

Kibi no Makibi Park

Kibi no Makibi (695–775) was an influential statesman credited with bringing many elements of Chinese culture to Japan, such as improved methods of astronomy, the divination practices of yin-yang cosmology (*onmyōdō*), and the game of Go.

Born to a powerful local family, Makibi showed academic prowess from an early age. He entered imperial service as a court official, and in 717, he was sent to Tang (part of present-day China) as a member of a group of scholar envoys. This was one of the 19 missions Japan sent to China between 607 and 838 to study a broad range of topics. Makibi spent 17 years there and would later rise to one of the highest positions in the Japanese court.

Kibi no Makibi Park was established at a site thought to be associated with Makibi's family, and it commemorates his many deeds. There is a towering statue of the man himself, an open space with a circle of monuments

depicting mystical and astrological symbols, a massive stone Go table, and a sundial in memory of his scientific astronomical work.

Kibi Daijingū Shrine stands at the entrance to the park. It is a small shrine dedicated to Makibi, where his reputation as a scholar draws local students and parents who write prayers for academic success on *ema* votive tablets illustrated with Makibi's image.