

Goshogozen

According to legend, it was on this small patch of ground to the south of Daiichi Hongū that the three Sumiyoshi Sanjin gods descended from a large tree and appeared to empress-regent Jingū. The encounter prompted Jingū to order the building of Sumiyoshi Taisha more than 1,800 years ago.

The *go* in Goshogozen, meaning “five,” refers to the five kinds of blessings conferred by the gods: health, wisdom, wealth, happiness, and longevity. Pebbles inscribed with the character for “five” (*go*, 五), “large” (*dai*, 大), or “power” (*riki*, 力) are scattered among the stones at the site, and if you find all three, you can take them home. Carrying the pebbles around is said to help make a wish come true. If it comes true, the custom is to return the stones to Goshogozen, along with three more pebbles collected from your own neighborhood and inscribed with the *go-dai-riki* characters. Symbolically, you will be giving back twice what you received.