

Site of Tango Kokubunji Temple

Tango Kokubunji Temple was established in 741 as one of dozens of provincial temples built under Emperor Shomu (701–756). The temples were institutions of the central government for exercising control over the provinces and spreading the influence of Buddhism. Very little is known about the original Tango Kokubunji buildings, but the temple's principal object of worship may have been a bronze statue of Kannon Bodhisattva that is now on display at the Masaki Art Museum in the Senshu area of Osaka Prefecture.

The temple fell into disrepair in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) as the Ritsu sect of Buddhism lost influence across Japan. In 1334, the temple was reconstructed, but it was burned down in the wake of local warlord strife in 1542. The subsequent temple suffered flood damage in 1683 and was moved to a new location. The temple as it existed at the turn of the sixteenth century, including the main hall and five-storied pagoda, can be seen in the renowned *View of Amanohashidate*, a painting by Sesshu Toyo (1420–1506).

Besides the Kannon statue, there are few archaeological remains of the original temple. Two roof tiles are on display at the on-site Kyoto Prefectural Tango Regional Museum, and parts of the foundation are visible. These foundation stones are believed to be from the 1334 temple, but some may be from the 741 building.

Visitors to the site may also wish to explore the Former Nagashima Residence, the house of a mid-nineteenth-century Miyazu village head, which is located across from the museum.