

The Propheying Jizo

Kitajima Town, Itano District

Once upon a time in Minamikoda Village (Kitajima Town, Itano District), there was a community that harvested rice in the rice paddies. However, they were troubled by the nearby flooding from the Yoshino River, Shikoku's largest river, after large rains. The people of the village placed a Jizo (Bodhisattva; a deity that protects people from suffering) that they had made on the tall river bank.

One day, it rained from the late afternoon. The village people thought "There is nothing to worry about if it's only raining this much", and fell fast asleep after a long day in the rice fields. However, in the middle of the night the rain became violent and it started to pour. Then, a loud voice followed "The bank broke! We must hurry and run away!" Everyone in the village was surprised and woke up because of the loud voice. When they looked at the river, the water had already risen to the top of the bank. "This is horrible, we must hurry and escape!" The people of the village somehow made it to Kourenji Temple located at higher grounds.

Again, the loud voice could be heard "The bank broke!" Then, the thrashing waters overflowed from the Yoshino River and swept away the newly planted rice crops and flowers, as well as numerous homes. When this happened, a young boy swam to the bank, placed the Jizo on his back, and returned to the temple. Everyone was surprised that he carried the large stone Jizo, which was the same size as him, on his back, despite being pulled away by the water. "Why did you carry the Jizo?" the priest of Kourenji Temple asked. "The Jizo appeared in my dream and told me that the bank will break. If I just left it, such a Jizo would have been swept away by the waters", the young boy replied. The priest paused in reflection, then asked the villagers "Who said that the bank would break, or that it did break?" However, none of the villagers could respond. "I see; it was the Jizo. The Jizo is the one who told us." When the people of the village heard this, they expressed their gratefulness to the Jizo from the bottom of their hearts. The Jizo was named the "Yumezuke-Jizo" (The Propheying Jizo), and placed carefully in the garden of Kourenji Temple. Every year, a festival is held at this temple.

