

# How to get to Nyuzan-Kobyō

The closest trailhead to Nyuzankobyō is Gakurokuji trailhead. It has a parking space for about 10 cars. Starting with the paved pasture road, hiking up about 2 hours by way of Yanagigamizu junction, you will reach Nyuzankobyō. This route has many places with a fine lookout and entertains you with a nice view on the way.

The view from Nyuzankobyō is simply awesome! From the top of the rock nearby, you can have a whole view of Oka clan which Hisakiyo reigned. Mt. Sobo and Mt. Katamuki also can be seen behind it. Mt. Aso is gushing out fumes on the right and Mt. Taisen is crouching like a giant behind the graveyard. No wonder why Nyuzanko made up his mind to have his grave built in this place!

From Nyuzankobyō, it takes about an hour and a half to get to the top of Mt. Taisen. The slope is getting steeper and steeper.

You need to get all ready for hiking up to the mountain!



▲ The view from Nyuzankobyō. Mt. Sobo on the left, Mt. Aso on the right, Kuju Plateau and Oka clan between them.

## Fire prevention area is vital!

In spring, open burning is conducted, and Nyuzankobyō was built near the area to be burnt. The local people have done their best to prevent the fire to reach the graveyard. According to the record in 1750, about 170 people were employed every to cut the grass or even scraped the grass out with the hoes around the graveyard. In about 1830, however, it was recorded that the graveyard was in the forest.



## Stones carried from Kyoto

Nyuzankobyō tombstone was built on the platform of the piling-up stones. The shape of the tombstone is semi cylindrical, which is the Confucianism grave style. The graves of his 6th son, Hisanori who died in infancy, and of 4th daughter, Itsuhime, were built by his grave. The stones carried all the way from Kyoto were also used to built this graveyard. It is surprising that such heavy stones were carried up into the steep mountain! At that time, the mausoleum and the guardhouse were also built to attend on the visitors.

The mirror Nyuzanko dedicated to a temple. The character 入山 (Nyuzan, meaning "going into mountains) was designed on it. →

## Brief history of Hisakiyo Nakagawa

- 1615 born in Kyoto
- 1640 married the daughter of Tadafusa Ishikawa
- 1641 His first son, Hisatsune, was born
- 1653 inaugurated as the 3rd lord of Oka clan  
hiked Mt. Taisen for the first time
- 1662 hiked Mt. Taisen twice a year
- 1666 retired his position and Hisatsune succeeded
- 1680 decided to have his graveyard built in Torii-gakubo
- 1681 died at the age of 67



The graveyard of Nyuzanko with Mt. Taisen on the back ▲

# Nyuzanko : The Lord who loved Kuju

Have you ever dreamed of resting your soul in your favorite mountain? There was a Lord who made his dream come true. He had his graveyard built in his favorite mountain, Mt. Taisen. His name was Hisakiyo Nakagawa, the third lord of Oka clan in Edo era. He even called himself "Nyuzan (going into mountains)". Let us introduce his life and his favorite mountain, Mt. Taisen!



In Edo period, Kuju region was divided into three districts: Shogunate territory with Hita regional office which covers the north eastern part of Kuju including Hand Plateau, the Hosokawa clan of Kumamoto Domain in the south eastern part of Kuju, and Bungo Oka clan in the eastern part of Kuju.

Hisakiyo Nakagawa was born in 1615 as the first son of the second lord, Hisamori. In 1653, he succeeded his father as the third lord of Oka clan. He tried hard to establish the domain duties and promote education. In 1666, he retired and handed

the reigns of the family over to his son, Hisatsune. He died in 1681 at the age of 67. In his lifetime, he hiked Mt. Taisen many times and he protected Hokkein temple cordially. He also arranged Ocha-ya (tea house) in Shitirida Onsen and visited the hot spring for health.

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Hisakiyo loved mountains so much that he called himself "Nyuzan (going into mountains)" after his retirement. He especially loved Mt. Taisen, and hiked it many times. Actually, he did not hike on his own feet, but had the strong people of his domain carry him on their back with a cradle board. It was possibly because his legs were not strong, and he was short (150cm high) enough for the men to carry him easily on the back.

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▲ the cradle board

What was his motivation to hike repeatedly Mt. Taisen, whose elevation is over 1700m? It was not for patrolling his territory, not for Syugendo training, nor for doing some investigations. He may have purely wanted to be free from his work and duties. He must have loved the grand scenery from the mountain top, beautiful seasonal flowers, and fresh air... His motivation to hike was just the same as ours.

It was difficult to enter the territory of other clan at that time, so he hiked only Mt. Taisen which was within his territory. Had he been born in modern times, he would have happily hiked all mountains in Kuju.

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In 1662, at the age of 48, Hisakiyo hiked Mt. Taisen twice in June and in October, each when Miyamakirishima and autumn leaves are the most beautiful.

He may have hiked to see the mountain covered with the pretty pink flowers in early summer and colorful autumn leaves in fall. How deeply he was touched by the wonderful scenery!

Later, he decided to have his grave built in the southern side of Mt. Taisen, called "Torii-ga-kubo".

In 1680, he wrote his will to be buried in Mt. Taisen, and died in the following year. In accordance with his will, he was buried in Torii-ga-kubo, whose elevation is 1400m. His graveyard is located at the higher place than any other lords' graveyards in Japan. In 1997, his graveyard, which is called "Nyuzan-kobyō, was designated as a National Historic Site.

