

Sacred Camphor Tree Square

Dominated by the beautiful sacred camphor tree, visitors can enjoy a relaxing time in this square, where tradition has it that a Tengu once took a rest under the camphor tree, before returning to his home on Mount Zozu.

Sacred Camphor Tree

This huge sacred tree is said to be inhabited by a god. For centuries, it has been venerated by sake brewers. Experts estimate that this tree has been standing since the Heian period (794–1192). Up to the Meiji period Kotohira Shrine combined both Buddhist and Shinto worship, and people worshipped both the Buddhist god of seafaring, Konpira, and the Tengu, a Shinto god associated with the ascetic practices of Shugendo. The Tengu were originally considered to be disruptive demons but eventually came to be seen as protective spirits of mountains and forests. A legend recounts that after rescuing people from misfortune, a Tengu stopped to rest at this camphor tree before returning to Mount Zozu.

Please relax under the shade of the tree, enjoy the dappled light on a sunny day and the rustling of the leaves, and feel at home in Konpira. Also available is a Japanese sake made by using natural yeast from the sacred tree.