

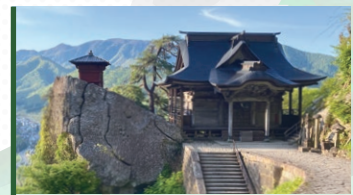
Hojusan Risshakuji

(Nyujokutsu Cave, Banji Hokora, Shakado, and Tainaido Temple are closed to the public.)



Godaido Observation Deck

The observation deck, built in front of Godaido, allows visitors to enjoy a breathtaking view of Yamadera. Godaido itself is a training shrine dedicated to Godai Myo-o and serves as a prayer space for world peace.



Kaizando

Kaizando is dedicated to Ennin, the founder of Risshakuji. A wooden statue of Ennin is enshrined within the temple, where incense is continuously lit, and a meal is offered twice daily. The temple opens to the public once a year on January 14th, marking the anniversary of Ennin's death.



Nokyodo

Nokyodo is the oldest structure in Yamadera. The ascetic practice of copying the full Lotus Sutra over four years in Nyohodo and enshrining it in this structure continues to this day.

Yonsun-michi

Yonsun-michi is an ancient training path, with its narrowest section measuring just yonsun (equivalent to 14 cm, where yon means four and sun is an ancient Japanese unit of length). It is also known as Oyako-michi or Shison-michi, meaning "Parent-Child Path" and "Offspring Path," as both ancestors and descendants follow the same path once walked by Ennin.

Ubado

This small structure symbolizes Jodoguchi, or the gateway to Paradise. The area above this shrine represents Paradise, while the area below signifies Hell. With each step up the stone stairs, it is believed that one's earthly desires disappear.



Together they are called Okunoin

Okunoin

(Nyohodo Temple and Daibutsuden) Enshrined within Nyohodo Temple are statues of Shaka Nyorai and Taho Nyorai, which Ennin is said to have carried with him as a protective charm during his time in China. The ascetic practice of "Nyoho Shakyogyo (Nyoho Sutra Copying)," established by Ennin, continues to this day. In this practice, a monk bows three times after writing a single character with graphite ink and a grass brush, continuing until the entire sutra is copied. To the left of Nyohodo Temple stands Daibutsuden, which houses a five-meter (16.4 feet) golden statue of Amida Nyorai. Many visitors, regardless of their Buddhist sect, come to pay their respects.

Niomon Gate

This stunning gate, crafted from Japanese zelkova wood, was built in 1848. The Nio statues positioned on either side of the gate are believed to have been created by the disciples of Unkei, a renowned Japanese sculptor known for his expertise in Buddhist figures.

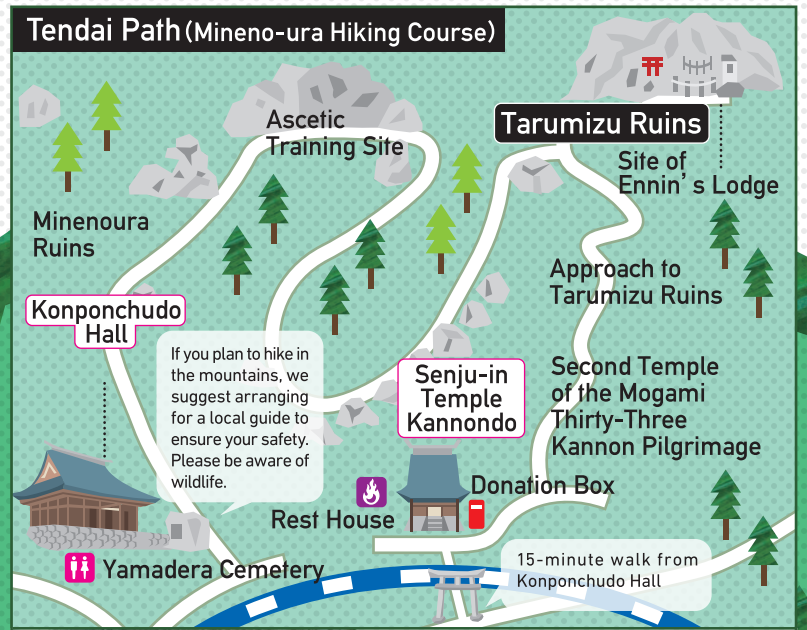
Hie Shrine

When Ennin founded Risshakuji, he modeled it after Heizan Enryakuji Temple, the main temple of the Tendai sect. He invited the divided tutelary deity of Hiyoishi Taisha, a shrine rooted in the Sanno Shinko tradition, to serve as the guardian of Yamadera. During the era of Shinbutsu-shugo (a period of kami-buddha syncretism) up until the Meiji period, the shrine was also known as Sanno Gongen.

Memorial Pagoda for Emperor Seiwa

Konponchudo Hall

Important Cultural Property



Tatumizu Ruins

Tatumizu Ruins is a sacred ground where Ennin stayed during his first visit to Yamadera. "Ennin Yado" is believed to be the place where he conceived the idea of founding Risshakuji. The area features towering, steep, and bare rock formations, adding to its spiritual significance. *We kindly ask visitors to contribute to the donation box to help preserve this sacred site for future generations. *For your safety, please do not climb the rocks.



Konponchudo Hall / Eternal Flame

Konponchudo, the main temple of the Risshakuji temple complex, is a nationally designated important cultural property and is considered the oldest beech wood structure in Japan. Enshrined within the hall is a wooden seated statue of Yakushi Nyorai, believed to have been crafted by Ennin. The inner sanctum of the hall houses the sacred eternal flame, originally lit by Saicho at Heizan Enryakuji temple. This flame was shared with Risshakuji at its founding and later returned to Enryakuji after its reconstruction, following its destruction by fire at the hands of the renowned samurai Oda Nobunaga. Inner sanctum entrance fee: 200 yen

There are 1,015 stone steps from the Mountain Entrance to Okunoin.

- Information
- Toilet
- Accessible Toilet
- Diaper Changing Station
- Bus Stop
- Coin-Operated Lockers
- Restaurant
- Snack Bar
- Souvenirs
- Goshuin Vermilion Seals
- Post Box
- AED (Available during Temple hours)



To learn more about the shops, please scan the QR code.

【Yamadera Entrance Fee】 *cash only

● Entrance Fee (Please pay at the Sanmon Gate)

- Adults (junior high school students and older)500円
- Children (ages 4 and older).....200円
- *Group discounts available for parties of 30 or more.

Individual Admission
Individual Admission400yen
Group Admission (20 or more).....320yen
*High school students and younger enter free of charge.
Matcha tea with sweets.....500yen
Special Admission Fee.....700yen
(Admission + Matcha tea with sweets)

○Hours: 9 am to 4:30 pm
○Closed: During exhibit changes and from December 29 to January 3
○Parking available



Yamadera Bashi Memorial Museum

The museum was established to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Basho's visit to Yamadera. It features numerous haiku poems written by Basho himself, along with resources related to his travelogue, "The Narrow Road to the Deep North."



20 minutes to Yamagata Sta. via JR Senzan Line

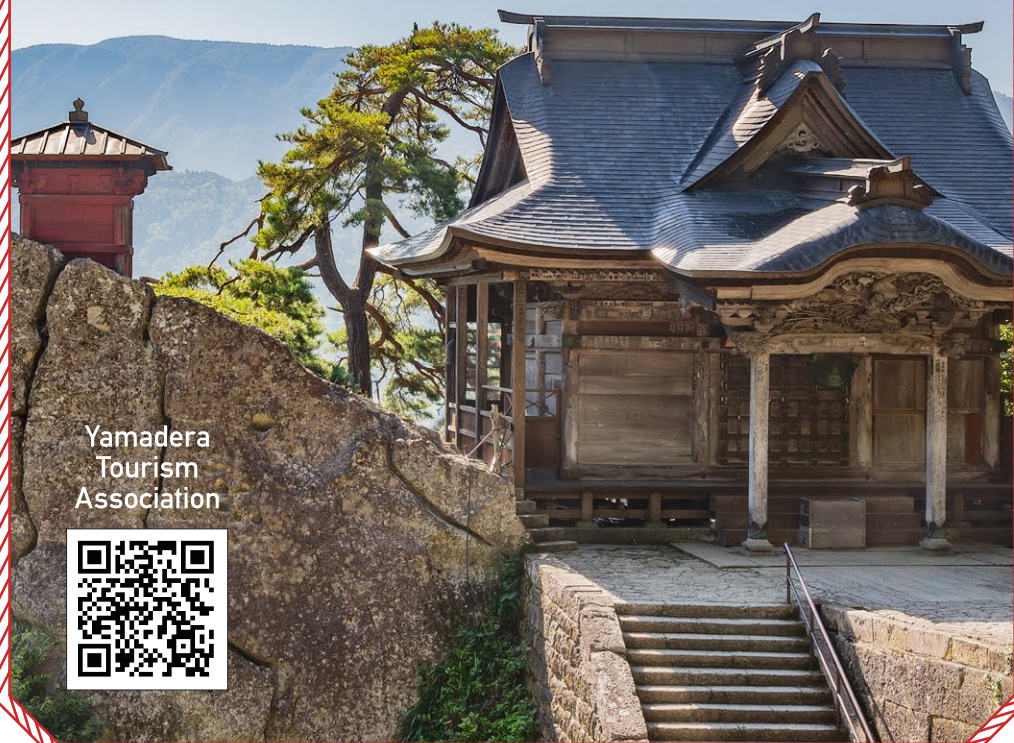
50 minutes to Sendai Sta. via JR Senzan Line

JR Yamadera Station

Yamadera Bashi Memorial Museum

All-in-One Map of Yamadera

Yamadera
Tourism
Association



Welcome to Yamadera.

Yamadera (Risshakuji Temple) is a temple dedicated to prayers for peace, health, and a comfortable life. We hope the peaceful world of prayer, the diverse scenery of the four seasons, the elegant atmosphere captured by the haiku poet Matsuo Basho—"Such stillness, the sound of the cicadas sink into the rocks"—and the natural and historic sites will enrich your experience in Yamadera.

Kiyohara Seiden
Chief Abbot, Hojusan Risshakuji Temple

About Yamadera



- Yamadera, officially known as Hojusan Risshakuji, is part of the Tendai Buddhist sect. The temple was founded in 860 by Jikaku Daishi Ennin, the third head priest of the Tendai sect.
- When Ennin visited this area, he purchased 40 km of surrounding land using 1000 ryo (an ancient Japanese currency) of gold dust and 3000 rolls of hemp cloth. He then established approximately 300 temple buildings and began propagating Buddhist teachings. With the eternal flame lit by Saicho and shared from Enryakuji, the head temple of the Tendai sect, Risshakuji became a temple dedicated to preserving the tradition of everlasting incense and four-year sutra-copying training.
- The temple flourished during the Kamakura era (1185 - 1333), but went into decline after the wartime destruction during the Muromachi era (1336 - 1573). During the Edo era (1603 - 1867), the temple was granted 1420 goku of land (approximately 940 square meters / 0.2 acres) by the Shogun, which enabled the reconstruction of its buildings. The master haiku poet Matsuo Basho visited Yamadera in 1689 and composed his famous haiku, "Such stillness, the cries of the cicadas sink into the rocks."
- Currently, around thirty large and small temple buildings are scattered across the approximately 100-hectare (250-acre) temple grounds. Here, three eternal practices—the eternal flame, the eternal incense, and the eternal sutra-copying are still performed today.
- Wooden tablets known as "Goshoguruma" are placed in various locations along the mountain. The posthumous Buddhist name of the deceased is printed on the Goshoguruma, accompanied by a wheel to pray for a swift reincarnation. Rolling the wheel is the equivalent of citing a sutra. Yamadera is open to all, regardless of nationality or religion, and welcomes anyone who wishes to hold a memorial service here.

Memorial
Service Fee:



Guided Tours

Japanese tours by Kizahashi Kai

Reservation
Required

Join us for a tour of Yamadera's stunning landmarks and historic sites. Enjoy a delightful and informative hike filled with unique stories shared by locals.



For reservations and inquiries

Tel.023-695-2816

Yamadera Tourism Association



Foreign language tours by Yamaderans

Reservation
Required

Join us for an English-guided tour, beginning at Konponchudo Hall to witness the eternal flame and concluding at Okunoin at the summit. You'll learn fascinating stories about history, nature, and local tales along the way.



For reservations

Please book your spot through our online reservation site.



Annual Public Events in Yamadera

Date	Event	Contact	
January 1.	12:30 AM	The First Goma Fire Ritual of the Year	Risshakuji Temple Office
January 14.	11:00 AM	Jikaku Daishi Death Anniversary Memorial Service	Risshakuji Temple Office
January 17.	1:00 PM	Daihannya Prayer Service	Risshakuji Temple Office
February 3.	2:00 PM	Setsubun Service	Risshakuji Temple Office
Early February.	9:00 AM	Kokeshi Snowman Contest	Yamadera Tourism Association
Late February.	1:00 PM	Hina no Michi Furiyuu Tea Ceremony	Yamadera Tourism Association
April 14.	8:15 AM	Ennin Festival	Yamadera Tourism Association
May 17.	All Day	Sanno Hie Shrine Festival	Yamadera Tourism Association
June 13.	11:00 AM	Shiji Kairo, Shiji Service	Risshakuji Temple Office
Early July.	10:00 AM	National Haiku Contest	Yamadera Basho Memorial Museum
July 13.	2:00 PM	In Basho's Footsteps Yamadera	Yamadera Tourism Association
Late July.	6:00 PM	Hojusan Mountain Light Display (until late August)	Yamadera Tourism Association
Late July.	2:00 PM	Children's Performing Arts Festival	Yamadera Tourism Association
August 6.	6:00 PM	Yako Nembutsu Nighttime Pilgrimage	Yamadera Tourism Association
Early August.	9:00 AM	Banji Festival	Yamadera Tourism Association
Late August.	6:00 PM	Imoni Bonfire Gathering	Yamadera Tourism Association
September Autumn Equinox.	11:00 AM	Okunoin Segaki Service	Risshakuji Temple Office
Late September.	10:00 AM	Yamadera Music Festival (Omoshiroyama Mountain)	Yamadera Tourism Association
Late September.	9:00 AM	Public Viewing of Kinenden	Yamadera Tourism Association
Mid-October.	9:00 AM	Street Market in Pedestrian Paradise	Yamadera Tourism Association
Late October.	5:00 PM	Hojusan Mountain Light Display (until early November)	Yamadera Tourism Association
November 28.	6:00 AM	Hand copied Lotus Sutra Offering Service (held every leap year)	Risshakuji Temple Office
Early December.	10:00 AM	Prayer Service for Successful School Results	Yamadera Tourism Association
December 30.	10:00 AM	Bell Cleaning & Mochi Rice Pounding Event	Yamadera Tourism Association
December 31.	11:30 PM	New Year's Eve Bell Ringing Service	Yamadera Tourism Association



Setsubun Service



Sanno Hie Shrine Festival



Banji Festival



Hand copied Lotus Sutra Offering Service

Contact Information

Yamadera Tourism Association
TEL.023-695-2816
FAX.023-695-2810
4495-15 Yamadera, Yamagata City, 999-3301



Proper Etiquette at Temples and Shrines

How to Pay Respect at a Temple

At temples, put the palms of your hands together and make a bow. Your palms should be joined in front of your chest. Practices may vary by Buddhist sect, but this is the basic etiquette for visiting a temple, embodying the expression of unity with Buddha.



1.

Take off your hat and make a bow before entering the temples and halls at Yamadera.



2.

Quietly make a monetary offering, and place your palms together. *When paying respects at Konponchudo Hall and Okunoin, please light a candle and incense.

*We kindly ask that you refrain from taking pictures inside the hall or bringing pets with you.

How to Pay Respect at a Shrine

A deep bow is called a "hai," and clapping one's hands together is called "hakushu." Both are traditional Japanese forms of salutation, expressing respect and gratitude. When approaching the altar, fill your heart with sincerity and appreciation.



1.

Before entering the Torii Gate, bow once and then walk through the side of the path. (The center is reserved for the Gods.)



2.

At the altar, gently make a monetary offering. Bow twice, clap twice, express your gratitude, and bow once more.

On Receiving Goshuin Vermilion Seals

After paying respect at the temples, please present your Goshuin seal book with a blank page open. We kindly ask that you wait quietly until the seal is ready.



- *Please do not take photos or videos of the seal issuance process.
- *Goshuin vermilion seals will only be issued to those with Goshuin seal books. (Notebooks and sketchbooks will not be accepted.)
- *Pre-printed Goshuin vermilion seals on paper are not available at Okunoin Nyohodo Temple.
- *Please note that Goshuin vermilion seals cannot be issued to Goshuin seal books that already contain stamps.
- *Please have your Goshuin seal book ready and removed from its cover.
- *Please have small change ready for payments.