

Kinomoto Jizōin Temple and One-Eyed Frogs

This temple's location at a major crossroads testifies to its significance: it was originally the center of Kinomoto-juku. Many prominent historical figures are said to have visited the temple, including the priest Kūkai (774–835) and the founder of the Ashikaga shogunate, Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358).

The temple's principal object of worship is a statue of the bodhisattva Jizō. This incarnation of Jizō is believed to cure ailments of the eyes. According to temple lore, the frogs that live in the garden show compassion for suffering worshippers by offering prayers to the bodhisattva on their behalf. It is said that a frog permanently closes one of its eyes in sacrifice each time a worshipper receives Jizō's aid. To show their thanks, temple-goers have left the countless little figures of one-eyed frogs that are piled in different areas of the temple.

Today, visitors may descend under the temple into absolute darkness and walk through a winding pitch-black corridor with only the walls for a guide.

The experience is believed to be spiritually cleansing.