

Opening hours

April-October: 9:00-17:00

November: 9:00-16:30

December-March: 9:30-16:00

We are closed on 15th Mar, 20th Apr, 23rd Sep and 8th Dec.

Admission fee

Adult: 500JY / Child(under 15 years old): 200JY

Getting Here

Car: Karida 615, Obuse-Machi, Kamitakai-Gun, Nagano-Prefecture. Free parking is available.

Train: Ride the Nagano-Dentetsu train bound for “Shinshu-Nakano” or “Yudanaka”,

and get off at the “Obuse” station. 30min. of walk from the station.

Bus: The town shuttle bus to “Gansho-in iriguchi”. *Out of service in winter.

Others

Goshuin (stamp book for shrines and temples) : 300JY

We have an automatic translator and we are welcome to guide you about this temple,

so plz feel free to ask any questions.

*No smoking inside and around the temple.

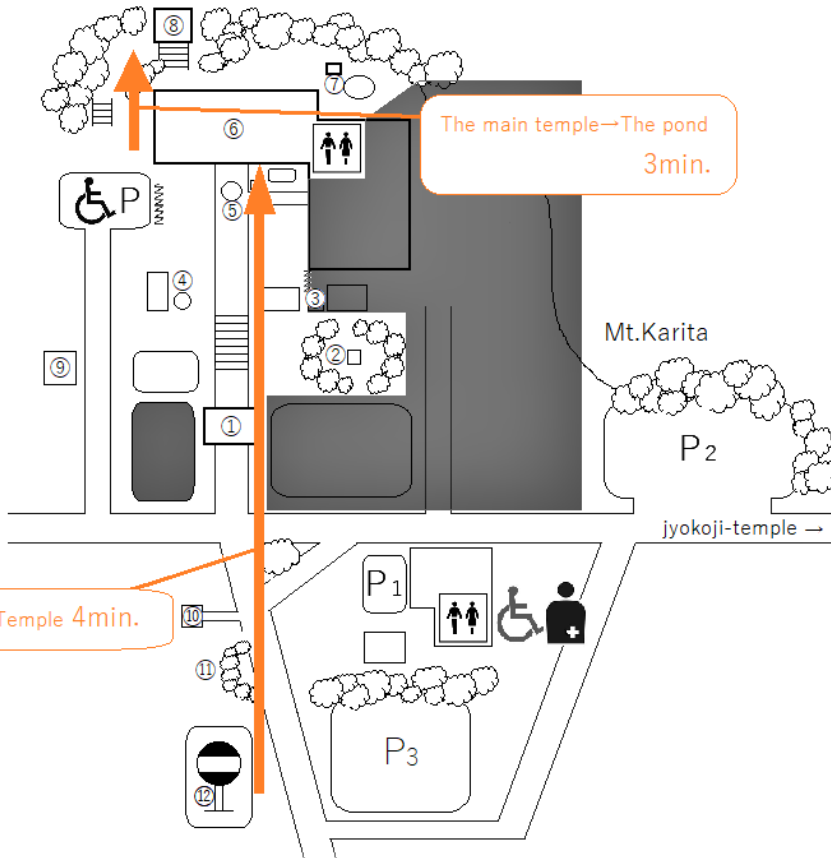
*Eating or drinking, and taking photo is not allowed inside the temple.

*No animal is allowed inside the temple.

The Map for The Gansho-in Temple and The Garden

*No smoking anywhere.

*The grey shaded area is off limits to visitors.



- ① Ni-Oh Mon - deva gate
- ② Garden
- ③ Shoo-Rou - bell tower
**visitors can ring it only on New Year's Eve.*
- ④ Statue of Kannon the Goddess of Mercy
- ⑤ Kou-Ro -Incense burner (50 yen for one bundle of incense) Take notice of the three goblins forced to lift the heavy bowl as a punishment for their folly.
**closed for Winter*
- ⑥ Main temple
- ⑦ Monument and pond in tribute to Issa the haiku poet **closed for Winter*
- ⑧ Tomb of Fukushima Masanori
**closed for Winter*
- ⑨ A well *You are free to take well water as a gift. Please be sure to boil before use.
**closed in winter*
- ⑩ Taishi-dou
- ⑪ Promenade and six Buddhist statues
- ⑫ Bus stop for shuttle buses
**out of service during Winter season.*

Parking :free for charge

P1 for 5 cars

P2 for 20 cars **closed in winter*

P3 for 10 buses and large cars

Parking near the main temple is for people who are hard to climb stairs.

**This one will be closed in heavy snowing.*

Toilet

In the temple: 3 for male,3 for female.

Near the parking3: 1 for All gender, Ostomate available.

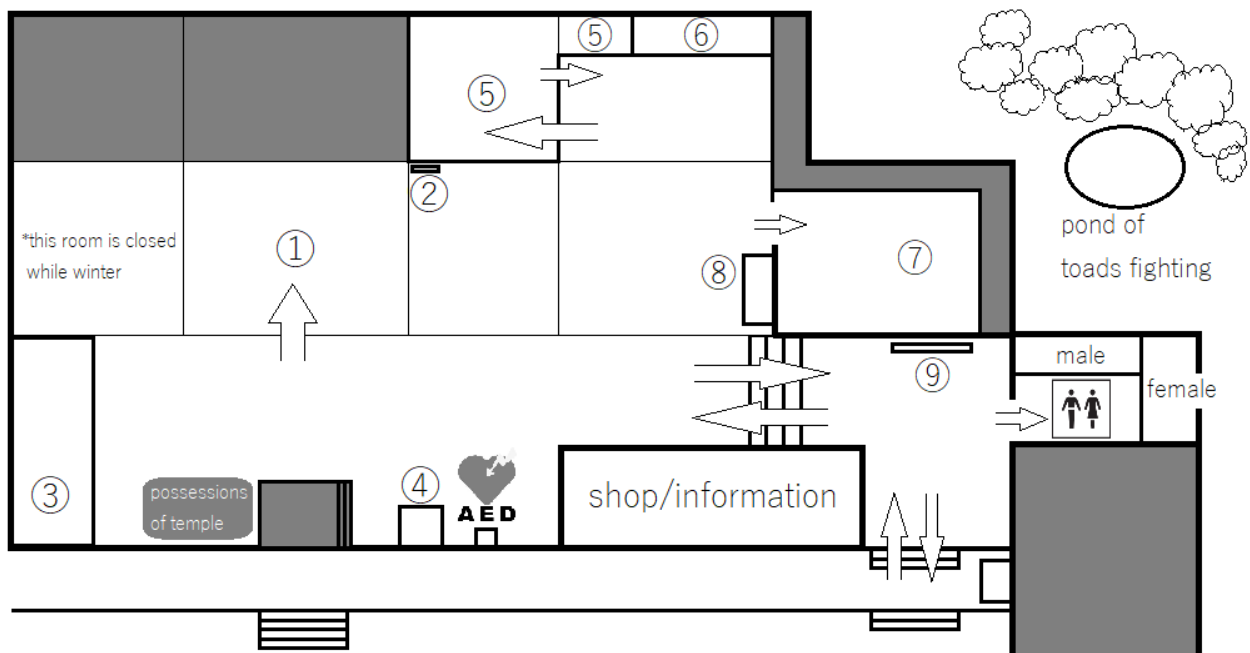
The Floor Map

*Taking pictures inside the temple is prohibited, however pictures of the exterior are allowed.

*No food and drink inside the temple.

*Animals are not allowed inside the temple.

*Do not enter the grey shaded area on this map.



① Happo-Nirami Ho-O Zu - The Phoenix by Katsushika Hokusai

**Please be seated while viewing the ceiling. Do not lie down.*

② Copy of a preliminary sketch for The Phoenix by Katsushika Hokusai

③ Nakano Tsuchi-Bina - Traditional clay dolls from the neighboring city of Nakano.

④ Binzuru-Sondja - Pindola Bharadvaja

He has a power of healing your pain. Touch your pain after touching the same part of his body.

⑤ Gallery of Teras Mokuzan

An artist of wooden statue. He is from the neighbor city of Iiyama.

**Closed in winter.*

⑥ Relics and belongings of Fukushima Masanori, a samurai

⑦ Photos of Kaeru-Gassen no Ike / A pond of toads-fighting

⑧ Books and articles about the Gansho-in temple

⑨ A calligraphy of Mu (means empty or nothing) by Takai Kozan

The Gansho-in Temple

Gansho-in is a temple belonging to Soto sect of Zen Buddhism. Its head temples are Eihei-ji temple in Fukui

Prefecture and Soji-ji temple in Tsurumi, Yokohama City in Kanagawa Prefecture. Founded in 1472, temple has been rebuilt three times. 190 years have passed since the most recent rebuilding. The ceiling painting by Katsushika Hokusai, "Happo Nirami Ho-O Zu" (The phoenix steering in each directions), was dedicated to the temple in 1848.



Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) and The phoenix

Katsushika Hokusai is a great master of painting in the Edo period and had a big influence on the impressionists in Europe. This painting was drawn on the last year before he died at the age of 90.

The painting is quite large as H230 x W250 inch. He drew it separate on 12 wooden panels of cypress and replaced them 3 x 4. It is lifted by Japanese traditional wooden framework, without any nails. Ho-O's face places roughly center of a painting. It is steering at you by its right eye. The eye always follows you wherever you are. This is why we call this phoenix "Happo Nirami" (steering in each directions).

Ho-O is said to be an auspicious bird and it has many kinds of plants on its body. These plants tell us how quite long Ho-O has been lived. It has tons of leaves of "Goyoh Matsu" (Japanese pine tree) on its back, and showing us big wide wings. "Gekkei Dju" (Laurel leaves) are growing with its tail feathers swaying and surrounding its body. In the lower part, there are two wide brown leaves of "Bashou" (plantain). Two leaves shape one big blank. This big triangle is called "Sakasa Fuji" (Mt. Fuji upside-down), the hidden picture of Mt. Fuji being refracted on a lake. Hokusai deeply loved and drew Mt. Fuji for his entire life as a great artist.

Hokusai used various pigments imported from mainly China for this masterpiece. "Hakudo" (white soil) for its surface, and the line drawing was by "Sumi" (India ink). Vermillion, Minium, Rouge and Colcothar for red. Black soil and Orpiment for yellow. Malachite for green. Indigo, Prussian Blue and Smalt for blue. He decorated powdered gold leaves around Ho-O's body as the last finish. Hokusai often used Prussian Blue on his work. He mentioned about these pigments in his technical book "Ehon-Saishiki-Tsuu" (Picture book: The Essence of Coloring). It past 170 years after Hokusai had done this painting, but these colors are still bright and fresh without any re-coloring. It tells us how deep knowledge Hokusai had about pigments and coloring.

Takai Kozan (1806-1883)

Takai Kozan, a wealthy merchant and one of parishioner representatives who support this temple, was a patron of Hokusai. He commissioned Hokusai to paint a ceiling painting for the Gansho-in temple. He was a knowledgeable man and had talents of drawing and calligraphy. His calligraphy of "Mu" is displayed at the entrance. "Mu" is a key

lesson of Zen, means “empty in my mind”. Two wooden frogs are placed in front of the “MU” calligraphy. Two wooden frogs are placed in front of the “MU” calligraphy. We call frogs “KAERU”. Make these two words gathered one like “MU-KAERU”, then “MUKAERU” means “welcome” in Japan. They can also make the word of "BUJIKAEURU", means "getting home safety". "Mu" for "BU", "two" for "JI", "frogs" for "KAERU".



Fukushima Masanori(1561-1624)

Fukushima Masanori, A commander of a samurai army in the Warring States period, was a key retainer to Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the first man who unify the whole country in Japan. The Gansho-in Temple has a tomb of Fukushima Masanori, and put some of his relics on display. He had protected Christians in his territory while it was prohibited in Edo period, and build a tiny statue called "Ana-Kannon" in the cave for them. You can see the site of the statue at the entrance of "Ana-Kannon-no-Yu", The spa in this town.



Kobayashi Issa (1763-1827) and a pond of toad fighting

Each spring, to lay their eggs, countless toads appear in a small pond in the backyard of this temple. It is utter chaos and looks like they are getting fight, so the pond is named "Kaeru-Gassen-no-Ike" (A pond of toads fighting). Issa Kobayashi, a famous Haiku poet born in the Nagano Prefecture, wrote one when he visited here:

*Yase-Gaeru
 Makeruna Issa
 Kokoni-Ari.*

Meaning: A thin toad, don't be defeated, I'm watching over you.

At the time he made this, Issa had a newborn baby who had some health problems. He wrote this Haiku as a pray for his son's recovery, but sadly enough, the baby passed away one month later.

The stone monument of this Haiku poem is standing by the pond. You can find some monuments like this everywhere in this town.