

The Twenty Views from Kankakei Gorge

About 1.3 million years ago volcanic activity and erosion caused by wind and rain formed this uniquely shaped gorge. Kankakei is considered one of the three most beautiful gorges in Japan. Every season has its own fascinating appeal: wild cherries in spring, green mountains in summer, red maple trees in autumn, and snow in winter. Formerly this valley was called “Jagatani” (Snake Valley) since there used to be many snakes.

On the viewing platforms of Kankakei Gorge you can enjoy one of the greatest views of Shodoshima and try your luck with “kawaranage” (a custom where you throw small clay disks from the mountain and through a ring below). This is also one of the many great spots from which to watch the morning sun.

If you want to hike further up to the mountain top, walk towards the white shrine archway located uphill. This path leads to the ruins of a medieval mountain castle and to the highest point in the Inland Sea, where a festival is held every year on September 16th. (Please see the “Hoshigajo” map and brochure for more information.)

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① 通天窓 Tsutenso (Window to Heaven)
The hollow in this massive rock is like a window to heaven.

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③ 錦屏風 Kinbyobu (Brocaded Folding Screen)
When the surrounding leaves turn red in the autumn, this wall looks like a brocaded folding screen.

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⑤ 蟾蜍巖 Senjogan (Toad Rock)
This rock has the appearance of a toad prostrating himself on the ground.

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⑦画帖石 Gachoseki (Sketchbook Stone)
This rock resembles a sketchbook in which you might keep the memories of the places you have traveled.

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⑨ 荷葉岳 Kayogaku (Lotus Leaf Mountain)
This mountain resembles the veined back side of a lotus leaf.

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⑩女蘿壁 Joraheki (Jora Wall)
Long ago, a kind of lichen called jora used to be found here,
blowing in the wind like a long, wispy beard.

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① 鹿岩 Shika-iwa (Deer Rock)
This rock looks like a deer head or like a lion's head.

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③石門 Sekimon (Stone Gate)
This is a stone gate that formed naturally from agglomerate rock.

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⑤ 幟岳 Noboridake (Flag Mountain)
This mountain looks like a flag, but it is also called Tenchu-dake (Pillar of Heaven Mountain).

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⑦二見岩 Futami-iwa (Futami Rocks)
The name traces back to the Futami Rocks found in Ise.

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A Shiki Masaoka Haiku Monument

"Above my head, circling around the rocks - autumn clouds"
This haiku poem was written by Shiki Masaoka when he came to Kankakei Gorge on Shodoshima in 1891. The original paperboard on which he wrote the haiku was enlarged and used in the engraving of the monument so that you can read the poem in the original handwriting.

"Above my head, circling around the rocks - autumn clouds"
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"First winter's rain-even the monkey seems to want a little straw raincoat"

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老杉洞 Rosando



海女岩 Tsutenao

玉苧峰 Gyokujunpo



The highlights of Kankakee Gorge are the viewing platform at the summit, the fun trail winding around the mountain, and the beautiful view of nature. However, our recommendation is that you take the exciting ropeway gondola and experience the thrill of "walking through the air" at Kankakee! We have the best tourist facilities on the island with a parking lot, a directly managed restaurant with a capacity of 600, the "Kaede" Diner, the Cafe-Restaurant "Maple," and shops selling all of Shodoshima's outstanding local products. We also have a very comfortable public restroom, located in the brick-colored building at the top of the mountain.

From Kountei Station to the summit of
Kankakei Mountain
Capacity: 40 people
Leaves every 12 minutes (every 6 minutes
during peak seasons)
Operating Hours: 8:00 - 17:00, open year
round
TEL: 0879-82-2171

Hoshigajo Castle Ruins

The Highest Peak of the Inland Seas

The remains of Hoshigajo Castle can be found on top of Kenso Mountain. East Peak (816m) and West Peak (805m) are separated by about 400 meters. The main part of the castle was on West Peak, while East Peak held the secondary castle. This was a medieval mountain castle, which was surrounded by cliffs and made use of the area's natural defenses.



杉の小道
Hinoki Cypress Trail

星ヶ城山 Mt. HOSHIGAJO



西峰・阿豆根島神社
Azukishima Shrine, West Peak



西峰からの展望
View from West Peak



West Peak

Here in the main part of the former castle, there are a wooden gate, ramparts, a large earthen mound, reservoir, remains of residential quarters, remains of a forge, and remains of earthwork fortifications.

1 Remains of the Forge

Many pieces of metal slag are scattered around the former site of the forge, which was built to provide the metal tools needed to build the castle and the warriors' weapons.

2 Lower Rampart

This defensive rampart was built to create a protective trench that shielded people inside from attacks from outside as they went about their activities. It is 10.8m long by 4m wide by 1.5m deep.

3 Remains of Residential Quarters

Built on a flat area of West Peak that runs 26m from east to west and 10m from north to south, and with a slight downhill slope on the north end that was for water drainage purposes, the remains of the residential quarters here are in a location that has a good view of the area that once held the residential quarters on East Peak.

4 Reservoir

This facility captured rain water that drained from the mountain peak to a point midway down the north side of the mountain, and there is a path paved with andesite rock that leads from the south side for the purpose of carrying water up the mountain.

5 Earthen Mound

This flat, elevated piece of ground running 27m east to west and 20m north to south was built using the earth excavated from behind the rampart.

6 Outer Ramparts

This defensive rampart's purpose was to halt the advance of attacking soldiers approaching the wooden gate. It is measured at about 3.5m deep and 19m wide.

7 Azukishima Shrine

Located at the top of Shodoshima's highest peak, Hoshigajo's West Peak, the Azukishima Shrine

is the place where the deity Onudehime, the ancestral god of Shodoshima Island, is enshrined. On East Peak are enshrined five gods of fertility, including Toyouketaijingu. According to the Kojiki, the oldest existing book in Japan, the two gods Izanagi and Izanami, after creating the *Oyashima* (eight major islands of Japan), set about creating many smaller islands. The tenth island they created was called Azukishima (the old name for Shodoshima). Another name given to the island was "Onudehime." The soul of the island is said to be enshrined in the Azukishima Shrine on West Peak. Including Toyouketaijingu, the five gods that were once associated with the nearby peaks of Shihozashi were all removed from their previous locations and enshrined together in East Peak's Azukishima Shrine.

8 Hoshigajo Shrine

Here is enshrined the spirit of Sasaki Nobutane.



East Peak

At the site of the former secondary castle on East Peak can be found a number of remains, including a natural spring, a man-made well, earthwork fortifications, remains of residential quarters, a stone wall, remains of implements used in religious rituals, and the remains of boat-shaped stones.

9 Man-made Well

At 5.5m deep by 2.5m wide, this well is thought to have collected rain water for use in times of emergencies.

10 Natural Spring

Even in the middle of summer this spring never goes dry, so it was used as a well.

11 "Funagata" Remains

Many *funagata* (boat-shaped) stones, each about 6m by 3m, can be found scattered about here. It is believed that these rocks were quarried here and then transported to other places for the construction of stone walls.

12 Signal Fire Pit

This depression running 3.6m east to west and 5.1m north to south was used to create a signal fire during times of emergencies in order to communicate with the areas of Kusakabe and Yasuda, where there used to be villages.

13 Remains of Shinto Altar

After an archaeological excavation of this site, a great number of hajiki earthenware fragments were discovered. These are believed to be the remains of objects used in religious rituals before the castle was built.

14 Eastern Corner Pillar

At the eastern corner of the stone wall that runs around the peak of the mountain, square-shaped stones are stacked together to reinforce the wall.

15 Remains of Residential Quarters

It is believed that several buildings that were once residential quarters were located in this place, which has an excellent view of the former residential quarters on West Peak.



Nobutane Sasaki

He was originally a soldier serving under Jozen Hosokawa, a general of the Northern Court, and he joined in the attack on Kyoto. However, he absconded with the lover of one of the powerful retainers of Takauji Ashikaga, the first shogun of the Ashikaga Shogunate, and he then defected to the Southern Court. Accounts about when he arrived on Shodoshima vary, but it is generally accepted that he came around the year 1339. Eight years later, in 1347, Nobutane Sasaki surrendered after losing a month-long battle against a large troop of soldiers gathered from Awa, Awaji, Sanuki, and Bizen.