



A Journey of Japan's Religious Sites

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Author:

Mirai Molina was a 2025 CAPI Intern at Ehime University in the city of Matsuyama, Japan. The author would like to express her gratitude to all of the people at Ehime University who supported her throughout her placement, and the people at CAPI who made this internship possible.

Project Description:

This capstone project incorporates photographs and watercolour paintings to depict a journey through religious sites in Japan. The pictures were taken from the author's visits to religious sites during her internship.

Shinto Shrines in Japan: A Collection of Pictures

The author had the opportunity to visit 5 shrines throughout Japan during her internship.

1. Ehime Prefecture Gokoku Shrine (愛媛縣護國神社)
2. Sumiyoshi Taisha (住吉大社)
3. Oyama Shrine (尾山神社)
4. Ōyamazumi Shrine (大山祇神社)
5. Itsukushima Shrine (厳島神社)

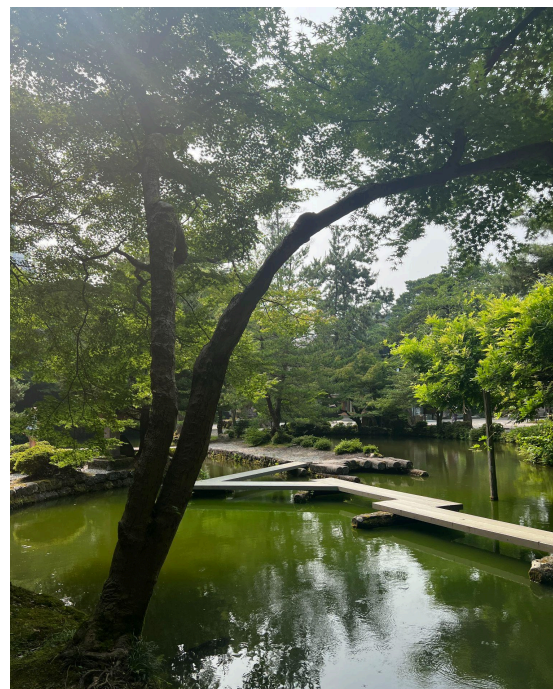
Ehime Prefecture Gokoku Shrine (愛媛縣護國神社) in Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture



Sumiyoshi Taisha (住吉大社) in Osaka, Osaka Prefecture



Oyama Shrine (尾山神社) in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture



Ōyamazumi Shrine (大山祇神社) in Imabari, Ehime Prefecture



Itsukushima Shrine (厳島神社) in Miyajima, Hiroshima Prefecture



Shikoku Pilgrimage



(Yellow dots represent the capital city of each prefecture, red dots represent each temple)

Shikoku has a Buddhist religious practice called the *Shikoku Henro* (四国遍路). The pilgrimage takes you to visit 88 temples throughout the island of Shikoku. It is said to have been formed in the 16th and 17th centuries and is associated with the Buddhist Monk Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi), who is associated with founding Shingon Buddhism, which is a major school of Buddhism in Japan. The pilgrimage starts in Ryozenji in Tokushima, travelling clockwise to Kochi, Ehime, and ends in Okuboji in Kagawa.

The pilgrimage occurs in 4 stages:

1. Tokushima holds temples 1-23, which represent awakening (発心)
2. Kochi holds temples 24-39, which represent discipline (修行)
3. Ehime holds temples 40-65, which represent enlightenment (菩提)
4. Kagawa holds temples 66-88, which represent nirvana (涅槃)

Shikoku Henro Equipment



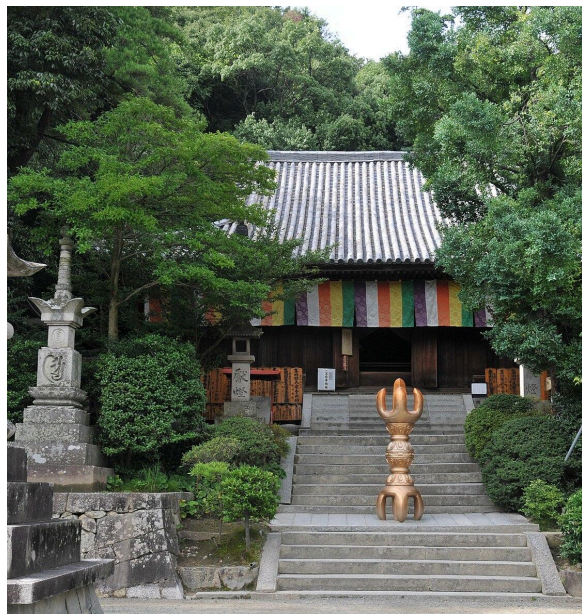
People taking on the pilgrimage, called *o-henro-san* (お遍路さん), wear a white shirt or vest (Oizuru), a conical sedge hat (すげ笠, *sugegasa*), and a walking stick (金剛杖, *kongō-zue* or *kongō-jō*). They may also have a stole, prayer beads, a bag with name slips (納札 *osame-fuda*), a booklet, and coins for offerings.

In Matsuyama, there are temples 46 to 53. To showcase temples that may be of curiosity to future interns, there are guides to 2 temples close to Ehime University, where the internship takes place, temples 51-52.

Temple 51: Ishite-ji, 石手寺



(Own Work of the Main Hall, *Hondō*)



(Ishite-ji, Ehime Pref., [Source](#))

Ishite-ji (石手寺), meaning stone hand temple, is located just past Dogo Onsen. 7 of its structures have been designated National Treasures or Important Cultural Properties.

Temple 52: Taisan-ji, 太山寺



(Own work)



(Taisan-ji, Ehime Pref., [Source](#))

Located slightly North of Matsuyama's city centre, Taisanji (太山寺) is embedded in bamboo and forests. The Hondo (the main hall) has been designated a National Treasure. It is said that a merchant from Kyushu founded the temple after he underwent a shipwreck, and he found safety near the shore of this temple.