

MYOHOJI-TEMPLE

Myohoji's other name is "Buson's temple" or "Buson-dera".

◆Guided tour of Myohoji

◎Main Hall

The Hall was renovated in 1934 by the 17th Head Priest, Shincho. This wooden temple complex is made from zelkova. The inner sanctuary is dedicated to Kongokai Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocana-tathagata of the Diamond Realm), The Trinity of Shaka images are: (Shaka Nyorai, Fugen Bosatsu, and Monju Bosatsu), Fudomyoo, Nyoirin Kanzeon Bosatsu, Jizo Bosatsu, statues of Tendai Daishi and Ganzan Daishi, and Daikokuten. Hereditary stamps of the Temple and memorial tablets of the congregation's families are also enshrined. The Trinity of Shaka images have been enshrined since the temple was founded as the Nichiren Buddhist temple. Kongokai Dainichi Nyorai, although not opened to visitors, has been enshrined since 1669, when the temple was converted to the Tendai sect. The framed and carved calligraphy "Henshokaku" placed at the top of the inner sanctuary was originally written by the high priest of Enryakuji Temple during the Edo period. This word symbolizes that the temple is dedicated to the most important image of esoteric Buddhism, Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocana-tathagata).



◎The main entrance(San-mon)

This four-legged gate is made from zelkova wood. The construction took eight years, and was conducted by the 15th Head Priest, Shin'en in 1885. Although the project planning started during the time of the 13th Head Priest Shincho during the Edo period, the actual construction could not start due to an objection of the Head Priest of Nikko Rinnoji Monzeki Temple and the last Prince of the Imperial Family. The approval was finally made after three generations of repeated petitions by the priests; the 13th priest, Shincho, 14th priest, Shinzen and 15th priest, Shin'en.



◎Garden of Myohoji

The garden was designed by Kobori Enshu. He shaped the pond by a Japanese word "kokoro," meaning, "heart," and the rocks were placed as if they naturally tumbled down from the mountain. It is named, therefore, "the garden of falling rocks." A waterfall pours into the pond, and a variety of the trees - azaleas, pines, nandins, oaks, and black pines - express the beauty of each season. The cycard trees at the northwest corner are known to have inspired the creativity of the haiku poet Yosa Buson. The exotic plants must have caught the poet's eyes.



◎Buson's Haiku Monument

☆Mon wo izureba ...

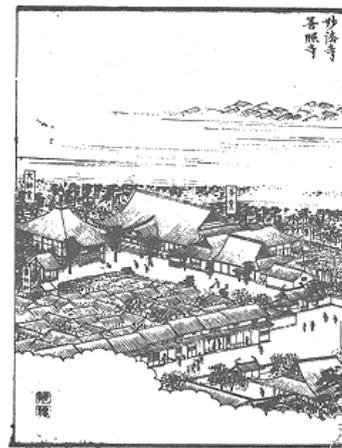
Marugame Citizen's Haiku Society constructed the monument in 1976. Yosa Buson, Haiku poet and painter, stayed in Myohoji several times between 1766 and 1768. He donated six pieces of his artwork to the temple. One of them is the masterpiece, "the Cycard Trees." This is why Myohoji is also known as "Busondera". The haiku engraved on the monument was written when Buson was 59 years old, 6 years after he left the temple. It reads: Mon wo izureba ware mo yuku hito aki no kure. (Going out of this temple, I am now one of the passers by in the forlorn autumn sunset.)

☆Nagajiri-no...

Celebrating the 400th anniversary of Myoho-ji, a new Buson's monument (Nagajirino...) was erected by the 18th Head Priest, Shinzyun. Yosa Buson, a haiku poet and painter left a haiku at Myohoji when he returned to Kyoto from Kagawa in the early summer of Meiwa in 1768. It reads: Nagajiri-no Haru wo tatsete shuro no hana.



(Having stayed too long, the spring is about to go with the cycad flowers.)
 This haiku expresses the poet's feeling that he must leave the temple with pleasant memories of Sanuki (Kagawa Prefecture's former name).



◆The History of Myohoji Temple

Myohoji of Tendai School of Buddhism is officially called Shoinzan Jissoin Myohoji. The temple is dedicated to Kongokai Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocana-tathagata of the Diamond Realm). The present head priest is the 19th Head Priest, Rev. Ooka Shinsho.

The temple attracts many visitors as it enshrines varieties of popular deities who give merits to worshippers. For example, the Daikokuten image, believed as the work of St. Saicho, is the deity to promise prosperous business and good health of family members. The image of Ganzan Daishi Gomason is believed to guard us against evil spirits and misfortune. The most popular spot may be the temple of Ganzan Daishi Lottery. This is the place where the successive head priests have served to offer advice for visitors' problems through the drawing of lots.

Between 1766 and 1768, Yosa Buson, a haiku poet and painter, stayed several times in Myohoji and composed haiku and drew pictures. He presented six pieces of his art works to the temple when he left. This is therefore why Myohoji's other name is called "Buson's temple".

In 1597, the feudal lord of Marugame Castle moved the temple to the present place. This happened when St. Nichigen was the First Head Priest. In 1666, the authority forbade the religious practice of Fujufuse sect. In 1669, the temple was converted to Tendai School and restarted as a branch temple of Bishamondo in Kyoto.

Having been affiliated with Rinnoji Temple of Nikko, which is the family temple of the Tokugawa Shogun, the successive head priests used to attend each Shogun's memorial services. Since the ritual took place at Tochigi Prefecture, Nikko, they had to make long trips to the Northern part of Japan. This came to an end when the Tokugawa Shogunate fell to Meiji Reformation in 1867.

◆Buson-Dera - Treasures of Myohoji Temple –

Yosa Buson (Taniguchi Buson 1716 -1783) is a Haiku poet and visual artist. He was born in Osaka and lived in the middle of the Edo period. He used many pen names as a part of his expressions. The names included Karamachi and Yahantei on poems, and painter's names Shunsei and Shain. His creativity attracted many followers, including Kito and Gekkyo. His friendship with writer Ueda Shusei is also well known.

Buson was a traveler who devoted his life to paintings and haiku. He was a self-taught artist. He said, "I have never had teachers, but learned from historically great arts of the world." Buson established his own style by learning from the classical arts and seeking his own creative imagination. His paintings and Haiku poems are mutually influenced, and created a new genre, called Haiga (Haiku and Painting in a same space).

Buson visited Sanuki, Kagawa Pref., several times from the fall in 1766 till the summer in 1768. The purpose of his visit was to paint and to seek new possibilities as an artist. He had established his status as an artist and poet by his 50's. The long trip to Sanuki must have revitalized his creative energy by exposing him to exotic landscapes, as well as Sanuki's local art, literature and tradition.

During Buson's stay in Myohoji, he drew six masterpieces as listed below. The temple has treasured them and kept them in good care. This is the reason

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| "Sotetsu zu (the Cycad)": ink drawing on four-fold paper screen |
| "Take no zu (the Bamboo)": light ink drawing on paper hanging scroll |
| "Jurojin no zu (Saint Jurojin)": light ink drawing on paper hanging scroll |
| "Sansui zu (Landscape)": light ink drawing on three-fold paper screen |
| "Sansui zu (Landscape)": light ink drawing on paper screen |
| "Kanzan Jittoku zu (St. Kanzan and St. Jittoku)": light ink drawing on paper sliding screens, drawn on four sides |

All were designated as important national assets on June 22, 1971.

why Myohoji is called "**Buson-Dera**".

In 1766, when Buson was 51 years old, he left Kyoto for Sanuki. At that time, numbers of Haiku poets, who belonged to the school of Mochizuki Soya, lived in Sanuki and Kotohira district. One of the members was Kan Bogyu, who happened to be a parishioner of Myohoji Temple.



On the way to visit his colleagues in an autumn evening, Buson stopped by Myohoji and asked to stay the night. It is said that Buson had no money and was dressed like a hobo when he came into the temple. Rev. Shinkan was the 10th head priest of the temple at that time. Thus he met Rev. Shinkan who had a deep appreciation for art, and they immediately took an interest in each other.



Thereafter, he visited the temple several times, and one time he stayed for several months. To express his thanks to the head priest for his warm hospitality, he did bindings of the sliding screens and drew pictures on them. At his leaving the temple for Kyoto he composed the following Haiku:

Nagajiri no haru wo tatsete shuro no hana. (Having stayed too long, the spring is about to go with the cypress flowers.)

This haiku expresses the poet's feeling that he must leave the temple with pleasant memories of Sanuki.

"Sotetsu zu", "Sansui zu", and "Kanzan Jittoku zu" were originally drawn on the sliding screens of the main hall. "Sotetsu zu" was the eight pieces drawing on the four screens, and each of the two "Sansui zu" was the six piece drawing on the seven screens respectively.

In 1862, after a hundred years since these Buson's masterpieces were drawn,

Rev. Shinkan, the 15th Head Priest of Myohoji, had them remade from the sliding screens to folding screens for preservation purposes.

◎Sotetsu zu (the Cycad)

階前鬪奇 醉春星写 The signature and comments: Kaizen touki Sui Shun Sei Sha.

The V shaped cypress plant with stretching arms is wildly placed in the center. The artist's vigorous brush strokes are very powerful. He depicts the plant with superb craftsmanship in gradation of dark to light ink. The most appealing point may be the fresh and moist monochrome ink color itself. The unexpected contrast between the exotic plant from the south in a Japanese garden probably inspired Buson's inspiration. The comments imply that he was offered some sake by Rev. Shinkan. Some believe this picture was drawn in no time, after having a few drinks. No one would deny that this is his masterpiece, representing his Sanuki period.

◎Jurojin no zu (Saint Jurojin)

虚洞写 The signature : Kyo Do Sha.

Jurojin is one of the saints of the Seven Lucky Gods. The indigo colored rock expands the picture and gives it stability. Light pink brushed on the saint's cheeks expresses that he is mellow with drink. The gentle touch of Buson's brush tells of Jurojin's warm and relaxed personality. It also portrays the artist's enjoyment of this work.

◎Take no zu (the Bamboo)

擬董其昌 虚洞写 The signature and comments: Gi Tokisho Kyo Do Sha.

This is a copy of the piece originally drawn by the Chinese artist Tokisho. In this drawing, Buson expresses the subtle movements of the bamboo leaves. He had thirty-six pen names in accordance with the 36 mountain peaks of Kyoto Higashiyama.

◆Buson's Revived painting

It was discovered in 1967 that “Sotetsu zu (the Cycad)” and “Kanzan Jittoku zu” were seen in an unexpected accident that they were scribbled with black oil-based felt pens by the work of unskilled people. The “Sotetsu zu” was a few places in the trunk and leaves, and the “Kanzan Jittoku zu” was a graffiti with false eyelashes on both eyes.



When it was designated as a nationally designated important cultural property in 1971, there was a condition that this addition be erased, but it was still judged that it did not detract from the value of an artistic cultural property.

Later, at the Agency for Cultural Properties Protection of the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the National Institute for Cultural Properties, attempted to remove ink with chemicals (pyridine) that act on oil-based inks. The Agency for Cultural Affairs has done a lot of work, but because it is technically impossible, the picture was returned to Myoho-ji without being completely restored.

Mr. Susumu Suzuki, a researcher at Buson Art, consulted with Mr. Mitsuharu Takechi, a paper and picture hanger of Nagoya, about the removal of oil-based ink. It was in 1977 that Mr. Takechi responded positively, “Because Japanese ink and oil ink are different, they should be taken.

Mr. Takechi researched and experimented with 200 kinds of chemicals with the cooperation of chemical specialists based on the research results of the National Institute for Cultural Properties. Finally, HMPA (Hexamethyl Phosphordo Amide) remained. This is a powerful chemical with an odor and it is a carcinogen. With this chemical, oil-based ink can be decolorized without affecting the sumi-e. This is unprecedented technology in the world.



The biggest problem was whether Japanese paper (“Maniai-gami”) with mud that was difficult to remove stains 200 years ago could withstand the ink removal process using a powerful drug called HMPA. However, with permission from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, “Sotetsu zu” and “Kanzan Jittoku zu” were entrusted to Mr. Takechi in November 1982.

Mr. Takechi made a large glass cylindrical stirrer. The picture was wrapped with a stainless steel mesh, and the solvent chemical was sent to the cylinder by a pipe. The operation, keeping the temperature at 60 ° C.

and slowly and slowly rotating the cylinder by hand, was carried out alternately. It took 50 hours to stain a single picture. Finally, the powerful chemical was neutralized by the solvent HMPA. When the picture taken out of the liquid from the tube that was blotted on Japanese paper, the stain of the oil-based ink was removed brilliantly. Since there were 8 kites for Suetsu and 4 kites for picking up Kanzan Jittoku zu, we succeeded in cleaning them in over 600 hours. This is an epoch-making restoration that combines craftsmanship, tenacity, with science and

technology along with many years of skill. The picture of Buson was revived. In September 1983, the 200th anniversary of Buson, the “Sotetsu zu” and “Kanzan Jittoku zu” restored from Mr. Takechi in Nagoya



Transportation & Parking Guide to Myohoji Temple

A 4-minute walk from JR Marugame Station
through Tomiya-machi shopping street.

Car Parking: 5 car parking spaces in Myohoji-Temple

Address: Myohoji Temple, 9 Tomiya-machi Marugame,
Kagawa-ken 763-0021 Japan

Phone : (+081)877-22-7881

<http://www.busondera.com/> (October,23th,2019)