

Jūsan Mairi Ceremony and Dendengū Shrine

Jūsan Mairi is a seasonal coming-of-age ceremony in which children who have reached the age of 13 visit Hōrinji Temple to pray to Kokūzō Bodhisattva for wisdom. Although there is no written record of the first ceremony, it is believed that during the Heian period (794–1185), Emperor Seiwa (850–880) visited the temple to pray for wisdom after his thirteenth birthday. At the time, a child was considered an adult once they had experienced one full 13-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. After offering their prayers, children who participate in the ceremony are told that if they look back at the temple before they finish crossing Togetsukyō Bridge on their return home, they will have to give back all of the wisdom that was granted to them by the bodhisattva.

Dendengū Shrine originated in the 800s as Myōjō Shrine, where the monk Dōshō (798–875) enshrined Ake no Myōjō, the morning star. He believed the morning star was a manifestation of Kokūzō Bodhisattva, who was venerated there as a deity of lightning and other natural phenomena until the shrine's destruction in 1864. A temporary shrine occupied the spot until Myōjō Shrine was restored in 1956 at the request of workers in the newly formed telecommunications industry who wanted a place to pray. The shrine was reestablished and given the new name *denden*, which is written by repeating the character for “electricity.” Today, the shrine receives pilgrims from technology companies around the world with prayers for the deity enshrined there.