

Official Name: Amanosan Kongoji

Sect: Omuro School of Shingonshu

Foundation: Approximately 1300 years ago

It is said that the temple was established by the holy priest Gyoki under the order of the Emperor Shomu in Nara period, 1300 years ago. In the 800s, Kobo-Daishi self-trained here. He founded his temple on Mt. Koya and introduced esoteric Buddhism into Japan, and established the foundation of Singon Buddhism.

Restoration:

Toward the end of Heian period (794 to 1185) when Kongoji declined after 400 years from its foundation, holy priest Akan moved to Kongoji from Mt. Koya, where he trained himself and took the task of restoring this temple under the support by Ex-Emperor Goshirakawa and Ex-Emperor Toba's daughter, Hachijo Nyoin. Hachijo Nyoin brought a precious copy of Kobo-Daishi's image from Mt. Koya and set it up here and prayed to him. The first religious memorial service, Mieiku, was held in 1172 in remembrance of Kobo-Daishi and the main hall was completed in 1178. Ever since then, this temple has been known as Nyonin Koya or the women's substitute temple for Mt. Koya, where women were not allowed to go to pray. However, Kongoji was the place where women could pray to Kobo-Daishi and train themselves in religious practices.

Amano Angu:

During the Northern and Southern Courts Period (1333 to 1392) this temple was used as temporary quarters for about 6 years for the Emperor Gomurakami of Southern Court, and also as the thrones for three Ex-Emperors, Kogon, Komyo and Suko and one imperial prince of Northern Court. During the wartime, though this temple was attacked repeatedly by Ashikaga Shogun army, the main building and the pagoda escaped fire due to the great effort by Zenne Hoin, No 1 priest of this temple at that time.

Sub-Temples:

Once the number of sub-temples exceeded 70, but now only 2 of them, Maniin and Kisshouin, exist. Maniin was used as temporary lodging to accommodate the Emperor Gomurakami and other Emperors of Southern Court.

Treasures:

This temple has three national treasures and 31 important cultural properties.

Amano Sake:

Formerly, this temple made sake, Japanese Wine, which was loved by warriors, especially Hideyoshi Toyotomi, (1537-1598 AD) who ruled during the Warring States Period, or the Sengoku Jidai. Amano sake was one of the three best sakes in Japan. Amano sake is now made and sold by a brewery company Saijo near Kawachinagano station.

Temple Garden:

The temple garden (dry landscape garden) constructed during Muromachi period (1392-1573 AD), is particularly splendid, and is definitely worth seeing.

Others:

1. Large Front Gate
 - is a main gate of the temple and was rebuilt in 1700.
2. Large South Gate
 - The board on the gate indicates "Nyonin Koya (Women's substitute temple for Mt. Koya)" and "Amano Angu (Amano temporary quarters)".
 - Built in 1700.
3. Tower Gate (important cultural property)
 - Gate to protect main building, hall and pagoda.
 - Statues of the two guardians (important cultural property): Jikokuten (The Guardian of the East) and Zouchouten (The Guardian of the South, both Buddhist deity).
 - Built in 1279.
4. Dining Hall (important cultural property)
 - May have been built in Kamakura period (1192 to 1333).
 - Dining hall and lecture room for priest.
 - Called Amanoden and used for the performance of official duties of the Emperor Gomurakami (Southern Court) for six years after 1354.
5. Main Hall (important cultural property)
 - Built by Holy priest Akan in 1192.
 - Main image is the seated figure of Dainichinyorai (Mahavairocana)

- (important cultural property).
- Statues of Fudoumyouou (Acalanathavidya-raja) (right hand) and Gouzanmyouou (Trailokyavijayavidya-raja) (left) (both important cultural properties).
 - Mandala at both sides.
 - Main hall is now under major repair works which started in November 2009 and are said to continue for nine years (until autumn of 2017 before completion.) The last major repair works were made 300 years ago. Pagoda and Bell Tower will also be repaired.
6. Office to present a copied sutra to the temple
 7. Pagoda (important cultural property)
 - May be the oldest pagoda of its type in Japan.
 - Main image is Mahavairocana (Dainichinyorai).
 - 12 highly colored paintings of Buddha inside.
 - May have been built between 1170 and 1175.
 - Dainichinyorai in Pagoda was designated the 31st important cultural property of Japan in this temple in 2001. Now it is exhibited in the treasure room.
 8. Temple for the healing Buddha
 - Main image is Buddha able to cure all ills.
 9. Temple for Five Wisdom Buddhas
 - Main image is Five Wisdom Buddhas.
 - Temple which issues amulets.
 10. Temple to worship Kobo-Daishi's image (important cultural property)
 - Built in 1172 when the Mieiku started.
 - Main image is Kobo-Daishi transcribed by imperial prince, Sinryo.
 11. Moon Viewing Deck (important cultural property)
 - Built during the Northern and Southern Courts Period by the Emperor Gomurakami nearly 700 years ago.
 12. Bell Tower (important cultural property)
 - May have been built during the Northern and Southern Courts Period.