

## **Hokiji Temple**

Hokiji Temple is one of the seven great Buddhist temples founded by Prince Shotoku (574–622), a statesman who spread Buddhism throughout Japan during the Asuka period (593–710). His son, Prince Yamashiro, established this temple after his father's death, and it was completed in 708. Excavations have revealed the presence of an earlier structure on this site, the Okamoto Palace, where the Prince lectured on the Lotus Sutra.

Hokiji Temple's magnificent three-story pagoda, a National Treasure, is the only original structure remaining from the early eighth century. The priest Shinsei Ennin and his followers restored the pagoda and built the Kodo Hall in the late seventeenth century. The Shotendo Hall was added in 1863. The Kodo Hall houses a gilded wooden statue of the Eleven-Faced Kannon, carved in the Heian period (794–1185) and listed as an Important Cultural Property.

In 1993, Horyuji Temple's inner precincts and surroundings, including Hokiji Temple, were the first site in Japan to be registered as a World Heritage Site.