

Bonjigaike Pond, Muryokoin Temple

As part of the larger Muryokoin temple complex, Bonjigaike Pond and its three islands were designed to replicate and reflect the Pure Land Buddhist paradise on earth. Originally constructed between 1170 and 1180, the pond measures 19,600 square meters in size, with a maximum depth of approximately 40 centimeters.

It is believed that Fujiwara no Hidehira (1122–1187), who constructed Muryokoin, modeled the temple after Kyoto's Byodoin Temple. An Amida Hall once stood on the largest island in Bonjigaike Pond, and a bridge connected this central island with the smaller northern island. The Amida hall featured lateral corridor wings, like the Phoenix Hall of Byodoin Temple, and enshrined a statue of Amida Buddha. Excavations have also discovered the remains of several buildings on the eastern island, including a stage.

First excavated in 1952, the pond and its three islands have been painstakingly restored to their original size and condition, allowing visitors to experience this rare Pure Land Buddhist historical site.