

Konpira Gongensha Shrine

Konpira Gongensha Shrine is a historic shrine with connections to Aridagawa's lumber industry and local residents who served in the Japanese navy. The shrine was first established at this site in 1823. It enshrines Konpira Gongen, the deity for which the shrine is named.

Konpira Gongen is revered in both Buddhism and Shugendō, a blend of Buddhism and mountain worship that spread throughout Japan during the Heian period (794–1185). As a god of water and seafaring, Konpira Gongen is the divine protector of Mt. Zōzu, a key landmark for ships navigating the Seto Inland Sea.

Konpira Gongen has also been venerated by loggers in Aridagawa's lumber industry. Prior to the 1940s, log drives were the standard way to transport timber downstream. Each log drive was a dangerous undertaking in which loggers could drown or be crushed to death in a log jam. Loggers used to

visit Konpira Gongensha before a log drive to pray for safety.

Enlisted sailors from Aridagawa would also pray at the shrine before their deployment. On the eve of a sailor's departure, it was customary for their loved ones to walk up and down the approach to the shrine 100 times, offering 100 prayers to Konpira Gongen for the sailor's safe return.

The main festival day at Konpira Gongensha is the tenth day of the tenth month on the traditional lunisolar calendar, which now generally falls in November. On the weekend closest to that date, a mochi-throwing event is held in which small rice cakes are tossed to a jostling crowd for good luck.