

Eight Views of Omi: Clear Breeze at Awazu

Awazu is a district of Otsu well known for its pine trees. It lies at the southern edge of Lake Biwa where the lake joins the Seta River. The old Tokaido highway between Tokyo and Kyoto runs through the area, connecting the Seta no Karahashi Bridge to the rest of Otsu. Just to the north was Zeze Castle, built by the Tokugawa shogunate during the Edo period (1603–1867) but demolished after the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

Many renderings of this view are dominated by the imposing structure of Zeze Castle, but in the famous woodblock print by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) published by Hoeido, the castle almost disappears behind the sailboats on the lake and the pine trees on the shore. Today, the Tokaido is no longer primarily a pedestrian path, and there are not quite so many trees and sailboats. However, a peaceful public park lined with gnarled pine trees still follows the sweep of the shoreline around the lake. Where the castle once stood is Zezejoseki Park, a popular spot for cherry blossom viewing in spring.