

Honnoji Temple

Honnoji Temple was built in 1586 and belongs to the Jodo sect of Buddhism. Stone guardian deities flanking the main gate (*sanmon*) welcome visitors and defend against evil.

The first building inside the gate is the main worship hall (*hondo*), with an interior lavishly decorated in gold leaf. The hall houses a statue of Amida, the Buddha of the Pure Land, carved from stone sourced locally in Shiotatsu.

A monument to Matsuo Basho (1644–1694), the famous haiku poet, is located on the temple grounds. Although Basho never visited this temple, the monument was built by local fans.

To the left of the main hall is the guest hall. During the Edo period (1603–1867), samurai and their guards traveling along the Nagasaki Highway stayed here. This building is still used today as a place to teach children about aspects of traditional culture, such as the tea ceremony.