**Horinji Temple**

There are two stories of how Horinji Temple, also known as Miidera, came to be. One holds that Prince Yamashiro (d. 643) and his son established the temple in 622 to pray for the recovery of Yamashiro’s ailing father, Prince Shotoku (574­–622), a regent who established a centralized government leading to the early formation of Japan. The second story maintains that two Buddhist monks, Emmyo and Kaihoshi, and one lay person, Shimohi Shinmotsu, came from the ancient Korean kingdom of Paekche to found the temple.

Though the date of its establishment is unclear, Horinji was completed by the seventh century, originally on a much larger scale. The temple began to decline around the thirteenth century, and in 1645 a typhoon destroyed most of the buildings in the compound. Only the Three-Story Pagoda survived, and it continued to stand for another three centuries. Horinji was revived in the eighteenth century when its Main Hall and Lecture Hall were rebuilt. Today, the temple houses a number of treasures, including the Eleven-Headed Kannon statue, designated an Important Cultural Property.