

## **Hayashi Razan Statue**

Hayashi Razan (1583–1657) was an influential supporter of Japan's famous hot spring towns of Gero (Gifu Prefecture), Arima (Hyogo Prefecture), and Kusatsu (Gunma Prefecture). A statue of the Confucian scholar is located on Shirasagi Bridge in the center of Gero, across the street from Gero Onsen Shrine. It depicts Hayashi in flowing robes, surrounded by three monkeys.

Hayashi served the Tokugawa shogunate under several generations of shoguns, beginning with Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616). He was a trusted advisor whose influential writings included philosophical treatises and travelogues. Hayashi designated Gero, Arima, and Kusatsu as the country's three greatest hot spring towns, which is often cited as one of the reasons for their enduring popularity.

The statue was erected in 1992 to commemorate more than 1.5 million annual visitors to Gero, a milestone surpassed several years prior. A direct descendant of Hayashi Razan, Hayashi Tomoo, was invited to the unveiling ceremony. Today, the statue serves as a symbol of Gero's long reputation as a popular travel destination. The annual Onsen Thanksgiving Festival in early August pays tribute to Hayashi Razan and Banri Shuku, a fifteenth-century poet and Zen priest whose statue is located near Gero City Tourism & Cultural Center.