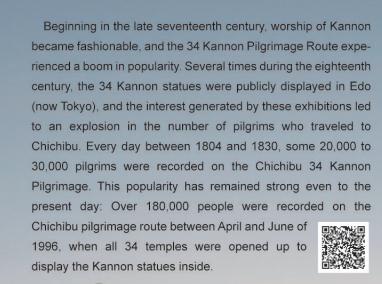
Chichibu 34 Kannon Pilgrimage Historical Overview

he Chichibu pilgrimage route is one part of the 100 Kannon Pilgrimage, three connected paths that link 100 temples across the regions of Chichibu, Bando, and Saikoku. Each of the temples along the route enshrine a statue of the bodhisattva Kannon, Goddess of Compassion.

Before the 100 Kannon Pilgrimage was established, each of the three pilgrimage routes visited 33 statues of Kannon. Sometime around the early sixteenth century, a thirty-fourth temple (Shinpuku-ji, No.2) was added to the Chichibu pilgrimage to create a single, unbroken route of 100 temples.

Although the Bando and Saikoku pilgrimages can take weeks to complete, the Chichibu 34 Kannon Pilgrimage is popular for being less strenuous. The Chichibu pilgrimage is tightly grouped within the Chichibu Basin and can be completed in just a few days. The route is about 100 kilometers long, and some portions can even be traveled by car.

Particularly during Japan's medieval period (twelfth to sixteenth centuries), travel between regions was tightly controlled. The Chichibu route, being so compact, did not require travelers to pass through any checkpoints, and it was very popular with pilgrims. Even after the start of the Edo period (1603-) 1867), when travel restrictions were relaxed, the Chichibu pilgrimage remained popular.







everal temples on the Chichibu During the session, the priest leading instruction in English and Mandarin. meditators on the shoulders to call After a brief explanation of how medita- attention to poor posture, bring a tion is performed, visitors seat wandering mind into the present, or floor. The back should be held straight, but visitors should confirm in advance. A but not rigid, and breathing should be \$2,000 donation is requested for each light. Focusing on one's breathing can participant, and visitors should wear help to clear the mind, but the ideal way clothing that will allow them to sit

34 Kannon Pilgrimage provide the meditation may circulate with a flat guided experiences of zazen, wooden stick called a kyosaku. and Hosho-ji (No.32) offers Traditionally, this stick is used to strike is sitting in quiet self-awareness without comfortably and modestly.



"Seven Waters of Chichibu" (Chichibu no Nanato), said to fully rejuvenate weary travelers on the Chichibu 34 Kannon Pilgrimage. The springs in the area contain minerals that are beneficial to the skin, ease stiff shoulders and

Chichibu's springs are different from hot springs in many other regions of Japan in that they do not naturally bubble up from the ground. The water is lukewarm when drawn from the ground, but it is heated to around 45°C (84°F) before being pumped to the baths.

allowed to get in Onsen in general.



Chichibu's All-Star Snack Miso-Potato Miso-potato is a humble food with simple were easy to prepare, satisfying, and

("small lunch") during mid-morning or that serve small dishes to

npura batter, and miso sauce—are While the taste can vary slightly depending on in Japanese cooking, but in on where it is prepared, miso-potato chibu they have been combined into a typically consists of soft, flaky bites of



Sutra Copying (Shakyo)

Seated Zen Meditation (Zazen)

is required, but there is a requested offerings and donation of ¥1,000 per participant.

focusing on any specific thing.

Hosho-ji offers three sutras for copying. One of them, Phrase Kannon Sutra, is ideal for beginners, and completing a copy usually takes between 30 and 60 minutes.

Visitors are led to a tatami room with the desk and materials prepared. The chosen sutra text is overlaid with a translucent sheet of copying paper. To copy the sutra, trace the characters beneath from top-to-bottom, right-to-left. While it is important to proceed slowly and carefully as a sign of reverence, the copyist's sincerity outweighs the quality of the

instruction in English or Mandarin they choose to dedicate it, the sutra should go to Hosho-ji. No reservation will be placed on the altar with other



Chichibu's Local Alcohol

The history of alcohol production in Chichibu dates back over 250 years, when the first sake breweries in the city were founded. Water quality is essential to brewing and is referred to as the "life" (inochi) of the alcohol. Chichibu's water contains an ideal ratio of mineral content for alcohol production, and a wide variety of different alcohols are made there The city proudly embraces its identity as a sakedokoro, of "brewing town." As of 2019, Chichibu has four sake breweries, two wineries, one beer brewery, and one whisky distillery.

. 🔷 Sake and Shochu .

designated a national Tangible Cultural distilled alcohol.

(1603–1867) and supplied sake to the Yamada Nishiki rice and Miyama Nishiki miners and silkworm farmers that lived in rice. These two varieties of rice are considthe region. The subterranean rivers flowing ered top-class within the sake world. Like within Mt. Buko were included in the list of Buko, Yao Honten offers regular tours of "100 Famous Waters" (Meisui Hyakusen) their brewing facility, which produces compiled in 2008. This same water is used at Buko, makers of Masamune sake, considered to be the preeminent sake of Chichibu.

The pure water used in their brewing can be approximately 18,000 bottles of sake each year. The brewery's second floor is the brewery's history that displays sake-making freely taken from a spigot in front of the implements. At an attached storefront and Buko brewery, and they also offer free tours. tasting bar, visitors can sample Yao's brands In 2004, the brewery and storefront were of sake and Danbe shochu, traditional



🔷 Whisky _

In recent years, Chichibu's sole whisky distillery, Venture Whisky Ltd, has gained worldwide acclaim. Founded in 2004 by Akuto Ichiro (b. 1965), the distillery has captured both domestic and international praise for its unique take on Japanese whisky. Since its founding, Venture Whisky has taken numerous titles at the World Whiskies Awards, including multiple awards for "Japanese Whisky of the Year" and "World's Best Blended Limited Release."

Chichibu's four breweries—Yao Honten, Nagatorogura, Buko, and Chichibu Kikusui — were each built during the Edo period Another beloved local sake, Chichibu Nishiki. The name "Nishiki" is a reference to the fact that the sake is made with both

