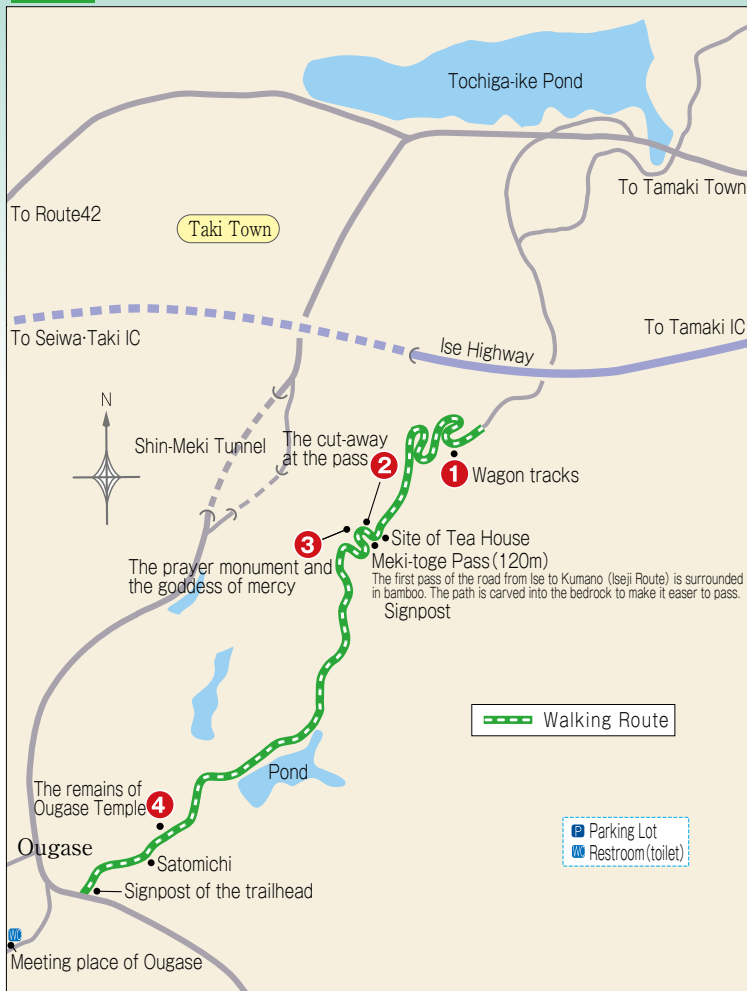


1 Meki-toge Pass



Wagon tracks

Long ago, wagons used to use this part of the route. It is easy to see their tracks even now.



The cut-away at the pass

It is said that they carved out 1000 slabs of graphite to clear the way for this path. This must have been an enormous amount of work considering the limited tools they had for excavation at the time.



The prayer monument and the goddess of mercy

A prayer stone with the words, "Namu Amida Butsu" (a mantra repeated in order to never forget Buddha's grace). A statue of a guardian of mercy is enshrined inside the small shine.



The remains of Ougase Temple

The temple which stood here long ago was built by the order of Emperor Shotoku in the year 766. Roof tiles and other artifacts dating from the Nara period (710 to 794) were excavated from the area.

■ **Distance** / Approx. 1.8Km

■ **Walking time** / 45mins.

■ **Level** / ★

■ **The Course** / Pilgrims making their way to the Three Grand Shrines of Kumano would first pray at Ise Grand Shrine, after which they would make their way to Tamaru and change into pilgrimage clothes. This is the first pass they would cross after starting their journey to the Kumano San Zan. Even during the day it is quite dark and you can feel its long history.