here and carved the main statue. The Kannon Bosatsu statue was called "funadama" Kannon (Spirit of the boat Kannon) and the temple became known as a place to pray for the safety of sailors and fisherman.

Temple 33 – Sekkeiji (Snowy Cliff Temple)

Originally named Kofukuji, this temple was founded by Kobo Daishi as a Shingon temple. It was converted to a Rinzai Zen temple in the mid 16th century by the monk Geppo. Like the vast majority of temples on Shikoku, this temple was burned down during the purge of Buddhism at the beginning of the Meiji Period. The local people built a Shinto shrine on the newly cleared land and when the temple was rebuilt, it was built on land adjacent to the shrine. Today, although it is now a Zen temple, there is a large statue of Kobo Daishi standing in the compound. This temple is one of only three Zen temples on the pilgrimage (the others being #11 and #15).

Temple 34 – Tanemaji (Sowing Seeds Temple)

On his return from China, Kobo Daishi is said to have planted five varieties of seeds (rice, wheat, 2 types of millet and bean) when he founded the temple. The temple is a popular place for pregnant women to pray. Many women pray here for an easy childbirth, and those women who have had their prayers answered customarily donate water dippers to the temple with their bottoms knocked out. When she first finds that she is pregnant, the women takes a whole ladle to the temple priest. He knocks out the bottom, places it on the altar, and prays over it over the course of two days after which the woman takes it home and places it in the Tokonoma. After a safe delivery, the woman brings the ladle back to the temple in thanks.

Temple 35 – Kiyotaki (Pure Waterfall Temple)

The temple was founded by Gyoki. Gyoki is also credited with carving the main statue which is now considered a National Treasure. A century later Kobo Daishi visited the temple and after seven days of austerities brought forth a clear stream of water from the ground, hence the name of the temple.

Temple 36 – Shoryuji (Green Dragon Temple)

Kobo Daishi built this temple in memory of his Chinese master Keika, the 7th Patriarch of Shingon Buddhism. Before leaving China to return home, Kobo Daishi threw a Vajra (five pronged ritual object) in the direction of Japan and temple legends say that it landed in the branches of a pine tree in the rear of the present temple. Until 1975, worshippers were forced to use a small ferry to reach the temple, but a bridge now takes you directly to the temple.

Day 10 Free Day in Kochi

The entire day is free to enjoy Kochi. You can visit Kochi Castle, one of only 12 remaining original castles in Japan. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Day 11 Temples 37 to 40 by van; Cape Ashizuri; Overnight Uwajima

We will visit Temples 37 to 40 by van today. Temple 38 is located near the tip of Cape Ashizuri, the southern-most point of Shikoku. We will also take some time to walk a 2 km (1 1/4 miles) walking path along the top if the 80 meter cliffs covered by sub tropical plants overlooking the waters of the Pacific Ocean. Later in the afternoon, we will drive to the city of Uwajima where we will stay overnight. Breakfast and dinner at the hotel included.

Travel Time – 5 Hours and 45 Minutes
Overnight – Uwajima

Temple 37 – Iwamotoji (Rocky Root Temple)

This was originally a complex of seven temples founded by Gyoki at the order of Emperor Shomu in the 8th century. The number seven stood for the seven good fortunes and for the seven stars described in the Ninnokyu Sutra. This is said to be the start of the Star Festival (Hoshi Matsuri). Kobo Daishi created the five main statues with legends growing up around each one related to its own miraculous powers.

Temple 38 – Kongofukuji (The Temple of Everlasting Happiness)

Founded by Kobo Daishi with the aid of Emperor Saga, the temple is located on the tip of Cape Ashizuri and commonly called Ashizurisan. It is modeled after the Pure Land of Kannon. It is believed one can set sail for the pure land of paradise where Kannon lives from here because Kobo Daishi saw Kannon when looking at the sea. Located on the bluff looking out over the sea, the temple has always enjoyed the patronage of aristocrats, warriors, and noble clans.

Temple 39 – Enkoji (Emitting Light Temple)

Temple 39 was founded by Gyoki in 725 on the orders of Emperor Shomu and later reestablished in 795 by Kobo Daishi when he came and struck a spring in the compound. The spring was known as Hoisui, Treasure Medicine Water. The mountain is called Sekkizan which means Red Turtle Mountain. Legend says that in 911 a red turtle came out of the sea and brought a bell to the temple by carrying it on its back. The pond on the temple grounds (Kame no Ike) is where the turtle lived while it was here.

Temple 40 – Kanjizaiji (The Temple of Kannon)

The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi and he is said to have carved three statues (Yakushi, Amida, and Juichimen Kannon) from the same piece of wood while making three full prostrations before each stoke of the knife. The Hakkaku displays various temple treasures. The Hachitai-butsu is said to fulfill your wish if it is covered with water. This temple is the furthest away from Ryozenji (Temple #1).

Day 12 Temples 41 to Temple 47 by van; Overnight at Matsuyama

We will visit Temples 41 to 47 by van, and then drive to Matsuyama, where we will be staying overnight. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant included.

Travel Time – 6 Hours
Overnight – Matsuyama

Temple 41 – Ryukoji (Dragon's Ray Temple)

According to legend, Kobo Daishi met Inari-myojin (Rice God) here in 807, in the form of an old white-haired man and founded the temple. Inari, though originally a Shinto divinity, became popular here during the Edo Period. During that time, people would pray to the Rice God for an abundant harvest, however, today many people pray for prosperity in their businesses. This temple has always had many donors and believers, from merchants to samurai. The temple has become the head temple of Inari worship in Japan.

Temple 42 – Butsumokuji (The Temple of Buddha's Tree)

According to legend, in 807, when Kobo Daishi was passing here, he was offered a ride on a cow. While riding, he saw a jewel in the branches of an old camphor tree, and immediately recognized it as a jewel that he had thrown from China. From the same tree Kobo Daishi carved an image of Dainichi Nyorai, placed the jewel on its forehead, and established it as the main statue of the temple. Where Temple 41 is dedicated to rice growing, this temple is dedicated to animal husbandry. Of interest is the belfry with a straw thatched roof and the row of statues representing the seven gods of luck (Shichifukujin) in the temple courtyard.

Temple 43 – Meisekiji (Brilliant Stone Temple)

This temple was founded in the 6th century by Shochu Enjun, under the orders of Emperor Kinmei. Later, a disciple of Enno Gyoja dedicated the gods of the twelve Kumano shrines here and made this the Dojo of the practice for followers of Shugendo. Minamoto Yoritomo (the first Kamakura Shogun) constructed buildings and donated a Sutra mound in the early years of the 13th century. The temple is popularly called Ageshisan (Brilliant Rock Mountain).

Temple 44 – Taihoji (Great Treasure Temple)

In 701, a monk who returned from Korea placed a Kannon statue in the mountain. Two brothers founded the temple while hunting. At the main gate, there are a pair of huge straw sandals that are remade every 100 years. The sister of Emperor Go-Shirakawa was once the chief nun here during his reign in the 12th century. The temple was destroyed by fire in 1873 but later restored. The temple is located in the town of Kuma at an elevation of 1,600 ft. and situated in a calm and quiet forest of cedar trees.

Temple 45 – Iwayaji (Rock Cave Temple)

Legend states that the temple was donated to Kobo Daishi by a mysterious female recluse named Hokke-Sennin. Kobo Daishi carved two statues of Fudo, one in stone and kept in a cave at the rear of the temple, and the other in wood and enshrined in the main hall. By keeping the stone statue in the cave, Kobo Daishi ensured that the entire mountain needed to be worshipped in order to worship the statue. This way the mountain remained sacred, just as it had been in Shintoism.

Temple 46 – Joruriji (Pure Emerald Temple)

The temple was founded by Gyoki in 708 and later restored by Kobo Daishi. The temple was destroyed by fire in the 17th century but rebuilt 80 years later by the priest Gyu-on, a famous social worker who constructed eight bridges on the Tosa highway. In addition to a 1,000 year old tree, you will find stone images of the Buddha's foot prints at this temple. If you stand on the Buddha's foot prints (with bare feet, of course), any pain in your feet will immediately disappear. Emon Saburo, who is credited as being the first person to complete the 88 temple pilgrimage (see Temple 51), came from this area. Look for a large stone engraved with a haiku written by Masaoka

Shiki, one of Japan’s greatest poets.

How long the spring day is!
Remembering Emon Saburo
At Joruriji.

Temple 47 – Yasakaji (The Temple of Eight Slopes)

In Kobo Daishi’s time, eight paths led up the mountain to the temple and hence the name, the Temple of Eight Slopes. The statue of Amida, attributed to Eshin Sozu of the 11th century, and the statue of Bishamon-ten, of 13th century origin, are classified as Important Cultural Properties. There is also a stone pagoda and stupa from the same time period. This temple has prospered as a place for Shugendo training. The temple is dedicated to the gods manifested at Mt. Kumano in Wakayama-ken.

Day 13 Free Day in Matsuyama

Today is a free day to tour Tokushima or to just rest. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Day 14 Visit Temples 48 to 51

We will visit temples 48 to 51. Breakfast at the hotel is included.

Travel Time – 1 Hour
Overnight – Matsuyama

Temple 48 – Sairinji (West Forest Temple)

Founded by Gyoki in 741 several kilometers from here, the temple was moved to its present location by Kobo Daishi in 807, at which time he carved and enshrined the statue of Kannon. The main statue, which has never been shown to the public, has been placed facing backwards. So most people go to the back of the main hall to worship. To the right of the main hall, there is a “parent bamboo” and a “child bamboo” which are believed to assist with harmony at home. As he did at many of the other temples on the pilgrimage, Kobo Daishi created a spring at this temple by striking his staff into the ground.

Temple 49 – Jodoji (Pure Land Temple)

The temple was founded by Gyoki as a place for Empress Koken to pray and at one time was quite large, with 66 branch halls and 7 affiliated temples. All were burned in 1416 and later rebuilt by the Kono clan of Iyo Province on a much smaller scale. Kuya Shonin (903-972), the founder of the Kuya School of Tendai Buddhism, stayed here for three years. The local people were so sorry to see him leave, they asked that he carve a statue of himself. Kuya’s grave is only 1 cho (109 meters or about 357 feet) from the temple and pilgrims are supposed to visit.

Temple 50 – Hantaji (The Temple of Great Prosperity)

This temple is commonly called Hata-dera (Farm Temple) and was founded by Gyoki. Kobo Daishi changed the name to its present name while he spent considerable time here. Ippen Shonin, founder of the Jisho Sect trained and studied here in the 13th century. At one time it had 36 temple buildings and governed 120 sub-temples, but little of that remains after the effects of both fires and war. Within the Shoten Hall, there is a deity which is said to assist with passing exams, having a prosperous business, warding off misfortune and assuring a good relationship between husband and wife. As you approach the temple, look for the sixty-meter concrete statue of Kobo Daishi on the mountain ridge behind the temple.

Temple 51 – Ishteji (Stone Hand Temple)

Legend states that a rich and stingy man, named Emon Saburo, lived in Ebara village, Iyo Province (today's Ehime Prefecture). One day someone came to his door begging for food. Saburo refused and pushed him away. The next day he came again and Saburo again pushed him away, this time a little more forcefully. This continued in the same manner until the eighth day when Saburo completely lost his temper and threw the monk's begging bowl to the ground shattering it into eight pieces. The beggar said nothing and simply walked away. It was at this time Saburo learned the beggar was actually Kobo Daishi.

The next day one of Saburo's eight sons died for an unknown reason. Each day thereafter another of his sons died until by the eighth day he had lost all his sons. Realizing what he had done, Saburo repented his stingy ways and made up his mind to repent for all the sins he had committed before and find Kobo Daishi to beg his forgiveness.

Saburo began walking around the island in a clockwise manner looking for him. Not finding him on his first trip around he began again. He walked the complete pilgrimage 20 times, but had still had not found him. So he decided to walk it in reverse order, hoping that this would allow their paths to cross. On this, his 21st pilgrimage, he met Kobo Daishi at the base of the mountain leading to Temple 12. However, by this time he was completely worn out and was dying.

He begged forgiveness and repented all his wrong-doings. Kobo Daishi told him that his hard work on the pilgrimage and his repentance had washed away his sins and asked if he had any last wishes. Saburo told him that he hoped he would be reborn as the lord of Iyo Province so that he would have the power to do good. He swore that in his next life he would atone for all the wrong-doings he had done in this life.

Kobo Daishi picked up a small stone, wrote something on it, and placed it in Saburo's hand, at which time he passed away quietly. Kobo Daishi buried his body beside the trail and marked the grave by planting Saburo's staff in the ground. That staff eventually grew into a great cedar tree.

Later, in the early 17th century, the wife of Ikitoshi Kono (the daimyo of Yuzuki castle) gave birth to a son but the child was never able to open his left hand, even after three years. At last the chief priest of Annyuji (the former name of Temple 51) was called and he succeeded in opening the hand through prayer. When the hand opened, they found a stone on which was written "Incarnation of Emon Saburo."

When this child became an adult he took over as the ruler of Yuzuki Castle and the temple was renamed Ishiteji.

Of interest is the tiny stone that the baby boy held in his hand, a temple museum, and a memorial monument of haiku poems. The temple is in the heart of the city and very near to Dogo Onsen. The main hall and main gate are classified as a National Treasure.

Day 15 Visit Temples 52 to 59

Today we will visit temples 52 to 59 by van. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Travel Time – 4 Hours 15 Minutes
Overnight – Matsuyama

Temple 52 – Taisanji (Big Mountain Temple)

The temple was built by Mano Kogoro, a wealthy merchant from Kyushu. He built it to honor Juichimen Kannon for saving him from shipwreck on a voyage to Osaka in the 6th century. When he washed ashore after the wreck, he saw a bright light on the mountain's peak and followed it. When he arrived, he found the statue of Juichimen Kannon and founded the temple on the same spot. The temple holds a festival every year on March 17th in memory of Mano. The main hall is considered a National Treasure and is constructed without the use of a single nail. Legend states that it was built in a single night. This temple has had the patronage of emperors since the time of Emperor Shomu. In the compound is the Hyakudo Ishi (One hundred times stone). It is a large

boulder with a hundred pieces of bamboo in a ring on its top. You take a piece of bamboo, walk with it to the main hall, return to the stone, praying continuously as you walk back and forth. After one hundred repetitions, the prayer is sure to be granted.

Temple 53 – Enmyoji (The Temple of Circular Illumination)

The temple was originally founded by Gyoki. At one time this was a monastic community of seven shrines but these burned down in the wars of the 16th century. It was later rebuilt by the feudal lord Shigehisa Suga. The temple houses an interesting statue of the Virgin Mary disguised as Mariya Kannon, which was worshipped by secret Christians during the persecutions of Christians during the Tokugawa Period.

Temple 54 – Enmeiji (The Temple of Long Life)

Located in the hills around Imabari harbor, the temple was founded by Gyoki. Originally, it was located on the top of Mt. Chikami but, as with other temples, was burned down by the warriors of Chosokabe. It was moved to its present location in 1727.

The temple is remembered as the place where the medieval Buddhist scholar Gyonen stayed and wrote a book called The Essential Philosophical Analysis of Eight Buddhist Sects. This is the only temple on the whole pilgrimage with two belfries. One of the bells of this temple was once taken to Matsuyama Castle. However, legend states that once it was there, when it was rung, it’s sound sounded like the word “home” so it was promptly returned to the temple.

Temple 55 – Nankoboji (The Temple of Southern Lights)

Founded in the 8th century by Gyoki. When it was founded, it was associated with the Oyamazumi Shinto Shrine of Omishima Island. This association was due to the 9th century theory of Honji-suijaku (True Nature-manifestations) in which Shinto Kami are considered to be manifestations of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. It was because of this theory that temples and shrines were usually combined and/or coexisted side by side. This lasted until the early years of the Meiji Period when they were forcibly separated and Shinto was established as the state religion.

Temple 56 – Taisanji (Peace Mountain Temple)

The temple and main statue are both attributed to Kobo Daishi. This temple, like others, was once located on the top of the mountain and later moved to the base. The river near here often floods and has caused great damage and loss of life. On the request of the local people, Kobo Daishi tamed the river by performing a secret ritual on its banks, at which time Jizo Bosatsu appeared. He then built the river’s levee, carved a statue of Jizo, and enshrined it in the temple. In front of the Daishi Hall, is a pine tree said to be planted by Kobo Daishi.

Temple 57 – Eifukuji (The Temple of Good Luck)

The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi on the orders of Emperor Saga. The complex started off as a Shrine, but when Kobo Daishi prayed here for safety at sea and stopped a storm with his prayers, Amida Nyorai appeared to him. Kobo Daishi then converted it to a temple, carved the main statue of Amida, and enshrined it here. The temple has been destroyed by fire several times and was deserted for almost a century, but has always remained as a favorite location for people offering prayers for safety at sea, as is Konpira Shrine in Kagawa Prefecture. On each side of the main hall, there are copies of the “Buddhist feet rocks” from the temple in India where Shaka attained enlightenment.

Temple 58 – Senyuji (Hermit in Seclusion Temple)

Legend states that the hermit ascetic Abu recited sutras here for forty years before mysteriously disappearing one morning. The main statue was carved by a pious girl and became the guardian Buddha of Emperor Tenchi. Another legend states the main deitiy was carved by a dragon who swam up the Ryuto River from the ocean. Kobo Daishi made this the 58th temple on the pilgrimage and the Dojo of esoteric disciplining. Local people call this temple Osarei (carving while prostrating yourself) because of the legend that the girl prostrated herself once after every cut of

the knife while she was carving. The temple is located at an elevation of 1, 300 ft (390 meters) on the top of the mountain.

Temple 59 – Kokubunji (Official State Temple)

Built by Gyoki on the orders of Emperor Shomu in 741 along with the State Temples in each of the other 66 provinces. The main statue is also attributed to Gyoki. Kobo Daishi is said to have stayed here and to have done a painting of five great deities for this temple. Of interest is the temple museum with its old manuscripts. The Tenno-matsu (Emperor Pine) is said to have been planted by Emperor Shomu as a prayer for cure. The grave of Nitta Yoshisada is here (famous for helping overthrow the Hojo at the end of the Kamakura Period). There is a statue of Kobo Daishi with which you can shake hands and make a wish.

Day 16 Visit Temples 60 to 65; Overnight in Niihama

Today we will visit temples 60 to 65 by van. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at the hotel or local restaurant included.

Travel Time – 5 Hours 30 minutes
Overnight – Niihama

Temple 60 -Yokomineji (Side Summit/Peak Temple)

In 651, En no Gyoja carved a statue of Zao Gongen (a Shinto Kami) and founded this temple. Kobo Daishi came here later and carved the main statue of Dainichi Nyorai, into which he placed the statue of Zao Gongen. The temple was originally an affiliated temple of the holy mountain Ishizuchi-san, which was worshipped as a Shinto Kami. By law, however, it became an independent Buddhist temple in 1869 at the start of the Meiji Period. It is said that through prayers said here, the brain illness of Emperor Kammu (781-806) was cured. At an altitude of 2,340 ft (709 metes), this temple is the second highest temple on the pilgrimage.

Temple 61 – Koonji (Incense Garden Temple)

Kobo Daishi made a vow here to protect children, ease child birth, to sacrifice himself for others and to allow women to become Buddhas. Because of the first of these vows, the temple is popularly known as Koyasu-Daishi, the Daishi of protecting children. The main statue is attributed to Kobo Daishi and it is said that he brought it back with him from China. Legend states that when he was here he relieved a woman of a difficult child-birth. Since then it has remained famous for aiding child-birth. In fact, this temple has, in two generations, gone from being the poorest to being the richest of the 88 temples on the pilgrimage based solely on women’s belief that prayers offered here will enable couples to have children.

Temple 62 – Hojuji (The Temple of Wealth and Happiness)

The temple is attributed to Kobo Daishi who built it on the orders of Emperor Shomu as a place to recite the sutras. Kobo Daishi is also attributed with having carved the main statue. It was carved in the likeness of Shomu’s Empress, Komyo, when she was sick. Shomu dedicated a sutra he had copied himself to the temple. The temple was abandoned in the early Meiji Period and restored by a henro named Ryohen in 1877. It is said the Senju Kannon stone monument, also carved by Kobo Daishi is the oldest stone monument on the pilgrimage.

Temple 63 – Kosshoji (The Temple of Mahasri/Laksmi)

The three statues of Bishamonten (worshipped as the god of wealth), Kichijoten, and Zennishidoji were all carved by Kobo Daishi. The temple was originally on the summit of the mountain, but after being destroyed in a battle between Chosokabe and Kobayakawa warriors, it was rebuilt at the present location. This is the only temple on the pilgrimage that has a main statue of Bishamonten and it was chosen because he was supposed to have appeared to Shutoku Taishi during a battle and to have saved his life. Like Temple 53, this temple also has a beautiful statue

of Mariya Kannon (the Virgin Mary disguised as a Kannon) which was entrusted to Chosokabe by a Spanish sea captain. There is a large boulder near the temple entrance with a hole in it. It is said that if you can walk from the Main Hall with your eyes closed and place your staff in the hole your wish will be granted.

Temple 64 – Maegamiji (The Front God Temple)

The temple is located at the foot of Mt. Ishizuchi and was founded by En no Gyoja while he was engaged in ascetic practices on Mt. Ishizuchi, the highest mountain in western Japan. During these practices, both Sakyamuni and Amida appeared to him in the form of Zao Gongen. Because it has long been associated with the worship of the god Zao Gongen in the Shinto tradition, the temple's buildings and shrines are all built in the form of a Shinto shrine. The temple houses a statue of Shaka Nyorai that is attributed to En no Gyoja as well. According to legend, Kobo Daishi once spent 21 days on the top of Ishizuchi Mountain performing a fire ritual.

Temple 65 – Sankakuji (Triangle Temple)

The temple was founded by Gyoki in the late 8th century. In 815 Kobo Daishi performed a 21 day Goma of Victory ritual here and carved the main statue. On the temple grounds is the triangular goma altar used by Kobo Daishi in that ceremony. The temple's name comes from that triangular altar. The ritual performed by Kobo Daishi was done to rid the mountain of a ghost who caused many problems. This temple is also dedicated to easy childbirth but there is a twist. The expectant mother is supposed to pretend to break into the temple and steal a ladle, which she then places under her bed. After the delivery, she brings the ladle back to the temple for someone else to take and hide.

Day 17 Visit Temples 66 to 71; Overnight in Takamatsu

Visit temples 66 to 71 by van. Breakfast at the hotel and dinner at a local restaurant included.

Travel Time – 3 Hours 45 Minutes
Overnight – Takamatsu

Temple 66 – Unpenji (Hovering Clouds Temple)

Kobo Daishi enshrined a Buddhist relic here in 790 and then returned at a later date, founded the temple, and carved the main statue. The temple was dedicated by Emperor Kameyama when he came here and planted a ginko tree which bears a Sanskrit inscription. This temple is the highest of all the temples on the pilgrimage at 3060 ft (911 m). The statues of Kannon and Fudo are National Treasures.

Temple 67 – Daikoji (The Temple of the Great Growth)

This temple was founded by Kobo Daishi on the orders of Emperor Saga in 822. The temple has been associated with the three Kumano Shrines since its founding in 822. At one time it contained twenty-four Shingon Halls and twelve Tendai Shrines. At that time it was under the joint management of both the Shingon and Tendai Sects. Most of these buildings were burnt down in the 16th century by Chosokabe's warriors. The large camphor tree in the compound was planted by Kobo Daishi. Like many other temples on the pilgrimage, this temple was burned by the warriors of Chosokabe Motochika in the 16th century.

Temple 68 – Jinnenin (The Temple of God's Grace)

In 703, the monk Nissho had a vision here. Seven colorful clouds arose on the western horizon and hovered over the mountain of this temple (Mt. Kotohiki). Suddenly a ship floated on the sea and the god Hachiman appeared to Nissho playing a Koto. Nissho dedicated the ship and its Koto to the temple and placed them at the top of the mountain. Later, Kobo Daishi painted the Kotobiki (harp playing) Hachiman in the form of Amida Butsu and dedicated that to the temple as well. The picture of Amida is now a National Treasure. Kobo Daishi is also attributed with having carved the

main statue. Temple 68 and 69 are located next to each other.

Temple 69 – Kannonji (The Temple of Kannon)

Nissho founded this temple as well, and Kobo Daishi carved the main statue which is considered to be the incarnation of Empress Jingu. This temple is thought to be a special place to pray for victory in battle. This is because at the time of the Mongol invasions, Emperor Kameyama came here and prayed for the safety of the nation. One priest manages both Temple 68 and Temple 69. Temple 69 has several National Treasures, including an icon of Buddha entering Nirvana, Fudo Myoo, and painted scrolls of the temple's legend of Kotobiki Hachiman. Interestingly, this temple doesn't have a Daishi Hall.

Temple 70 – Motoyamaji (Headquarters Temple)

The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi in 807 at the request of Emperor Shomu, and it is said that he built the main hall in a single night. Unlike most other temples on the pilgrimage, this temple has not been burned down and is now classified as a national treasure. Legend states that it was spared the ravages of Chosokabe's armies when they were driven away by a huge swarm of bees that lived at the temple. The main statue and his supporting deities Amida Nyorai and Yakushi Nyorai were all carved by Kobo Daishi and are National Treasures.

Temple 71 – Iyadaniji (Eight Valley Temple)

This temple was constructed and founded by Gyoki. The temple was originally called Yakunidera (Eight Counties Temple) because it sat on a hill overlooking eight provinces. Emperor Shomu donated a treasure tower and a rice field to the temple. When Kobo Daishi was studying here a five-handed sword fell from the sky hence it was also called the 5 sword temple. There are more than 1500 carvings of Amida Buddha and his attendants in the rock wall behind the temple. Kobo Daishi is said to have come here frequently from the time he was seven until he was thirteen, at which time he started to wander farther from home.

Day 18 Free Day in Takamatsu

Today is a free day in Takamatsu. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Day 19 Visit Temples 72 to 76

Today we will walk from temple 72 to temple 76. Breakfast at the hotel is included.

Travel Time – 2 Hours 15 Minutes
Overnight – Takamatsu

Temple 72 – Mandaraji (Mandala Temple)

Originally called Sesaka-dera, the temple was built in 596 and was the ancestral temple of the Saeki clan into which Kobo Daishi was born. When he returned from China, he dedicated the mandalas signifying the worlds of the cosmic Buddha and enshrined the Dainichi Nyorai as the main statue. Kobo Daishi modeled the temple after Ch'ing-lung-si Temple in China (Shoyuji) and it took three years to build. Once built, it was renamed to its present name. Of interest is the Ageless Pine Tree in the temple courtyard. It is a huge (but not tall) dome-shaped tree and maintained in the form of a circle. It is said that Kobo Daishi himself planted the tree here.

Temple 73 – Shusshakaji (The Temple of Shaka Nyorai's Appearance)

When Kobo Daishi was seven years old, he climbed to the cliffs above the temple here and, after vowing to save all sentient beings, threw himself over the edge saying "If my desire to save all beings will be achieved the Buddha will save me. If not, let me die." As we know, his future works were assured when a company of angels appeared and saved him by catching him in their robes.

Because of this legend, this site is popularly called Shashingatake (the Jumping Cliff).

Temple 74 – Koyamaji (Armor Mountain Temple)

The temple received its name because the mountain is shaped like a helmet, or the armor of Bishamonten. The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi. He also carved the main statue in appreciation for the successful completion of the reconstruction of Mannoike (Manno Irrigation Pond), which he supervised and directed. According to another legend, Kobo Daishi met an aged man here while searching for a good site on which to build this temple. A sage came out of a cave and said, “I am a sage who gives meritorious power and propagates good teaching. If you build your temple here, I will protect it throughout the ages.” Kobo Daishi immediately cut out a piece of the rock and carved the image of Bishamonten.

Temple 75 – Zentsuji (Right Path Temple)

Famous as the birthplace of Kobo Daishi, this was the first Shingon temple in Japan. Along with Koya-san and Toji in Kyoto, this temple is one of the three most important sites related to Kobo Daishi. Its name derives from his father’s name Yoshimichi (Zenstu), which literally means ‘Right Path.’ Legend states that the temple was built on sand from the eight sacred places of India, which had been given to Kobo Daishi by his teacher Hui Kuo. It took six years to complete construction and was dedicated in 816 (or 813). Kobo Daishi also is credited with carving the main status. The chief priest was traditionally appointed by the emperor himself. Be sure to visit the tunnel corridor (Kaidan Meguri) in the basement. You must walk the one hundred yards through the tunnel and past 88 Buddhas without a lamp. Evil people are supposed to get stuck in the tunnel. Also in the tunnel is a small square, said to mark the exact spot of Kobo Daishi’s birth.

Temple 76 – Konzoji (Golden Storehouse Temple)

Konzoji was founded in 714 by Wake-no-Michi-maro, the grandfather of Enchin (814-891), also known as Chiso Daishi. Chiso, a nephew of Kobo Daishi and the sixth patriarch of Tendai Buddhism who was born here. At one time the temple owned 132 residential halls for monks but extensive fires in the 16th century destroyed most of it and was rebuilt on a smaller scale by the lord of Takamatsu castle. Of interest are the self-portrait of Chiso Daishi, a statue of him in the compound, a residential home for General Nogi, and the Tsuma-gaeshi-no-matsu (a pine tree under which the general’s wife used to wait for him during military duties). This pine tree is also called the Waiting Pine because ‘matsu’ means both ‘to wait’ and ‘pine tree.’

Day 20 Visit Temples 77 to 83

Today we will visit temples 77 to 82 by van. Breakfast at the hotel included.

Travel Time – 2 Hours, 45 minutes
Overnight – Takamatsu

Temple 77 – Doryuji (The Temple of Arising Way)

Wake no Michitaka founded the temple in 749 to repent for accidentally shooting his nurse with an arrow. At the same time, he carved a small statue of Yakushi from a mulberry tree and enshrined it as the temple’s honzon. Kobo Daishi later carved a larger statue of Yakushi and placed this smaller one inside. Chisho Daishi established the custom of giving annual Lotus Sutra lectures here and carved statues of the Five Guardian Deities. For several centuries, both Tendai and Shingon monks were sent here by imperial order to study and it was designated an official place of imperial worship.

Temple 78 – Goshoji (The Temple of Illuminating Local Site)

The temple was founded by Gyoki and originally called Dojoji. It was later rebuilt by Kob Daishi and yet again by St. Ippen in the 13th century. When St. Ippen rebuilt it, he also converted it to the Jishu sect of Pure Land Buddhism and changed the name to its present name. At the time, there

was an ongoing battle on Mt. Koya between Shingon priests and wandering lay priests who also lived on the mountain part of the year and believed in the efficacy of chanting the Nembutsu. Eventually the battle got too bloody for anyone to stand and the matter was taken to the Shogun to settle. He ordered non-Shingon priests off the mountain and they ended up going to Shikoku and settling at this temple.

Temple 79 – Tennoji (Emperor's Temple)

This temple is popularly called Shotoku Tennoji (Emperor Shotoku's Temple) because his coffin was preserved and worshipped here for a short time after his assassination at Tsutsumigaoka in 1156. In the temple compound is the Yasoba fountain where the body of Emperor Shotoku was cleaned daily for twenty-one days after his death before being moved to Temple 81 for burial. The fountain looks like a pond in the dim shade of big trees. Legend states that Kobo Daishi carved a statue of Yakushi in stone, dedicated it in this fountain, and performed an esoteric rite. As an indication of how remote the pilgrimage is for foreigners, a woman at the Nokyosho said that while the temple receives about 100,000 visitors each year, on average only one of them is non-Japanese.

Temple 80 – Kokubunji (The Official Site Temple)

The temple was founded by Gyoki in 741 at the request of Emperor Shomu for the protection of the nation. The sixteen-foot Kannon is considered to be the finest and largest statue on Shikoku and has eleven faces and forty-two arms. The main hall is from the Kamakura period and is the oldest physical structure remaining of all the Kokubunji. Its bell is also one of the oldest in Japan. Both the bell and the main hall are considered a National Treasure. The walkways of this temple are lined with stone sculptures, each representing one of the eighty-eight temples on the pilgrimage.

Temple 81 – Shiromeniji (White Peak Temple)

The temple was founded by Kobo Daishi. Chisho Daishi later added forty-seven buildings to the temple. The main statue is attributed to Chisho-Daishi who carved it from a shining piece of wood he found floating at sea. At the time he found it, a white-haired sage appeared to him and said, 'This is the holy site in which to turn the wheel of Dharma and enter Samdhi.' The temple also contains the mausoleum of Emperor Shotoku, who was assassinated near Temple 79 in 1156 after being banished from Kyoto following an unsuccessful coup attempt against his brother, the current emperor. The mausoleum was built in 1414 and is located behind the temple. This temple has some of the oldest buildings on the pilgrimage and the main hall dates back to the turn of the seventeenth century. The three main buildings are in the permanent shadows of overhanging trees. The trees are so thick that a tiny grotto and spring that have formed are in near darkness.

Temple 82 – Negoroji (Fragrant Root Temple)

This temple was founded by Kobo Daishi before his trip to China in 804. Chisho Daishi, a nephew of Kobo Daishi, carved the Senju Kannon from cherry wood and enshrined it here at the request of a local Shinto kami, Ichinosemyojin. At a later date, the temple was lavishly patronized by Emperor Go-Shirakawa, owned 99 branch temples, and possessed a thousand koku of rice. But, like many of the temples on Shikoku, most of this was destroyed by fire in the 16th century. This temple is located on the same plateau as temple 81. Legend states that in the 16th century, a devil animal with an ox head and a body like a fox appeared frequently on this plateau and scared the local people. A brave samurai named Kurando Yamada, an archery expert, shot the devil, cut off its head, and brought it to the temple in memory of the dead devil. The people called the animal Ushi-oni and believed that it had the power to purge an evil force. Later, they built a statue of the Ushi-oni near the fountain in the temple compound.

Temple 83 – Ichinomiyaji (First Shrine Temple)

The temple was founded by Gien in 704. It acquired its present name when the Ichinomiya Shrine was built in the temple compound in 716. Kobo Daishi stayed here from 806 to 810. The temple is commonly called Sanuki Ichinomiya (The Shrine Temple of Sanuki). There are several small torii in

the compound. Pilgrims crawl (on hands and knees) through the torii to purify themselves of bad karma and to ward off any evil influences. In 1679 the temple was declared separate from the Tamura Shrine on the orders of the lord of Takamatsu Castle, Yorishige Matsudaira. Of interest are three tombs dating from the 13th century and called the Ichinomiya Goryo.

Day 21 Visit Temples 84 to 88; Stop at Temple #1, Drive to Osaka; Overnight Osaka

Today, we will visit temples 83 to 88 by van, visit Temple #1 (this is standard practice in the pilgrimage), and then return to Osaka. Breakfast at the hotel and the final dinner at a local restaurant is included.

Travel Time – 5 Hours
Overnight – Osaka

Temple 84 – Yashimaji (Roof Island Temple)

Kobo Daishi built the main hall and carved the main statue in 815. The Senju Kannon main statue was carved by Kobo Daishi. The temple is near the site of the Battle of Gempei where the Genji and the Heike fought at the end of the 12th century. Of interest are the snow garden at the temple, the old battle site, and a museum containing relics from that battle. The temple's belfry is also from the Kamakura Period.

Temple 85 – Yakuriji (Eight Chestnuts Temple)

This temple is located on Go-ken-zan (Five sword mountain) and was founded by Kobo Daishi in 827 after five swords appeared in the sky. The top of the mountain has five huge rocks on the top, as the name also signifies. On the way to China to study, he planted 8 baked chestnuts here and on his return he found that they had grown into great trees, hence the temple's name. As with most temples, Chosokabe's warriors burned the temple down in the 16th century, but it was rebuilt by the Lord of Takamatsu Castle, Matsudaira. Thousands of people visit here on the 16th of every month to pray for their business success.

Temple 86 – Shikoji (The Temple of Fulfilling One's Wish)

One of the daughters of Fujiwara Kamatari went to China to become a concubine of the T'ang emperor Tai-tsung. Once there, she sent back three tiny but precious jewels for her brother's use in work on Nara's Kofukuji. Unfortunately the boat sank near Shido Bay and the three jewels were stolen by the Dragon King. Her brother, Fubito, disguised himself and married a female diver in the area in order to recover the jewels. Eventually the wife gave birth to a son and at that time promised to recover the jewels on the condition that the husband promise to make the son his heir. Through a heroic dive, the woman recovered the jewels, but at the cost of her life because the Dragon King saw her and she only got away by slitting herself and hiding the jewels inside her body. She was dead when she reached the surface. The son, Fusasaki, became the heir and the ancestor of the northern branch of the Fujiwara aristocracy. The jewels sit between the eyes of the Shakuson statue at Kofukuji in Nara. This temple was built by the son and by Gyoki in the 694 as a memorial to her and remains dedicated to the spirits of the dead (hence a strong association with Emma, the King of Hell).

Temple 87 – Nagaoji (Long Tail Temple)

The temple was founded by Gyoki in 738. Kobo Daishi came here later and, in keeping a vow he made before leaving for China, performed a fire ritual for the first seven nights in January and distributed amulets to the assembled people. This is the origin of the Daikaiyofuka-ubai (The Rite of Chasing a Good Fortune). During this festival, there is a race where people carry a large mochi. This race is famous through out Japan. Of interest is the tomb of Shizuka Gozen, the lover of Minamoto Yoshitsune. After his death, she was ordained and entered the religious life here. The East Gate of the temple was moved from the temple to Ritsurin Garden during the Edo Period.

Temple 88 – Okuboji (Large Hollow Temple)

This is the last temple of the circuit and has been appropriately named Kechigan-sho, the place of fulfilling your vow. The temple was founded by Gyoki in 717. It was later rebuilt by Kobo Daishi when he carved the main statue and enshrined it here with his staff. In commemoration of his trip to China, he enshrined his staff at this temple. Likewise, it is now customary for all pilgrims to leave their walking stick here after they complete their pilgrimage. Of interest here are the numerous crutches left by people who been miraculously cured during their pilgrimage.

Day 22 Sayonara

It is time to day Sayonara. We will provide a sending service to Osaka's Kansai Airport or Osaka's Itami Airport. If you would prefer to leave from a Tokyo airport, contact us for the details.

Walking level descriptions:
Light – 0 to 2 miles on level ground
Medium – 2 to 4 miles on level ground or 0 to 2 miles on hilly ground
Heavy – 4 to 6 miles on level ground or 2 to 4 miles on hilly ground

Dates & Pricing

Dates	Price (land only) / Single Supplement (All prices are per Person)	Status
May 2, 2027 - May 23, 2027	$11,545.27/ $1,081.50	Available

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- Meeting service at Osaka's Kansai Airport (KIX) or Osaka's Itami Airport (ITM) by a private taxi meeting service and transfer to Osaka hotel
- Optional meeting service at either Tokyo's Narita or Haneda Airport will be an extra $100 fee per group. If you are arriving or departing at Tokyo's Narita or Haneda Airports, there will be an extra $150 fee per person for the train tickets to/from Osaka for either of these airports (the meeting service is required if you want us to purchase the train tickets to Osaka for arrival, if you are arriving at one of the Tokyo Airports, the meeting staff will help you board the train. You will travel on your own to the Shin Osaka station, and will be met there and escorted to the hotel.)
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- If you will be leaving from Tokyo's Narita Airport or Haneda Airport, there will be an extra $150 fee per person for the train tickets from Osaka to one of these airports.
- For those requiring meeting or sending services on dates other than the scheduled arrival/departure dates, there will be a $100 fee for the meeting service from the airport into Osaka or the sending service to Kansai Airport.

- Lodging for 21 nights in western style hotels or Japanese style ryokans

- Meals
  - Japanese-style or Western-style breakfast every morning (Please Note: Some ryokans offer Japanese breakfasts only.)
  - No lunches
  - Eight Japanese-style or Western-style dinners at the hotels/ryokans or local restaurants

- The appropriate amount of free time to allow you to explore and discover your own personal Japan.
- All transportation costs when traveling with the group. (Transportation costs during scheduled free times are the tour member's responsibility.)
- Electronic version of itinerary
- Sayonara dinner at the end of the tour

Each tour member receives an electronic copy of our tour handbook. This handbook is full of tips and suggestions taken from our Japan travel experiences that allow you to better plan and prepare for your trip, and therefore enjoy your trip even more. The tips and suggestions included cover everything from how to save while exchanging money, what to pack, some basic Japanese-language tips, general etiquette do's-and-don'ts, ryokan customs, etc.

Exclusions

- Airfare is NOT included.
- A printed itinerary is not included
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks and desserts are NOT included

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