

Features & Interviews

KOICHI TANAKA's Travel Journal – Undertaking the journey of the SHIKOKU HENRO

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Next, I will tell you about the procedure for visiting the temples.



1. First, you give a bow at the entrance to the temple, the SANMON GATE (or the NIOMON GATE).



2. Next, you cleanse your hands at the CHOZUYA and rinse out your mouth.



3. You visit the HONDO (the main temple).

The HONDO is where the HONZON (main deity) of the temple is enshrined; each temple has a different HONZON. You give a monetary offering, or OSAISEN, to this god; insert a slip of paper with your name (or OSAMEFUDA^(*2)) into a special box; and recite the HANNYA SHINGYOU (the heart sutra)^(*3).



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4.Then, you pay a visit to the DAISHIDO.

The DAISHIDO is the place in the temple where KOTO-DAISHI KUKAI is honored. As with the HONDO, an OSAISEN is offered, an OSAMEFUDA with your name is left, and the HANNYA SHINGYOU (the heart sutra) is recited.



5.Finally, you receive a NOKYOU.

A NOKYOU serves as proof of your visit to the temple; it consists of a calligraphy signature and a shuin, or stamp, that you receive in your NOKYOCHO, or pilgrimage notebook.

(*2)The OSAMEFUDA differ in color based on the number of the SHIKOKU HENRO pilgrimage you have done. For the first through fourth times, they are white; for the fifth through seventh, green; for the eighth through twenty-fourth, red; for the twenty-fifth through forty-ninth, silver; for the fiftieth through ninety-ninth, gold; and for the hundredth and beyond, the slips are brocaded. There are many people who have done the SHIKOKU HENRO pilgrimage many times and visited the temples repeatedly.



(*3) HANNYA SHINGYOU (the heart sutra): One of the best-known sutras among the Japanese.