

Noten Daijin Ryuoin Temple

This temple sits above a rushing river at the bottom of a deep valley, down a long, lantern-lined stone stairway leading from Kinpusenji Temple.

According to legend, when the high priest of Kinpusenji Temple started to build a training dojo on this spot, he came across a dead snake with its head split open. Feeling compassion for the creature, he recited a sutra and respectfully buried it. After that, the snake repeatedly appeared in his dreams, thanking him for the kind act. The priest eventually realized that the snake was a manifestation of the Zao Gongen images enshrined in Kinpusenji Temple's main hall, the Zaodo.

The temple is named after Noten Daijin, the protector of everything related to the head and brain, the seat of all human thought. Many visitors come to pray for relief from headaches and other head-related complaints, and students come to pray for success in their schoolwork. The temple even holds special prayer sessions from mid-January to late February for students preparing for entrance exams. The present building dates from 1951.