

Takekoma Inari Shrine

The Settaya area's Inari shrine features the standard pair of foxes at its entrance, but in place of the usual female fox is a statue of a vixen and her cub.

In the Shinto tradition, Inari is a deity associated with rice cultivation who ensures an abundant harvest and protects the local community from disaster. Foxes act as the deity's messengers, and if you see one in nature, legend holds that it may be a sign sent by Inari. This is why statues of foxes stand guard outside Inari shrines, and in many cases feature prominently elsewhere on the grounds.

Casual observers might think the vixen and cub are meant to represent a mother protecting her child. However, experts suggest the intended meaning is actually the opposite: it is the child who is looking at the mother and saying, "When I grow up, I am going to protect you." This relationship between parent and child is a theme that runs through other shrines and Japanese society in general. It is an important responsibility of younger generations to look after their parents as they get older. In this respect, the shrine teaches children a vital lesson.

Takekoma Inari Shrine is a source of pride for the local community. Beyond its aesthetic qualities, the shrine naturally holds a deeper spiritual significance. Good fortune, bountiful harvests, and success in business are said to await all those who offer a prayer here.