

Aizen-in

This temple is formally known as Henkōzan Ganjōji, but is more commonly called “Aizen-in.” It is one of several temples in the area that worship Aizen Myō-ō, one of the Five Wisdom Kings (*myō-ō*) and the deity of human passion and lust who aids followers in achieving spiritual awakening through earthly desires.

Aizen-in was the Matsuo family temple, and within the temple graveyard is Matsuo Bashō's (1644–1694) grave. But only the poet's hair is buried here; he died in 1694 in Osaka, and the rest of his body was interred near Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture. Bashō's disciples ensured that at least part of the poet's body would remain with his ancestors but that his true resting place would be on the shores of Lake Biwa.

The cemetery garden includes two significant plants: a banana tree (*bashō*), which is the poet's namesake, and a camellia, the kind of wood used to make Bashō's walking stick. In addition to these trees in front of the grave, the path to Bashō's grave is lined with stones inscribed with his poems.