

Kasuisai Temple

Just northwest of Kasui Yuri no Sono Lily Park is Kasuisai, a temple of the Soto Zen school of Buddhism. The temple, built in 1401, was originally named Toyoken Temple, however, its name was changed after an event involving Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), the first of the shoguns who ruled the country during the Edo period (1603–1867).

Ieyasu spent much of his childhood as a hostage in order to secure military alliances, and the 11th generation abbot at Toyoken was in charge of his education during some of that time. Years later, when Ieyasu was lord of the castle at Hamamatsu, he invited his former teacher for a visit. The monk fell asleep during their conversation, yet Ieyasu allowed the old man to sleep in his presence, an act usually forbidden, which seemed to show his affection for the abbot. Thereafter, the abbot became known as “the sleeping monk,” and the temple he oversaw, Toyoken, came to be known as Kasuisai, meaning “the temple where one can sleep.”

At the temple, protective amulets said to bring peaceful rest are available. Activities include Zen meditation and learning about the temple’s numerous historical treasures. Vegetarian cuisine prepared by the monks is served if pre-ordered at least a week in advance. A wind chime festival is held from late May, when thousands of wind chimes are displayed around the temple grounds to welcome the advent of summer.