

Gokurakuji Temple Honden Tsuketari Munafuda (wooden ridge plaque attached to the main hall), 1 piece

Located in the mid-highlands in the eastern Yabuhara district. The temple belongs to the Myoshinji Temple school of the Rinzai Sect and its honorific title is Hojozan.

The principal image is Shaka Nyorai (Shakyamuni), which is attended by the Buddhist saints Mahakasyapa (right) and Ananda (left).

The temple was founded between 1570 and 1592 by the lord of Yabuhara, Furuhashi Juemon Masatsura, with the invitation of the Buddhist priest Morin.

At that time, it was located in Kuraro, on the west bank of Kiso River and was named Dairyuzan Zenrinji Temple. However, it was moved to Kanmachiura to avoid repeated flooding and was renamed Hojozan Gokurakuji Temple ("Paradise Temple") with hopes of "leaving water behind for soil".

The temple was destroyed by a large fire in the settlement in 1662 during the tenure of priest Chuoku, and due to the inconvenience, was later rebuilt in Nakamachiura in 1664.

Then in 1686, Terashima Kan-emon donated the present-day grounds, and in 1691, during the tenure of the priest Zengai, the temple was built as revealed by the wooden ridge plaque.

The main hall had a thatched, half-hipped roof until 1942 and houses a *shitsuchu* (main central room at the front) with the *jokan* and *gekan* rooms on either side, a room housing the principal Buddhist image behind the *shitsuchu*, with the *ihai-do* (rooms housing Buddhist memorial tablets) situated on either side of that, while the outside of the main hall is surrounded by an *engawa* with cross-wise floorboards. This is known as the *hojo* style of construction. Deterioration had worsened until the temple underwent major renovations in 1942, when the roof was restored to its current-day pantile roof, and the interior was restored as well.

The *kuri* (kitchen) was renovated in 1956 and the Kannon-do Hall was renovated in 1966. Then in 1980, the *ihai-do* (rooms housing Buddhist memorial tablets) in the main hall were extended and rebuilt to their current configuration.

The temple is about 17.3 m in width and about 16.4 m in depth.

The wooden ridge plaque is 73.3 cm long, 21.2 cm across at the top, and 18.6 cm across at the bottom. Inscribed on the front is a wooden ridge plaque marking "the enhancement of the light of Myokichijo (Bodhisattva)", indicating the temple's construction, "Chief priest: Old Kobiku Zengai, the 16th generation priest after Kanzan Kokushi, Auspicious Day, July 1691, Year of the Metal Sheep" with the names "Carpenters: Ushimaru Zen-emon, Ushimaru Shichiemon, Kamimura Jiemon, Okuya Chozaemon, Ushimaru Hikosaburo" at the bottom, while on the back the names of 26 men including "Shinohara Kihee" listed as "The persons who construct and manage the temple".

Source: *Kiso-mura no Bunkazai Meguri* ("A Tour of Cultural Properties in Kiso Village") (Published by Kiso Village Board of Education, March 25, 1986)