

English

Japan's Three Benzaiten
The 30th site on the Saikoku 33 Kannon Pilgrimage

Chikubu Island Hogon-ji

POP UP 3D Map

E3D Map



文化庁 令和2年度
文化財多言語解説整備事業

竹生島 宝蔵寺

〒526-0124 Shigaken nagahamashi
hayazakicho1664-1

TEL / 0749-63-4410
<https://www.chikubushima.jp>

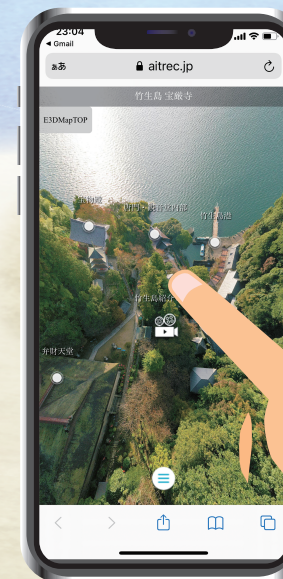


1 Scan the QR code using your
camera or a QR code reader app.



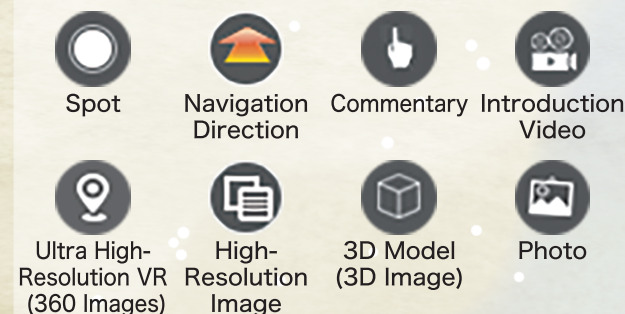
You can browse from your
smartphone, tablet or PC!

2 Tap on the spot that you want to
explore from the E3D map loaded
from the QR code.



3 You can view video clips and building
internals in 3D.

E3DMap Icon list



The island of romance where heavenly maidens descend

Chikubu Island

Chikubu Island, an island with a circumference of two kilometers, lies in Lake Biwa, the largest lake in Japan. Here visitors can find Hogon-ji Temple, which enshrines statues of Benzaiten and Kannon Bosatsu, and Tsukubusuma Shrine. The entire island has been designated a National Place of Scenic Beauty and a Historical Site.

The history of Hogonji Temple dates back to 724 AD, when Emperor Shomu was visited by the goddess Amaterasu in his dream and the monk Gyoki was dispatched to build the temple. The temple has been a site on the Saikoku Kannon Pilgrimage, a series of thirty-three temples across western Japan that pilgrims visit to worship Kannon. Since the late Heian period, the temple has been designated the thirtieth temple of the Muromachi period.

Meanwhile, locals worship the island as the domain of Benzaiten, a Buddhist goddess associated with wisdom. In fact, residents from the Azai District oversee the Benzaiten Lotus Festival held every August 15th.

In the Muromachi period, the shoguns and leaders of the Rokkaku and Kyogoku clans, both of whom were guardians of the district, came to the island to worship Benzaiten. Heads of the Azai clan, which inhabited Odani Castle (the ruins of which are located in present-day Nagahama City, Shiga Prefecture) for three generations, devoutly worshipped the goddess during the Sengoku period.

Fires, earthquakes, typhoons and other disasters that occurred between the Kamakura and Muromachi periods claimed many temple buildings.

One incident worth noting took place when Oda Nobunaga dispatched his general Akechi Mitsuhide to bombard Chikubu Island with artillery fire on July 24, 1572, destroying a large number of temple buildings.

Restorations would later take place and began in particular earnest between 1602 and 1603, when Toyotomi Hideyori ordered Magistrate Katagiri Katsumoto to rebuild and restore the temple buildings. This is the foundation of the present-day Hogonji Temple on Chikubu Island.

In 1942, the Bensaiten Hall was built at the top of the temple complex, establishing the present landscape of the temple.

In addition, broadleaved evergreen trees consisting primarily of tabunoki (Machilus thunbergia) and sudajii (Castanopsis sieboldii) trees cover Chikubu Island, and the tabunoki forest has been designated a natural monument of Shiga Prefecture.

Hogon-ji Temple Karamon Gate

The Hogon-ji Temple Karamon Gate has a thatched roof made from Japanese cypress bark and stands at the entrance to the Kannon Hall. It has been designated a National Treasure. The bottoms of the karahafu bargeboards and the wooden panels on the door of the gate feature beautiful, brilliantly-colored carvings. It truly is a masterpiece of Japanese Momoyama architecture.

Together with Hogon-ji Temple's Kannon Hall and the covered corridor, the Karamon Gate may have been a part of the Gokuraku Bridge at Osaka Castle in Toyotomi Hideyoshi's era. Some records from 1602 mention that Ieyasu had the gate moved to its current location on Chikubu Island, but Hideyoshi's heir Hideyori may have actually been the one who gave the order as part of his plan to repair the island's temples and shrines.



Karamon Gate
Kannon Hall



Kannon Hall

The Kannon Hall connects to the east of the Karamon Gate. The front of the structure is nine meters long and the sides are roughly seven meters long, and it has a thatched roof made from Japanese cypress bark. It has been designated an Important Cultural Property.

The structure features a kake-zukuri architectural style in which it protrudes from a cliff and has a floor is supported by pillars and horizontal beams. This style is similar to the stage-like structure at Kiyomizu Temple in Kyoto.

The Kannon Hall shares several design similarities with the Karamon Gate, indicating that both structures were moved from Hideyoshi's mausoleum around the same time at some point between 1602 and 1603.

POP-UP 3D Map
E3D
Map



Sanctuary



3D

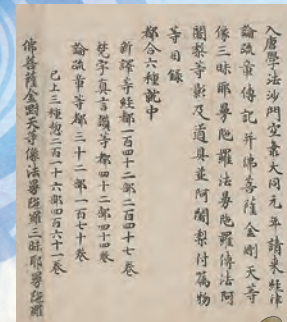
Chikubu Island Hogon-ji



Nave



Kukai's Catalogue of Buddhist Scriptures



This particular catalogue belonged to Kukai, a renowned monk who traveled to China during the reign of the Tang dynasty. On October 22, 806 the catalogue was entrusted to Takashina no Mahito, Magistrate of Dazaifu (present-day northwestern Kyushu), and presented to the imperial court. It has been designated an Important Cultural Property.

The contents include letters to the imperial court, a catalogue of sutras brought back from China, and a collection of annotations and commentaries on the sutra called gisho. In addition, the catalogue chronicles the process of how Kukai learned Shingon Esoteric Buddhism.

This is not a simple catalogue, however, but rather a record Kukai made and brought back to Japan to assert the superiority of Shingon Esoteric Buddhism to the Buddhist establishment.

Suruga Storehouse Seal

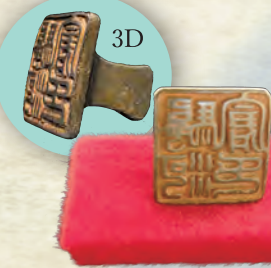
This Nara period seal belonged to the main storehouse of Suruga Province (present-day western Shizuoka Prefecture) and has been designated an Important Cultural Property.

The seal is a square with six-inch sides. This makes it roughly the same size as the Suruga and other provincial seals, as prescribed by an ancient system of laws in Japan known as the ritsuryo. The typeface is the same as that of the Suruga provincial seal stamped on the Shosoin Bunsho, a collection of writings stored at Todai-ji Temple in Nara.

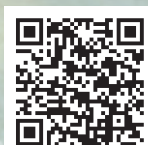
The seal is made of bronze and has a square-shaped face with narrow lines around the periphery.

The knob section, which allows the user to hold the seal, resembles a wide plectrum and does not contain any holes.

Two lines have been cast and engraved into the seal. The first line reads Suruga and the second line reads Soin, which means storehouse seal.



3D



Treasure Hall