

安藤 恵聡・安藤 恵薫 (Eso Ando and Ekun Ando)



Profile

Eso Ando (on right): The 18th chief priest of "Jodosan Kenshozen-ji Temple."
After graduating from a Buddhist university, he joined a company. After spending six years as an employee, he became a Buddhist monk. In 2012, he assumed the role of chief priest following a generational transition.

Ekun Ando (on left): Father of Mr. Eso Ando, the chief priest.

In 2012, he became a retired Zen monk after a generational transition. At "Seigetsuan," located near the temple, you can savor the Zen-style cuisine that the Buddhist priest mastered during his apprenticeship.

■What we value:

- We strive to convey everything in an easy-to-understand manner.

■What you can learn and do:

- Sitting Zen meditation · Buddhist sutra copying · Enjoy morning porridge

■Sights to see and flavors to savor:

- The townscape of Usuki (the scenery of the temple town)

■My "SDGs × #○○"

- # The etiquette for eating porridge

Moving Forward While Questioning the Emotional Connection Between Temples and People

"Kenshozen-ji Temple" was built in the 11th year of Kan'ei (1634). The 18th chief priest of this famous temple is Mr. Eso Ando, who is 51 years old this year. His smile is youthful, but his calm demeanor and gentle gaze exude the dignity of a chief priest. In the past, temples played the role of government offices and schools, and were closely connected to people's lives. "But nowadays, there are hardly any chances for people to engage with temples in their daily lives, except perhaps during funerals. Well, I guess it can't be helped because the way we live is different." He says, pondering the relationship between temples and people and reflecting the essence of a modern day chief priest.

Kenshozen-ji Temple has always had an open atmosphere. The former chief priest Ekun, Eso's father, had a deep relationship with the community and children, engaging in kind acts such as hosting a youth baseball team for a training camp. The 5th chief priest pulled up a statue of Mary that had been sunk in a river during a time when Christianity was suppressed and enshrined it in the temple. The generosity and openness that have been passed down in the temple, is also inherited by Eso Ando. When asked about his future plans, he replied with a smile, "I would like to host a wedding ceremony at the temple. Denomination is no concern, and wearing a wedding dress is absolutely fine. I want people to use the temple not only for Buddhist memorial services but also for celebrations." While inheriting its history, he wants the temple to be loved by modern society. The 18th chief priest's struggle is also part of the history of the temple.



A Zen temple that was founded in the 11th year of Kan'ei (1634).



The wickerwork ceiling of the tea room was crafted by Shounsai Shono, a living national treasure.



Maria Kannon (Deity of Mercy) stone statue. For fear of repression, it has been enshrined as the "One Word Jizo (guardian deity)."