

Koyasu Jizo

The Jizo statue behind the hillside tea field in the Erihara Pass has long been venerated in Wazuka for bestowing blessings of safe travels and easy childbirth. Jizo (Ksitigarbha) is a bodhisattva associated with the protection of travelers and children, and Koyasu Jizo is a form of the deity thought to watch over women in childbirth. An inscription on the lower right and left sides of the halo names the priest Jikkei and dates the statue to 1267, “more than 2,000 years after the passing of the Buddha.” Another example of this rare practice of dating statuary by counting years from the death of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, can be found on the Miroku Magaibutsu carving nearby. The stone altar around the Koyasu Jizo was installed at a later date; many smaller Jizo statues are lined up beside it.

The road in front of the Koyasu Jizo was once part of a route that connected Yamashiro and Omi Provinces (modern-day Kyoto and Shiga Prefectures), and many travelers likely prayed to the statue on their journey. People from the surrounding area made pilgrimages to worship here as well, having heard tales of the efficacy of praying to Koyasu Jizo.

During the Jizo-bon Memorial Service on August 24, a small ritual is performed in front of the statue.

Access

Walk approximately 20 minutes from the Wazukanagai bus stop. Look for a water tank surrounded by a green fence and a silver signpost in Japanese to know where to turn.