

Audio Guide: Sparrow Hell

Follow the path back toward the main road. If you listen closely on your left, you may hear a faint buzzing or chirping noise. That is the sound of the small Suzume Jigoku, or Sparrow Hell, whose escaping steam is said to sound like the chirping of small birds.

The story connected to the name of the spring is a sad one. It is said that in the 1570s, one of the young monks training at a temple in Unzen had a prized white sparrow. He refused to share the company of his sparrow with some other young monks who lived on a different part of the mountain. They started arguing, and the monk was killed in the resulting fight. This sparked an even wider battle among the different groups of monks that ended in the destruction of many temples on the mountains. In the chaos, the beloved sparrow fell into this spring, giving it its name.