

Oshino Hakkai Springs

Fujiko pilgrims traditionally spent several days purifying themselves before their climb by visiting each of the Fuji Five Lakes and three mountain springs, collectively known as the “Inner Eight Lakes” (*uchi hakkai*). In the mid-nineteenth century, a scholarly adherent of the faith named Tomoemon Oyori launched a project to cut the preparation time down to one day by reshaping the bodies of water in nearby Oshino into a set of eight sacred “lakes.” Since these were fed by underground streams from Mt. Fuji, they were believed to have the same purifying power as the Inner Eight Lakes. Visitors to the new “Eight Lakes of Oshino” (*Oshino Hakkai*) also brought much-needed income to the village.

Note that the central pond in the village, surrounded by restaurants and souvenir stores, was created at an even later date, and is not considered one of the eight lakes of the Oshino Hakkai.

The Eight Dragon Kings

Each of the Hakkai springs has a small stone monument bearing a poem and a dedication to one of the eight dragon kings that appear in the Lotus Sutra. The complete list of springs and their associated dragon king is as follows:

1. Deguchiike Pond: Nanda
2. Okamaike Pond: Upananda
3. Sokonashiike Pond: Sagara
4. Choshiike Pond: Vasuki
5. Wakuike Pond: Taksaka
6. Nigoriike Pond: Anavatapta
7. Kagamiike Pond: Manasvin
8. Shobuike Pond: Utpalaka