

Ichinoike Pond

Behind Keishinin Temple is a pond known as Ichinoike, or “first pond.” According to the legend, there are seven ponds surrounding Mt. Shichimen. The symbol of Keishinin is a cluster of six circles centered around a single circle. One of several theories about the meaning behind this symbol is that the circles represent the seven ponds of Mt. Shichimen.

Ichinoike and Ninoike, the first and second pond, are accessible on foot from the temple. The exact locations of the remaining five are unknown. It is even rumored that those who are able to locate the seventh pond will be blinded by the sight of it.

The water at Ichinoike is a light shade of emerald green, but the monks say that the water was once very clear. Global warming has altered the pond’s ecosystem. Still, when the water is motionless, the pond acts as a mirror reflecting the sky and surrounding trees.

Water is essential to nature and wildlife and is a vital symbol in Nichiren Buddhist mythology. The deity of Mt. Shichimen is Shichimen Daimyōjin, the Dragon Goddess of Shichimen. It is believed that the Dragon Goddess once lived at Ichinoike and the area where Keishinin Temple now stands. On certain days one can see ripples in the water, as if the dragon goddess is stirring beneath the surface.