

## **Ogumotori-goe Jizo-do Hall**

The Jizo-do Hall is home to 32 statues of the bodhisattva Jizo, who is said to watch over travelers.

### *A Fishmonger's Donation*

The original Jizo-do Hall and its contents were donated in 1707 by a fishmonger named Rokube from the city of Sakai, in Osaka. While the statues are the originals, the hall itself has been periodically rebuilt, as uninhabited wooden structures deteriorate quickly in the mountains. The most recent rebuilding took place in 2015.

Originally, the Jizo-do Hall had 33 statues. The location of the missing statue is unknown. According to one local legend, it roams the Kumano Kodo, secretly helping travelers in need.

### *A Shugendo Site*

The Jizo-do Hall is regularly visited by *yamabushi*, practitioners of Shugendo. Shugendo is a tradition of mountain asceticism that combines elements from Buddhism, Shinto, and Taoism. Kumano was a major Shugendo center in medieval times, and in recent decades the assistant head priest at Seiganto-ji Temple has led a Shugendo revival here. *Yamabushi* enter the Kumano mountains to practice austerities in summer and spring, and leave wooden plaques called *hide* (pronounced “hee-day”) at various statues and shrines as they pass them. Many *hide* can be found in the Jizo-do Hall at those times of year.

### *Jizo-jaya Rest Area*

Next to the Jizo-do Hall is the Jizo-jaya rest area. This is located on the former site of the Jizo-jaya Teahouse, at the midpoint of the Ogumotori-goe route.