Kadode Hachimangu Shrine
[LEGENDS]

The small Kadode Hachimangu Shrine is a place where people pray for a safe journey, and its paper safety amulets are popular among travelers. The tradition has its roots in a story involving Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189), who is considered one of the greatest warriors in Japanese history.

Soon after Yoshitsune's birth, his father, a samurai general who served the emperor as head of the Minamoto clan, was killed by the rival Taira clan. Raised in hiding, Yoshitsune grew up to become a fierce swordsman, and vowed to one day take revenge on the Taira. At the age of 16 he enlisted the help of a wealthy merchant, who helped him find refuge with the powerful Fujiwara clan in the northeastern city of Hiraizumi (in present-day Iwate Prefecture).

The merchant's estate is said to have stood where Kadode Hachimangu is now, and it was here that Yoshitsune prayed for divine protection before departing for Hiraizumi. Revenge came a decade later: in 1185, after a five-year war, the Minamoto crushed the Taira and went on to establish the Kamakura shogunate, the first warrior-led government to rule Japan.