

Abe, the Buddha of Wisdom

Abe-Monjyuin Temple, founded in 645, is one of the oldest Buddhist temples in Japan. It is highly respected as a special head temple of the *Todaiji* branch of the *Kegon* sect. Since its beginning, *Abe-Monjyuin* Temple has engaged in *Kito* (prayers and practices) to grant believers for wisdom and good fortune with the divine power of Buddhas. The *Monjyu* Bosatsu or the Buddha of Wisdom enshrined in the main hall was created by *Kaikei* who was one of Japan's main sculptors in the 13th century and is designated as a national treasure. The *Monjyu* Bosatsu is represented riding a lion and holding a raised sword in his right hand, symbolizing the cutting away of ignorance. The temple also houses a variety of treasures accumulated for more than 1300 years.



Address 645 Abe Sakurai-shi Nara

Map

Access 2 km South-West of Sakurai Station

Web Site (Japanese) <http://www.abemonjuin.or.jp/>

Admission Fee

	Adults	Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hon-do</i> Hall (including <i>Maccha</i> Tea and sweets) • <i>Ukimi-do</i> Hall (including <i>Shichimairi-fuda</i> paper and an amulet) 	¥1200	¥800
Hon-do Only (including <i>Maccha</i> Tea and sweets)	¥700	¥500
Ukimi-do Only (including <i>Shichimairi-fuda</i> paper and an amulet)	¥700	¥500

Highlights



Tokai Monjyu statue (National Treasure)



Ukimi-do Hall



Hakusando Shrine/ Observatory/ Abe Seimei-do



Monjyu Nishi-Kofun Mound/ Onmyodō



Omote-sanmon Gate/ Seasonal attractions

Tokai Monjyu and Four Companions

A recent research revealed that the *Monjyu* statue was provided by a high priest *Chogen* for a part of its projects to rebuild *Todaiji* Temple that was burnt down by the fire during the war in 1180.

The priest *Chogen* dedicated to the *Monjyu Bosatsu* and enshrined the statue in *Abe-Monjyuin* Temple because *Abe* had a strong relationship with *Todaiji* Temple.

This historical discovery was very important and the *Monjyu* statue and other four statues were designated as National Treasures.



Monjyu Bosatsu Riding a Lion

(Sk.Manjusri)

A main Buddha of worship riding a lion with four companions.

The *Monjyu* statue and other four statues are National Treasures.

Carved by *Kaikei* in 1203.

The *Monjyu* Bosatsu is called “*Monjyu* crossing the sea” (*Tokai Monjyuzou*)

He is represented riding a lion and holding a raised sword in his right hand, symbolizing the cutting away of ignorance. In his left hand he holds a lotus flower, symbolizing love and compassion.

Surrounded by four attendants:

the youth *Zenzai Douji*, the king of *Khotan* (*Utennou*), the elder *Saishou Rounin*, and the monk *Buddhapari*.





Ukimi-do Hall (*Nakamaro-do*)

Ukimi-do Hall is also called *Nakamaro-do* and enshrines famous historical figures such as *Abe Nakamaro* and *Abe Seimei* both of them were born in this temple.

The main object of worship of this hall is *Benzaiten*, a deity which brings good luck.

“*Shichi-mairi*” prayer is walking around the hall seven times while praying, each time, for a wish to come true.

The hall also exhibits temple treasures.



Benzaiten

Benzaiten is a deity who brings good luck. She has eight arms and 15 boy attendants.



Abe Nakamaro (698-770)

A Japanese scholar, administrator, and *waka* poet of the *Nara* period. He went to T'ang China as part of an embassy in 717 and became the first high ranking Japanese official in China.



Abe Seimei (921-1005)

A famous fortune teller of *Onmyo-do* that is a traditional Japanese esoteric cosmology based on the Chinese philosophies of five elements and Yin and yang.



Hakusan-do Shrine

Built in the *Muromachi* Period (1336-1573),

Important Cultural Property

Hakusan-do is a shrine known for its power to grant love matches.

It also said that *Kami* spirits enshrined in this shrine cut off any negative karmic links and lead to the forming of positive karmic links.

The primary object of worship is *Hakusan* Mountain located in *Ishikawa* Prefecture.

Abe Seimei (921-1005), a famous fortune teller of *Onmyo-do*, worshiped the Spritual Mountan “*Hakusan*” therefore a branch shrine of the mountain was enshrined here.



Abe-Seimei-do Hall and an observatory

Prayers made at *Abe-Seimei-do* Hall to ward off evil spirits or to improve one’s fortune, or other prayers of like kind are said to be efficacious. There is an observatory where *Abe Seimei* observed and studied stars. The picture is the sunset above the sacred *Nijyō* Mountain in the West.

Monjuin Nishi-Kofun Mounds

Special Historical Site (designated by the government of Japan), built in the 7th century

Only seven *Kofun* Mounds in Japan are designated as Special Historical Sites by the government and the “*Monju Nishi-Kofun*” has one of the most beautiful symmetry structures.

A stone carved *Fudou Myouou* or the Unmoving Guardian is enshrined within the mound. It is said that Saint Kōbō Daishi, the founder of esoteric *Shingon* Buddhism in Japan, made the stone statue.



Onmyō-dō

In ancient China, there were two philosophies, “Yin and Yang” and “Five Elements” which try to explain all things in the universe.

“Yin and Yang” explained that all things were attributed to the balance of two opposite energies of positive and negative,

such as heaven and earth, the sun and the moon, male and female. “Five Elements” explained all things referring to the movement of the five elements: wood, fire, earth, metal and water.

These philosophies merged into one and people applied it in their daily life. The philosophy, introduced to Japan in the 6th century, was an accepted method to forecast fortunes and developed uniquely in Japan as “*Onmyō-dō*”.



The *Kikyo* Pentagram



Omote-Sanmon, or Main Gate

There is an inscribed stone in front of the gate which means "Off a horse". Everyone had to get off a horse and walk to worship the buddhas enshrined in this temple.

This gate has never been closed since the foundation of this temple so that everyone can enter the precincts of the temple freely and pray anytime.

Seasonal Attractions



Spring: 500 cherry trees burst into bloom



O-Eshiki ceremony: held on the 25th and 26th of March annually
A pouch is placed on visitors head to receive wisdom.



Autumn: Cosmos Maze
Free Cosmos Maze made by the staff of the temple. More than 30 kinds of cosmoses are planted each year.



Winter: Japanese quince