

Juhoji Temple

Juhoji Temple is thought to have been established in 704. It was originally known as Yamamoto no Odera Temple and stood near the Kizu River. At that time, it was relatively prosperous and had seven halls. After a series of floods, however, it was moved in 1732 to the quieter, elevated area where it currently stands. It is a much smaller temple today. There is a park on the east side of the temple where visitors can enjoy cherry blossoms in the spring and beautiful foliage in the autumn. The grounds used to be a stop for migrating cranes as well as a renowned place to celebrate the Tsukimi Moon Viewing Festival in mid-autumn. Enshrined in the reliquary is Juhoji Temple's principal deity, the Thousand-Armed Kannon, which has been designated as an Important Cultural Property.

History

Since the temple was near the road that travelers took from Yamato (present Nara Prefecture) to San'indo (a historical geographic area that generally corresponds to the present San'in region in southwestern Honshu), it often provided food and support for those traveling along the road. The temple underwent restoration work in 1997 for the first time in 206 years.

Treasures and Artifacts

Along with its principal deity, the Thousand-Armed Kannon, which is enshrined in the reliquary, Juhoji Temple has other consecrated Buddhist statues in the Main Hall, one of which is of Prince Shotoku. Prince Shotoku (574–622) was a regent and political figure who played a key role in the rise of Buddhism in Japan. After his death, the name Shotoku was bestowed upon him for his virtues and merit. This statue is believed to date from the Kamakura Period (1185–1333) and depicts the prince at the age of sixteen, praying for the recovery of his ailing father, the emperor. There are also twelfth-century statues of two of the five great wise kings, the Kongoyasha Myo-o and Gozanze Myo-o. They are said to be the kings guarding the threshold between this world and the next, and are depicted with fierce expressions and raised limbs.