



2020 Culture and Art Promotion Cost Grant, Agency for Cultural Affairs

World Heritage
Horyuji Temple

虎の巻

Handy Reference

Your guide ▼

Prince Shotoku



Ikaruga-cho, Ikoma District, Nara Prefecture

World Heritage
Horyuji Temple

Horyuji Temple was registered as Japan's first UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993 under the name "Buddhist Monuments in the Horyuji Area."

Its registration as World Heritage was a recognition of the universal value of the Buddhist buildings of Horyuji Temple that have been protected and passed down for 1,350 years.

This temple I built 1,400 years ago consists of important structures of a kind that no longer exist in China, the Korean Peninsula or anywhere else.



Photo courtesy of Askaen

Who is your guide
Prince Shotoku?

He was a member of the imperial family in the 7th century. He sent missions to the Chinese continent (the Sui dynasty), created Japan's first constitution and adopted many other cultural and political elements.



Horyuji Temple is in Ikaruga-cho, Nara Prefecture!



To find out more



<http://www.horyuji-nara-ikaruga.jp>

"World Cultural Heritage" Regional Partnership Council/
Ikaruga Project Team

Cooperation provided by
Osaka University of Arts

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Horyuji Temple

highlights **Grounds**

Five-Story Pagoda

Built around 711

The Five-Story Pagoda boasts an elegance unmatched in Japan. Inside the first level, approximately 100 clay statues (national treasures) express the world of Buddhism. "Shakanyumetsu" (the death of the Buddha), which faces north, is particularly famous.



from the Prince Point

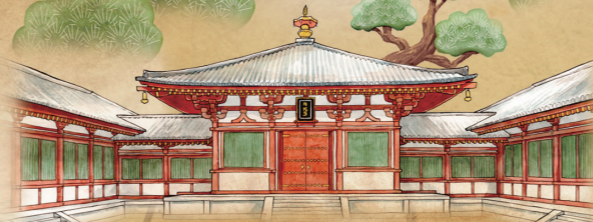
A construction method used for Tokyo Skytree

was based on that of the center column of the Five-Story Pagoda.

Daikodo (Great Lecture Hall)

Built in 990

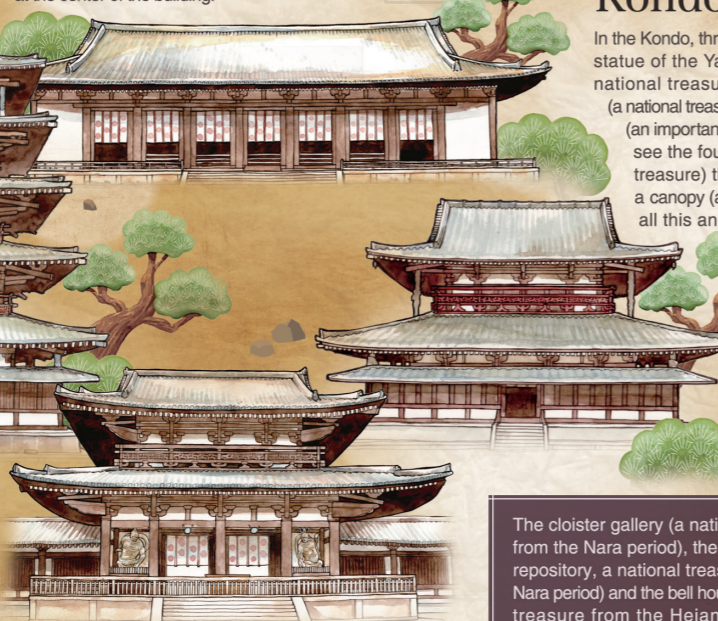
Horyuji Temple has long been a temple of learning, and the building at the center of that learning is the Daikodo. The Yakushi (Sakyamuni) triad (a national treasure) and the four heavenly guardians (an important cultural property) are enshrined at the center of the building.



Built around 711

Kondo (Main Hall)

In the Kondo, three statues stand in a row: a seated statue of the Yakushi Nyorai (Bhaisajyaguru, a national treasure), the Shaka (Sakyamuni) triad (a national treasure) and the Amida (Amitabha) triad (an important cultural property). Visitors can also see the four heavenly guardians (a national treasure) that guard them, and above them a canopy (an important cultural property). With all this and Buddhist wall paintings on the surrounding walls, the Kondo offers a glimpse into the world of Buddhism.



The cloister gallery (a national treasure from the Nara period), the Kyozo (sutra repository, a national treasure from the Nara period) and the bell house (a national treasure from the Heian period) are positioned so as to enclose the center of the Saiin Garan (Western Precinct).



from the Prince Point

The Asuka-style cloud-shaped bracket, modified fylfot handrail and "warizuka" strut shaped like the character 人 that can be seen in the Kondo and elsewhere originated on the Chinese continent.

Daihozoin (Gallery of Temple Treasures) Kudara Kannon Hall

Built in 1993

Daihozoin is a treasure hall, and visitors can see various treasures including the Kudara Kannon (a national treasure) in the center. In the rooms on the right and left are the Tamamushi Tabernacle (a national treasure), the Yumechigai Kannon (Dream-Changing Avalokitesvara statue, a national treasure), and the Lady Tachibana Tabernacle (a national treasure).



from the Prince Point

The reason Horyuji Temple is still standing today after 1,350 years is that repairs are done on it about every 100 years and major repairs about every 300 years.

National treasures **38** Important cultural properties **155**

Only Horyuji Temple has this many!



Shoryoin (Hall of Prince Shotoku's Soul)

Built in 1284

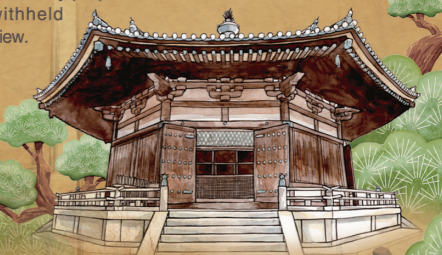
The southern end of the East Quarters was renovated into a hall to enshrine Prince Shotoku. A miniature shrine with a seated statue of Prince Shotoku (a national treasure) is opened during the temple memorial service for Prince Shotoku.



Toin Garan (Eastern Precinct) and Yumedono (Hall of Visions)

Built in 739

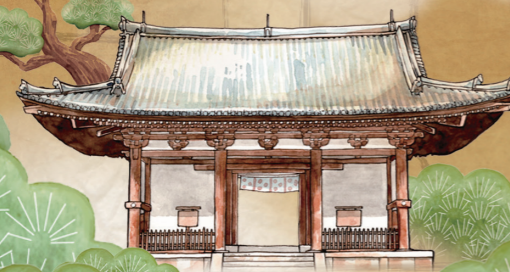
The Kuse Kannon (Avalokitesvara the Savior, a national treasure) is enshrined in Hakkakuendo, which was built on the former site of Prince Shotoku's Ikaruga Palace. The Kuse Kannon is a Buddhist image with the body proportions of Prince Shotoku that is normally withheld from public view.



Chumon (Central Gate)

Built around 711

This is one of the oldest wooden buildings in the Asuka style, and Japan's oldest guardian god statues (an important cultural property) stand to the right and left of the gate.



Nandaimon (South Main Gate)

Built in 1438

The front gate of Horyuji Temple. The grounds seen through the gate look like a framed picture.

Farther afield

But wait, there's more. Ikaruga has even more charms. It also has these temples.

Hokiji Temple World Heritage

Hokiji Temple is said to have gotten its starts when Prince Yamashiro, based on the will of Prince Shotoku, altered Okamoto Palace, where the Prince Shotoku lectured about the Lotus Sutra, into a temple. It has Japan's oldest extant three-story pagoda, which is a national treasure and one of the three towers of Ikaruga. Along with Horyuji Temple, it is registered as a World Heritage Site.



Horinji Temple

Prince Yamashiro is said to have built this temple in the first half of the 7th century with a wish for his father, Prince Shotoku, to recover from illness. It has a three-story pagoda that is one of the three towers of Ikaruga.



* National treasure