

### **Welcome to Dazaifu Tenmangu: Sanctuary of Learning, Culture, and the Arts**

Sugawara Michizane (845–903) was a scholar and influential member of the government of the Heian period (794–1185) whose legacy left a deep imprint upon Japanese history and culture. After his death in exile, Michizane’s spirit was enshrined at Dazaifu Tenmangu. He was deified as Tenjin, and today is worshipped as the deity of learning, culture, and the arts. All are welcome to worship here, and more than 10 million visitors come to the shrine each year to pay respect to Michizane, who is strongly associated with literature and calligraphy.

In the shrine grounds, more than six thousand plum trees stand as a tribute to Michizane, who had a deep affection for the early spring plum blossoms. The three bridges that guide visitors to the honden—the main sanctuary—represent the past, the present, and the future, and Shinji-ike pond is shaped like the kanji character for “heart” or “spirit.”

Dazaifu Tenmangu is one of Japan’s most important Shinto shrines and stands at the head of 12,000 Tenjin shrines nationwide.