

Shorinji Temple

Shorinji is a Buddhist temple of the Shingon sect. It was established in 712 as a place to pray for the prosperity of the Fujiwara clan, a powerful family closely connected with the imperial court. Due to damage sustained from multiple fires over the centuries, all of Shorinji's buildings were rebuilt in the eighteenth century. Today, the temple houses a number of treasures, including an eighth-century Eleven-Headed Kannon statue, listed as a National Treasure.

Situated on Mt. Ogura, a mountain celebrated in early Japanese literature, Shorinji commands a spectacular view of the ancient region of Yamato, the cradle of Japanese civilization and Buddhism. The Hashihaka burial mound (*kofun*), thought by some researchers to be that of Queen Himiko, a third-century monarch of the first Japanese dynasty, is visible in the distance. Mt. Miwa, the site of Omiwa Jinja, one of Japan's oldest Shinto shrines, lies to the east of the tomb.