

Tengawa no Mizu Spring

The natural spring known as Tengawa no Mizu, or “water of the heavenly river,” pours from the side of a hill just west of Hobomi Bay on the grounds of Seisuiji Temple. The spring was discovered during the Tenpyō era (729–749), when an itinerant Buddhist priest named Gyōki (668–749) arrived on the island. When he came across a lush, tree-shaded grotto echoing with the sound of running water, he was struck by its rarefied atmosphere. Gyōki decided to establish a temple on the site, which he dedicated to Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. He named the temple Seisuiji, meaning “temple of pure water,” and the spring Tenkei no Kawa, or “river of heaven’s blessing.” Later, the spring’s name was changed to its current name, but through the centuries, local residents have continued to refer to it as a “river.” Its waters are believed to be effective in curing illness, and throughout recorded history, the spring has never run dry.

Tengawa no Mizu produces around 400,000 liters of water per day, which is clean enough to drink directly from the source. In fact, the water’s purity has made it a valuable component in locally produced sake—the Oki Sake Brewing Company uses the water at its facility in the town of Okinoshima. For its purity, history, and its significance to the community, in 1985 the spring was designated #64 in the Ministry of the Environment’s list of “100 Famous Waters” (Meisui Hyakusen).