

Tachiki Kannon Temple

Tachiki Kannon Temple was founded by Kukai (774–835), the priest who established the Shingon school of Buddhism. According to legend, a white deer appeared in front of Kukai, who mounted it to jump across the Seta River and reach a sacred shining tree that he saw on the opposite bank. The priest rode the deer to the top of a nearby mountain, where the animal transformed into Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion.

The temple is dedicated to Kannon, and the main hall (*hondo*) contains a 1.6-meter wooden statue of Kannon reputedly carved by Kukai. Visitors can pray to Kannon at the front of the hall or use the smaller area behind the building, closer to where the deity is kept. The sacred sculpture is not on public display, but another statue at the temple entrance depicts Kukai riding the magical deer.

The most direct path up to Tachiki Kannon is a winding stone staircase with more than 800 steps. The mountain is covered with cedar trees, and along the ascent the sounds of traffic and the rushing river below are replaced with birdsong.