

Yokawa Chudo

This great hall at the center of the Yokawa district is also known as Shuryogon-in and Konpon Kannon-do. It was built by Ennin in 848 after he returned from Tang China, which he visited from 838 to 847. On his way to China, he encountered strong winds, and he called on Kannon, the goddess of mercy, for help. Bishamon appeared and calmed the winds, which is why Ennin enshrined statues of Sho Kannon and Bishamon at this temple. Ryogen renovated it in 975 and added a third statue, that of Fudo Myo-o, to make a triptych. Fudo Myo-o is the most important of the Five Wisdom Kings, and is particularly revered in Tendai Buddhism. It is said that the architecture of the hall is modeled after a Tang-period boat, with the roof shaped like the hulls once used to cross the sea to Tang China.

The Yokawa Chudo is considered the eighteenth stop on the Saikoku Kannon Bodhisattva pilgrimage, a series of thirty-three temples in the Kansai area dedicated to Kannon, and is a center of faith in Kannon worship. The first station is at Nachi Falls in the Kumano area of Wakayama, and many of the stations are temples in the Kyoto and Nara vicinity. Throughout the Yokawa district are stone Buddhas representing the Saikoku pilgrimage's thirty-three stations. Visiting each of the statues can be likened to completing a virtual circuit of the actual pilgrimage, with similar spiritual benefits.

S: Sanskrit

Yokawa Chudo (Yokawa Central Hall)

Shuryogon-in (Heroic Valor Temple)

Konpon Kannon-do (Central Avalokitesvara Hall)

Kannon (S. Avalokitesvara)

Bishamon (S. Vaisravana)

Sho Kannon (Noble Avalokitesvara)

Fudo Myo-o (S. Acalanatha)