

# Mt. Kongo

[Katsuragi Sutra Mound #20 (Former Ishi-dera Temple)]  
[Katsuragi Sutra Mound #21 (Mt. Kongo)]

Climbing Mt. Kongo, the leader of the Kongo Range – An ascent from the hamlet of Katsuragi to the settlement of Chihaya

Mt. Kongo has many old roads. Long ago, it was the site of a number of mountain temples, but the only that remains today is Tenporin-ji Temple. The former Ishi-dera Temple, where the 20th sutra mound is located, is the remnants of one such temple.

The course starts at the Kazenomori Bus Stop. You will depart after taking a look at the nearby Katsuragi no Michi trail sign. First, let's stop at Takakamo-jinja Shrine. Next, we will head toward a national historic site called Takamiya temple ruins. Follow the signposts, passing between the houses beyond a giant cedar tree, where a mini shrine is located. You will then reach the forest trail that leads to the Takamiya temple ruins. While the Ishidera trail branches off to the left just before the path to the temple ruins, we will stop by the ruins before continuing up the trail. After a short climb, you will come to opening that is the former Ishi-dera Temple, where a large rock is enshrined as a sutra mound. Further up the trail, the route merges with the Fushimi trail just before Fushimi-toge Pass on the Diamond Trail.

Head right from the pass, passing by an opening with a log cabin and a lookout tower, and the bamboo grass-covered trail to Mt. Yushutsu-dake will appear on your right. Climb it to the summit of Mt. Yushutsu-dake, where the 21st sutra mound is found. Descend the forest trail to the north of the sutra mound and rejoin the Diamond Trail. Pass through the Ichi-no-torii gate to the Katsuragi-jinja Shrine, which enshrines the deity Hitokoto-nushi, before arriving at Tenporin-ji Temple. Incidentally, the top of Mt. Kongo, the peak of Mt. Katsuragi-dake, is located behind the shrine, but is off-limits.

After passing by the shop and enjoying the view at the ruins of Kunimi Castle, take the Chihaya-hondo trail down. While you can choose to take the shortest path down, we will instead turn left just past the grave of Kusunoki Masanori and take the route that goes through the ruins of Chihaya Castle. After descending the long flight of stone steps to reach the bus route, turn right to go to the Kongo Tozanguchi Bus Stop. If you keep going straight, you will arrive at the ruins of Tamon-ji Temple, one of area's ascetic training sites.

Walking Distance ◆ Approx. 11 km

Fitness Level ★★ ★

Walking Time ◆ 4 hours 15 minutes

Skill Level ★★ ★

Course Times



## Course Information

- The mountains of Kongo-Katsuragi can be seen ahead on Katsuragi no Michi
- The Ishidera trail joins the Fushimi trail before Fushimi-toge Pass
- Only the foundation stones remain at the Takamiya temple ruins
- The ruins of Chihaya Castle, the impregnable fortress of Kusunoki Masashige

## Access

**Outward Trip**

Kintetsu Gose Line Gose Station → 17 min. (Nara Kotsu Bus Lines) → Kazenomori Bus Stop

**Return Trip**

Kongo Tozanguchi Bus Stop → 35 min. (Nankai Bus) or 34 min. (Kongo Bus) → Nankai Koya Line / Kintetsu Nagano Line Kawachi-Nagano Station or Kintetsu Nagano Line Tondabayashi Station

## Advice

This course is a climb from beginning to end, so proper hiking footwear is necessary. The trail is well maintained, so there are no places you are likely to get lost. Near the summit of Mt. Kongo is the Iwaya Monju, one of the ascetic training sites. This place is where En no Gyoja practiced asceticism and where Kusunoki Masashige received wisdom. The ruins of Tamon-ji Temple in Chihaya is hard to find, so ask the locals.

\*Walking distance is the horizontal distance. Course times are reference times for walking at a typical pace, not including rests.

\*This course does not exactly follow the training paths used by mountain ascetics.