



Old Temples and Buddhist Treasure of Obama

Monzen and Elsewhere, Obama City

When Obama served as the gateway to continental Asia during the Nara and Heian Periods, shrines and temples were constructed in great numbers. Many of these still remain, vestiges of the area's critical role in transmitting culture from the continent.



Myōtsū-ji Temple's three-story pagoda (National Treasure)^①

In Obama, which flourished as the major point of entry for Buddhist religion and culture into Japan, many old temples remain to this day. Among them Myōtsū-ji Temple houses two national treasures (its three-story pagoda and main hall), Mantoku-ji's gardens (a national scenic spot), Haga-ji's 11-faced statue of the Buddhist Kan'on (a nationally designated Important Cultural Property), and Myōraku-ji's statue of the thousand hands of Kan'on are some of the many Buddhist treasures that call Obama their home.

Within Myōtsū-ji's gardens rests a stone monument bearing a poem by Mizuhara Shō'ōshi, recording his quiet reflection on the surface of a pond.



Myōtsū-ji's main hall (National Treasure)



Gardens and stone inscription at Myōtsū-ji



Gardens of Mantoku-ji (National Scenic Spot)



Haga-ji's main hall (National Important Cultural Property)^②

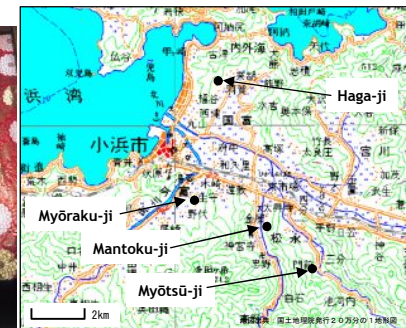
Mantoku-ji's landscape gardens, including its white stone garden, evoke natural themes while remaining distinctly man-made landscapes. Haga-ji's statue of an eleven-faced Kan'on retains much of its color despite being so old, a product of its having been hidden from public view for so many years. Myōraku-ji's thousand-armed Kan'on statue features one thousand carefully crafted arms, in order to capture one aspect of this important Buddhist deity.



Thousand-armed Kan'on



Eleven-faced Kan'on



Photos ①&② courtesy of Obama City