

## The Statue of Tatsuko

Rising from the azure waters of Lake Tazawa, the golden statue of a young woman looks out over the lakeshore. This is the legendary Tatsuko, the subject of one of the area's best-known folktales.

According to legend, Tatsuko was a young woman of unsurpassed beauty, who yearned to preserve her good looks and youth for eternity. Every night she prayed to the Okura Kannon, a deity of mercy and compassion. After many nights of prayer, the goddess told her that drinking water from a nearby spring would make her wish come true. Unfortunately for Tatsuko, her great thirst led her to drink until the spring ran dry, and she transformed into a dragon, fated to prowl the lake's great depths for eternity as its guardian.

The gleaming statue celebrates this legend, and in a way grants Tatsuko's wish for her youthful beauty to be preserved in perpetuity. It was created by celebrated sculptor and painter Funakoshi Yasutake (1912–2002), and first unveiled on May 12, 1968.

Located just off the shore on the western side of the lake, the statue stands 2.3 meters tall, on a base of black stone. The artist captured the heroine looking up expectantly with a hint of shyness, as if rising from a bath.

Made of bronze, the statue is completely covered with gold leaf to protect it from the high acidity of Lake Tazawa's waters.