

Kuzuryu Shrine

Kuzuryu Shrine enshrines the nine-headed dragon god of the same name, said to have been tamed by the ascetic priest Mangan in the year 757. Before being subdued by the legendary hero, Kuzuryu was feared by the people living on the shores of Lake Ashi, who would sacrifice their daughters to the venomous creature to escape its wrath.

Determined to put an end to Kuzuryu's reign of terror, the priest Mangan placed a stone slab in the water of Lake Ashi—at the place where a small torii gate now stands just off the shore near the shrine—and sat down to pray for three days and three nights. Faced with such a formidable adversary, the dragon gave up, and eventually promised to guard the region as long as the people would honor him every year with a prayer. That promise is upheld in the form of the annual Kuzuryu Shrine Festival, celebrated on June 13, while a simpler festival is held on the 13th day of every month. This ritual can be attended by getting on a special festival boat at Moto-Hakone, from where it is a 20-minute journey to the shrine. Be aware that since Kuzuryu Shrine is particularly popular among people looking for luck in love, the boat can get quite crowded. The shrine can also be reached on foot, a short walk from the Prince Hakone Ashinoko hotel.