

Hokyoji Temple

Founded in 1356, this quiet temple located near Higashi Katsura Station provides a calming environment in which to experience the nature and history of Tsuru. It is the largest historic structure in Tsuru as well as the oldest of those whose date of construction has been confirmed. The temple itself is composed of several beautifully constructed traditional wooden buildings. The most noteworthy is the *kuri*, or the temple kitchen.

Behind the temple lies Hokyoji Mountain, a popular destination for flower viewing. The slopes directly behind the main hall of the temple are covered in a field of *yamabuki* grass (*Kerria japonica*), whose bright yellow flowers bloom at the beginning of May. As this flower is rare in the area, it has been declared as a natural monument. The mountain is also covered with a number of cherry trees, making it a popular destination in the springtime as well. The view from the top is worth seeing, offering a panorama of the surrounding countryside.