

Dairinji Temple and the Standing Statue of the Eleven-faced Kannon

Dairinji Temple (Kita-Shinmachi, Mukai) is a Yuzu Nenbutsu sect Buddhist temple. Its honorific mountain name is Funinzan. It is the fifth temple in the Kawachi Saigoku 33 Location Pilgrimage. Among its principal images are a standing statue of Amida Nyorai (Late Edo period), a sitting statue of Acala (Mid Edo period), and a sitting statue of Kobo Daishi (Mid Edo period).

Until the early Meiji period, there was a Yuzu Nenbutsu sect prayer temple, Nenbutsuji Temple, in this spot in Mukai Village of Tanboku County, but after it was abandoned, Dairinji Temple that was located in what is now Owai, Mihara Ward, Sakai City (Formerly Tannan County of Kawachi Province) was moved in its place in the 11th year of the Meiji period (1878)

Yokoji Temple (Nunose Temple) was located to the southwest of Nunose Shrine on the opposite side of the Nishiyoke River from Mukai Village. Yokoji Temple is said to have been built by the Buddhist priest Yoko in the 3rd year of the Kanji era (1089) in the late Heian period. The temple temporarily went into decline, but during the Koan era of the Kamakura period (1278-1288) it was repaired by Eison of Yamato-Saidaiji Temple. During the Edo period, it was worshipped at the "Kannon of Nunose." However, due to the temple becoming abandoned in the 6th year of the Meiji period (1873), numerous treasures were moved to Dairinji Temple.

The eleven-faced Kannon statue worshipped in the main hall of Dairinji Temple is from the late 10th to early 11th century in the late Heian period, and was the principal image of Yokoji Temple. During the Edo period, prints from a woodcut of the eleven-faced Kannon circulated and are shown in the "Kawachi Kagami Meishoki" and "Kawachi Meishozue."

The head and body of the statue were carved from a single block of Japanese cypress and the statue is a full-scale Buddhist statue that stands at 171.5 centimeters. It can be assumed that the statue is a "Nara-style Buddhist statue" created by a central priest.

Even in the prefecture, full-scale eleven-faced Kannon statues with eleven Chojo Kebutsu (faces) and Zujomen (numerous faces on top of the main face) are very rare. Considering the Heian Buddhist culture of the southern Kawachi region, it was likely a very precious Buddhist statue and in February of the 21st year of the Heisei period (2009) it was designated as a City-Designated Tangible Cultural Property by Matsubara City.