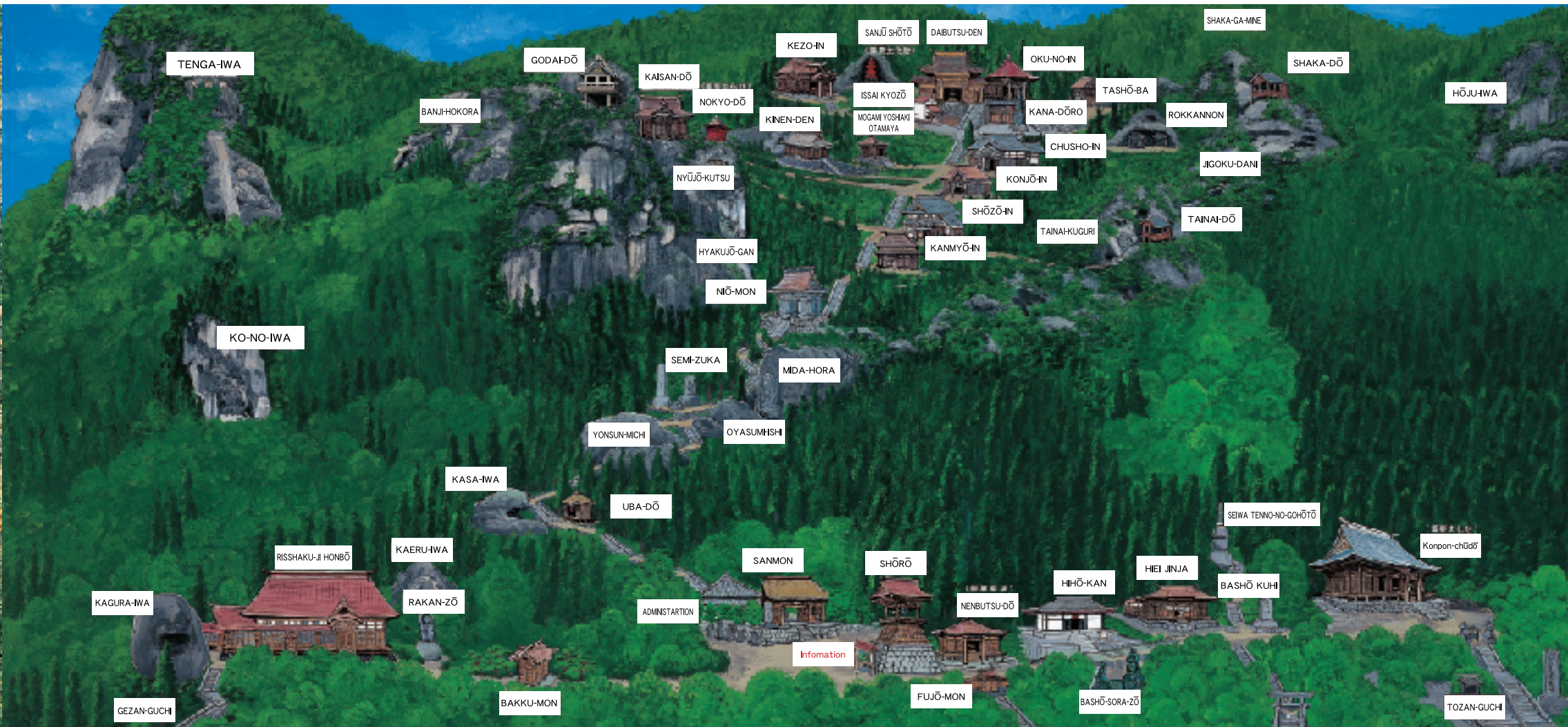


Places connected with the great haiku poet, Basho

The famous haiku poet Matsuo Basho was deeply moved during his visit to Yamadera. It was here that he composed one of his most famous haiku.



Yamadera, a holy site in Tohoku district, where religious fires are still burning over 1100 years since its foundation

Hojusan Risshakuji, popularly known as Yamadera, is famous as one of the most holy sites the Tohoku region. It was founded by the priest Jikaku Daishi in 860 A.D. as a branch temple of Enryakuji Temple on Mt. Hiei, near Kyoto. Climbing about 1100 stone steps through cedar trees along what appears to be a strangely woven tapestry of rocky mountainside, no one can fail to be refreshed in this world of stillness.

Matsuo Basho, traveler and great haiku poet, composed a well-known haiku to express his deeply felt impression of Yamadera upon his visit in 1689 A.D.



Yamadera, as its history tells, has many cultural assets. Konpon-chūdō, the main temple, and an important cultural asset, is said to have been built in 1356 A.D. by Shiba Kaneyori, feudal lord of Yamagata Castle. The temple is constructed of beech, which is very rare as a building material.

Even today, about 1100 years later, the religious fires brought from Enryakuji Temple on Mt. Hiei, near Kyoto, are burning in the main temple. It is said that when Enryakuji Temple, on Mt. Hiei, was burned down by Oda Nobunaga, the religious fires went out, and fire was brought back to Mt. Hiei from Yamadera.

There are many cultural assets, such as a seated wooden image of Yakushi Nyorai, which is the principal image of the main temple, a standing wooden image

of Shaka Nyorai, a standing wooden image of Yakushi Nyorai, a standing wooden image of Amida Nyorai, a seated wooden image of Dengyo Daishi, a hanging wooden Mandala of Buddha, and a monument of Nyōhōkyō Sutra, made in 1144 A.D. Most of these are enshrined at Hihōkan (treasure house).

Starting from Sanmon, (Gate) about 1100 stone steps meander up to Okuno-in (Temple) through cedar trees via Semizuka Monument, Nō-Mon, and Shozo-in, (Temple).

Along the stone steps, there are rock carvings bearing posthumous names, thousands of prayer wheels, stone images of Buddha, and stone lanterns. These engender a holy atmosphere at the site of Yamadera.



▲ Yamadera in Spring



▲ Sanmon (Gate)



▲ Korpon-chudo Main Temple (Important Cultural Asset)



▲ Yamadera in Winter



▲ Cherries



▲ Statue of Basho



▲ Haiku Monument



▲ Yamadera Basho Memorial Hall