

From the latter part of the Edo period (1603–1868) Zao Onsen became a tourist destination for the surrounding domains. Believing its water to be a panacea, people came to Zao to be healed of their ailments. They stayed at the inns (*ryokan*) that make up much of the town and bathed in the waters. By the 1860s the Kamiyu bathhouse had become too crowded, and the town built the Shimoyu public bath lower down the side of the mountain. Outside the Shimoyu building are a stone monument and footbath which the same water as the bath inside. To prevent discoloration, visitors should be sure to remove any jewelry before putting their hands or feet in the bath waters.