

Statue of Guze Kannon

This seventh-century statue of Guze Kannon is one of Horyuji Temple's most mysterious treasures. The Guze Kannon is believed to have the power to save those in the world from suffering. The sculptor carved the 179-centimeter image from a single piece of camphor wood and gilded it in its entirety. This Kannon is thought to be a depiction of Prince Shotoku. The statue is remarkably well preserved because the temple kept the statue hidden from view in honor of the prince.

When the American Asian Art Specialist Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908) and Okakura Tenshin (1863–1913) visited the temple during the Meiji period in 1884, they convinced the monks to have the statue catalogued. The statue can now be seen twice a year for short periods of time during the spring and fall.