

Dosojin

Dosojin are Shinto deities (*kami*) that reside in stone carvings placed at the side of the road at village boundaries, forks in roads and mountain passes. They are considered guardians and protectors that keep out evil spirits, and are also called *sae no kami*, *sae* meaning to “block” or “obstruct.”

While *dosojin* are found in many areas of the country, Azumino boasts hundreds of them, the largest some 2 meters tall. Most are easily accessible to visitors traveling by bicycle or on foot, and offer a fascinating glimpse into the importance of cultural artifacts and traditional religious beliefs in the Azumino rural lifestyle.