

Statue of Shinran Eating Noodles

This statue of Shinran (1173–1263), one of the most respected figures in Japanese religious history, is said to have been carved by the subject himself and has a compelling backstory. Shinran was the founder of Jōdo Shinshū, or True Pure Land Buddhism, which continues to be among the country's most prominent sects. When Shinran was a young monk in training, out of a powerful sense of devotion, he ventured out every night for one hundred nights to pay his respects across town at the temple of Rokkakudō. It is thought that the young monk carved this statue of himself with the hope that his absence would not be noticed. Miraculously, the soba noodles that he was served were somehow consumed, reportedly by the statue itself. Thus the origins of the statue's name, "Soba-Eating Shinran."