

500 Rakans

On the premise of Kitain Temple, you can see 538 unique statues of stone, which were carved by some monks and townspeople in Kawagoe between 1782 and 1825. They are called “500 Rakans”. Rakans mean Buddhist monks who are at the advanced stage of ascetic training. And the statues represent 500 disciples of Buddha’s, who got together to compile Buddhist scriptures after Buddha’s death. However, actually those statues look like humorous characters rather than holy saints. They are chatting, meditating, laughing, sleeping, lamenting, embracing animals, or having a massage. Each of them has different expression and posture. Visit the temple and take a close look at them, and you will find some statues which remind you of your family or friends.



Reported by Kazuko Ogawa