

### **Roku Jizo Square**

The Roku Jizo Square is across the river from the main part of Uchiyama. Six Jizo Bodhisattva statues stand at the entrance to a small graveyard on one side of the square. Known as Roku Jizo, these figures are said to guide people through the six realms of samsara, the Buddhist cycle of existence and rebirth: *jigoku* (hells), *gaki* (hungry ghosts), *chikusho* (animals), *shura* (demi-gods), *ningen* (humans), and *tenjo* (gods). Jizo Bodhisattva is also a protector of children, especially the souls of those who died young. The statues are often dressed in red bibs, since red is said to represent safety and protection from evil spirits.

Stone statues of Roku Jizo like these can be seen all over Japan. In Arita, Roku Jizo can be found in several other places including the Iwaya-gawachi neighborhood, in front of Hoenji Temple in the Hiekoba neighborhood, and in Sankoan Square in the Odaru neighborhood.

The square was originally full of trip hammers, a type of water-powered hammer that was used to crush the stone used to make porcelain clay. None of the mechanisms survive today, but two replicas were built near the site of the Tengudani climbing kiln in 1984.