

## **Ichijo Modoribashi**

### **[HEIAN]**

This unassuming bridge, rebuilt in 1995, has over the centuries been associated with a number of hair-raising legends. It was first built in 794, when Kyoto became the capital of Japan, and was part of the Ichijo Oji avenue, a major thoroughfare. The bridge was given its current name, which means “the bridge of return,” after a spooky incident in 918.

According to legend, a monk by the name of Jozo was engaged in ascetic practice far from Kyoto when he received word that his father was dying. Jozo hurried home, but by the time he reached the city, the old man had been dead for five days and his funeral procession was already on its way. Jozo caught up to the cavalcade at Ichijo Bridge and said a desperate prayer over his father’s casket.

The sky darkened, and Jozo’s father came back from the dead long enough for the two to exchange farewells. After this, funeral processions avoided crossing the bridge, but it became a staple setting for many ghost stories and other works of literature.