

Places to See and Experience

Abe Monjuin Temple 安倍文殊院

Built in the 7th century

The temple primarily reveres “Monju” (Sk. Manjusri), the Buddha of wisdom. It is known as one of the three great temples to Monju in Japan. Given that Monju is a deity of wisdom, many students seeking to pass exams visit the temple. This temple has been a site of worship for common people for over 1300 years. The temple grounds are dotted with relics from many eras, ranging from the modern temple hall to medieval sculptures and a burial mound from the 7th century AD. The temple is also home to truly unique experiences. If you're in the area, make sure to visit while you can!



Kinkaku Ukimido (Nakamaro Hall) and Shichimairi (Seven worships)

金閣浮御堂と七まいり

Built in 1985

This golden temple was built to celebrate the Abe Clan that originated here. Within, it holds precious statues of the Buddha.

Viewing hours	9:00 - 17:00										
Admission fee	<table><tr><td>A</td><td>Main Hall Tokai Monju statue (with Matcha / Wagashi)</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Adult ¥700 Elementary school student ¥500</td></tr><tr><td>B</td><td>Kinkaku Ukimido Reihoan (with seven worships ticket / charm)</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Adult ¥700 Elementary school student ¥500</td></tr><tr><td>A+B</td><td>Adult ¥1200 Elementary school student ¥800</td></tr></table>	A	Main Hall Tokai Monju statue (with Matcha / Wagashi)		Adult ¥700 Elementary school student ¥500	B	Kinkaku Ukimido Reihoan (with seven worships ticket / charm)		Adult ¥700 Elementary school student ¥500	A+B	Adult ¥1200 Elementary school student ¥800
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Access	<div>20 minutes on foot from Sakurai Station or 7 minutes by bus Fare ¥190</div> <div><div>Bus Stop Sakurai Station South Exit</div><div>Sakurai Community Bus Loop Line [South] 7 minutes</div><div>Bus Stop Abe Monjuin</div><div>short walk</div><div>Abe Monjuin Temple</div></div> <div>*Note that there is only one bus every 1-2 hours (approximately).</div>										
Sightseeing duration	1 hour - 2 hours										
Address	645 Abe, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture										
Tel	0744-43-0002										

Tokai Monju 渡海文殊

National Treasure Built in 1203

Statue of Monju Bosatsu seated on a lion with 4 flanking images. All five statues are national treasures. Created by Kaikei, a Buddhist sculptor representative of the Kamakura Period (1185-1333). It is 7m high, and is the largest Monju Bosatsu statue in Japan.



Matcha Tea and Wagashi Sweets

When entering the main hall, visitors are served Matcha and Wagashi. Drinking Matcha in the tranquility of the hall is a truly unique experience.



Shichimairi (Seven worships) 七まいり

Ceremony to ward off evil. While praying, “Do not let XX happen” (for example), worshipers circle the hall one time then submit ceremonial tickets. They repeat this seven times. They seek to avoid disasters and misfortune in doing this. The practice is unique to this temple. Be sure to give it a try!



Monjuin Nishi Kofun (western burial mound) 文殊院西古墳

Built around the 7th century Designated as a national special historic site

Visitors have access to an ancient stone chamber of the burial mound, much like those of the pyramids in Egypt. The Kofun is said to be the tomb of Abe no Kurahashimaro, the architect of Abdera Temple.



Be enveloped in the Buddha's kindness

## Shorinji Temple 聖林寺

Built in the 7th century

This is a quiet temple built on a hill outside the town of Sakurai. One can see the whole of Mount Miwa from the main gates.



## Koyasu Enmei Jizo 子安延命地藏

Built in the 18th century

The principal image of Shorinji Temple. Jizo is the Buddha of pregnancy and safe births. The Monk Monshun built this statue because many villagers - including his sisters - suffered from difficult births.

He took the wooden Buddha he had carved with him on his back, and went on a pilgrimage across Japan. The pilgrimage took 4 years and 7 months, and he then donated the statue.

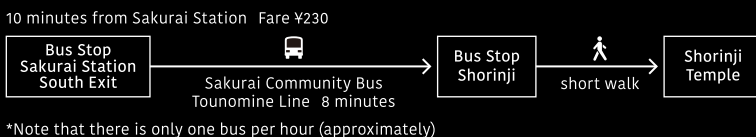
Even now, the temple draws worshipers who wish for children or safe delivery in childbirth.



Viewing hours 9:00 - 16:30

Admission fee ¥400 \* ¥500 admission fee during November for the "Mandala Exhibition".

Access



Sightseeing duration 30 minutes - 1 hour

Address 692 Shimo, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture

Tel

0744-43-0005



## Eleven-faced Kannon

十一面観音

National treasure

Created during the 8th century

This statue of Buddha radiates universally-encompassing benevolence. It has won acclaim from many artists. It is cited as a representative work in the history of Japanese sculpture. The site is not heavily visited by tourists, and the stillness allows visitors to spend time communing with the Buddha.

It was once the principal image of Omiwadera Temple, a Buddhist temple that used to be located in Omiwa Jinja shrine. When the storm of Haibutsu kishaku ("abolish Buddhism and destroy Shākyamuni", a term which advocates the expulsion of Buddhism from Japan) swept through Japan during the Meiji Period, the Buddha statue was removed to this location in 1868. When Japan's national treasure system was established, this was the first national treasure to be selected. At the time, only 24 national treasures were designated.



*The Crimson Shrine that Changed Japan's History*

## **Tanzan Jinja Shrine** 談山神社

Built in the 7th century

This shrine is located deep in the mountains, as though it were hiding from people. The conference for a coup d'état (the Isshi no Hen or Isshi incident of 645) that changed the history of Japan was probably also conducted here because of the isolated location. Its grounds feature 17 important cultural properties, such as the world's only thirteen-storied wooden pagoda. It looks more like an elegant fort than a shrine, and one can image many battles being fought here. The bright almost blood-red of the building and the autumn foliage are very beautiful, and many people use the site for viewing autumn leaves. It is known as the model for Nikko Toshogu Shrine (Tochigi Prefecture, World Heritage Site). Enjoy the solemn air and graceful architecture of this secluded mountain site.







## Isshi no Hen (Isshi incident) 乙巳の変 (645)

The Soga Clan that ruled the Imperial court grew audacious in the first half of the 7th century, plunging the nation into disarray. In order to set matters right, Fujiwara no Kamatari enticed Prince Naka no Oe to execute a coup d'etat. This led to the destruction of the Soga Clan, and the plotters then took over the regime, restored order, and brought prosperity to Japan (Taika Reform). Fujiwara no Kamatari was responsible for Isshi no Hen, and is enshrined here. He is the ancestor of a famed aristocratic family in Japan, the Fujiwara Clan. The Fujiwara Clan ruled Japan for about 400 years afterwards, and continued as powerful aristocrats for 1200 years.

Tokugawa Ieyasu (whose line ruled Japan for 400 years as the Edo Shogunate) respected Fujiwara no Kamatari and used this shrine as a model in building Nikko Toshogu Shrine.

Viewing hours	8:30 - 16:30
Admission fee	Adult ¥600 / Elementary school students ¥300
Access	<p>30 minutes by bus from Sakurai Station Fare ¥490</p> <div> <div>Bus Stop Sakurai Station South Exit</div> <div> </div> <div>Sakurai Community Bus Tounomine Line 25 minutes</div> </div> <div> <div>Bus Stop Tanzan Jinja</div> <div> </div> <div>5 minutes on foot</div> </div> <div>Tanzan Jinja Shrine</div> <p>*Note that there is only one bus per hour (approximately)</p>
Sightseeing duration	1 hour - 2 hours
Address	319 Tounomine, Sakurai City, Nara Prefecture
Tel	0744-49-0001



# Origin Of Japanese Entertainment

## — Birthplace of Japanese entertainment —



### Tsuchibutai (earthen stage) 土舞台

According to "Nihon Shoki", the Chronicles of Japan, the influential Prince Shotoku taught the boys how to dance the Gigaku in the year 612. Gigaku is a humorous play performed wearing masks, and was transmitted from continental China. "Tsuchibutai" was the first national theater in Japan, and was also chosen as the location for the National Theater Research Institute for the development of Japanese entertainment culture. Musical concerts and other events are still held here to honor the location's history.



### Tanzan Noh 談山能

Every year in mid-May, a Noh performance is conducted on the grounds of Tanzan Jinja Shrine, a shrine treasured as the historical base of Noh founders Zeami and Kanami. Here you can experience the bygone era when Noh first came to be.



### Noh Theater 能楽

After its transmission to the Tsuchibutai, Gigaku was given the protection of the court and performed mainly for aristocrats. When the protection of the court was terminated at the end of the 8th century, the performers acted at shrines, temples and street corners. It fused with the farmers' performing arts and the indigenous arts of the people, and developed into something uniquely Japanese. By the middle of the 14th century, four powerful theater companies called the "Yamato Shiza" (four prominent Yamato Noh theater groups) gained popularity. The Tobi Group later formed the roots of the Hosho Style, and belonged to Tanzan Jinja Shrine. There is a monument commemorating "the birthplace of Hosho Style" at Munakata Jinja Shrine. The parent and child team of Kanami and Zeami of the "Yuzaki Group" developed Noh into a more artistic form. Kanami incorporated music and dance into existing comedies, heightening the beauty of the art. Furthermore, Zeami created plays centered on the dead called "Mugen Noh" (Dream Noh). This style of telling the world from the viewpoint of the dead is unique to Noh Plays, and it has carried on into the present age. Noh Theater was the first in Japan to be registered as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage in 2008.

### Yuzaki, birthplace of Kanze Style

#### 観世流発祥の地 結崎

There is a legend that a mask fell from the sky. Kanami put the mask on and danced in front of the Shogun, winning popularity. Yuzaki in Kawanishi Town was Kanami's home, and where he elevated Noh Theater.



Menzuka (Monument of the birthplace of Kanze style)