

## Hokkesan Ichijo-ji Temple

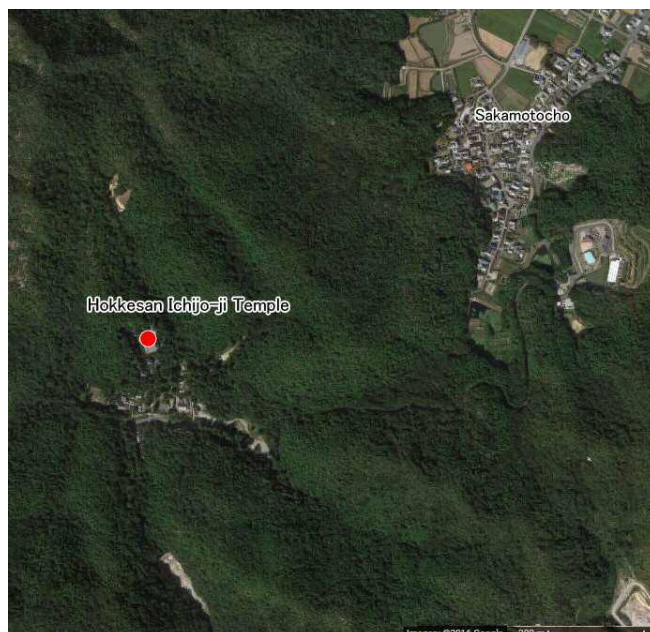
: An ancient temple with a 1350-year history



Three-storied pagoda  
(national treasure)



Ichijo-ji Main  
Hall



It is said that Hokkesan Ichijo-ji Temple was founded by the Indian high priest Hodo Sennin in 650 who acquired great trust from Emperor Kotoku by praying for him when he was ill. It is also widely known as the 26<sup>th</sup> temple on the Saigoku Sanjusansho pilgrimage and as a Kannon holy site.

There is a flight of 162 stone steps leading to the top of a small hill covered by large Japanese cedar and cypress trees. Within the temple precincts protected by a dense grove are Buddhist structures such as the Three-Storeyed Pagoda, a national treasure built at the end of the Heian Period, and nationally-designated important cultural assets such as the Hondo (Main Hall), Gohodo (hall dedicated to Bishamonten who protects the Buddhist way and ascetics), Myokendo (hall dedicated to Myoken Bosatsu), and Bentendo (hall dedicated to Benten).

The Three-Storeyed Pagoda is one of Japan's representative old towers which is said to have been built in 1171 at the end of the Heian Period. It is a stable and elegant tower with roofs that get smaller the higher up you go. There are also numerous cultural assets such as the Sekizo Hoto (stone treasure pagoda) and the Okunoin Kaizando (inner sanctuary of temple hall commemorating the founder). The greenery within the temple precincts blend marvelously with the various halls and Garan (temple buildings), such as the antiquated and elegant Three-Storeyed Pagoda and the Main Hall built in the kakezukuri style (an architectural method of building structures on sloped hills and lakes) (also called butai-zukuri).

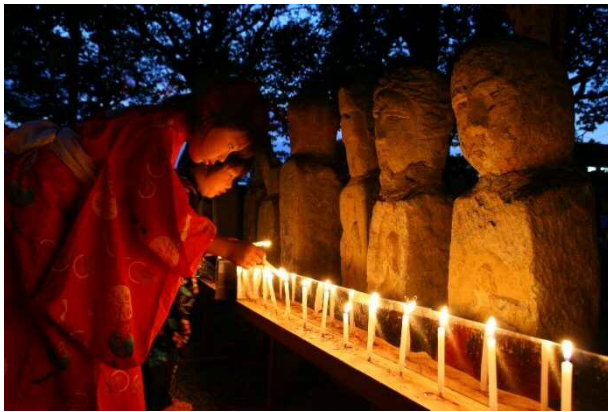
As described in the Goeika (pilgrim's hymn) that goes, "Flowers in the Spring, tachibana (mandarin orange) in the Summer, chrysanthemums in the Fall: forever mysterious dharma of Kasan," Ichijo-ji Temple is renowned for cherry blossoms in the spring and autumn leaves in the fall, and the old temple in the mountain becomes crowded with tourists especially when the temple precincts are colored by Autumn leaves.

Source: Hyogo Fukei Hyakusen (Top100 Sights in Hyogo) (published by Kobe Shimbun Sogo Shuppan Center), Hyogo Fukei Hyakusen: Kaze-to-Aruku (Top 100 Sights in Hyogo: Walk with the Wind) (published by Asahi Shimbun Kobe Branch), Kasai City website, Kasai City Tourism and Town Development Association website

<b>Main sights which make up the hometown of Hyogo</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Rich natural landscape <input type="checkbox"/> Rural vistas rich in nature and greenery <input type="checkbox"/> Expressive urban vistas and historic sights handed down through generations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural sights particular to the area	Location	821-17 Sakamotocho, Kasai City
	Famous sights	Top 100 sights in Hyogo that I like (Hyogo Prefecture) Top 100 Forests in Hyogo (Hyogo Prefecture) 50 Forests and Hotsprings in Hyogo (Hyogo Prefecture) Kaze-to-Aruku: Hyogo Fukei Hyakusen (Walk with the Wind: Top 100 Sights in) Asahi Shimbun
	Festivals and events	
	Associated parties	Hodo Sennin
	Organizations	
	Related sights	



## Rakan-ji Temple, Gohyaku Rakan (five hundred disciples of the Buddha) : Stone Buddhist images shrouded in mystery



Gohyaku Rakan Sentoe  
(lighting of a thousand candles)



Gohyaku Rakan Sekibutsu  
(stone Buddhist images)



Gohyaku Rakan  
Sekibutsu in the fall



Hojo Elementary School  
history guides



From ancient times, the stretch of land from Kasai City to Takasago City was a production area for quality stone. Numerous stone relics and artifacts remain still today. Of particular repute are the more than 400 stone Buddhist images of Rakan-ji Temple nestled together

within the temple grounds. These stone Buddhist images are widely known as Hojo-no-Gohyaku Rakan or “the five hundred disciples of the Buddha in Hojo.” Most of them are simply built standing images that have been carved out of stone pillars and have mild expressions reminiscent of Jizo (guardian deities of children). The Gohyaku Rakan are familiar to nearly everyone, and an old local saying goes “if you want to see your parents, visit the hall of the Gohyaku Rakan in west Hojo.”

While there are different stories about their origin, one story is that Akamatsu, Lord of Odani Castle, built them at the end of the Muromachi Period for the repose of the war dead. Another story is that it is a burial ground for the Shinto priests of Sumiyoshi Shrine (Sakami Shrine) located adjacent to Rakan-ji Temple on the south side. The Sento Kuyo (Thousand Lantern Festival) held during Obon (Festival of the Dead) is truly magical. The Sentoe (lighting of a thousand candles) which is held for the repose of the souls of the saints represented by the stone Buddhist images, is held from the evening of August 8, to coincide with the temple festival for Yakushi Nyorai (the Buddha of Healing), the principal image of the Buddha. The gentle flames of the approx. 1000 candles lighted by worshippers bring forth the world of the subtle and profound.

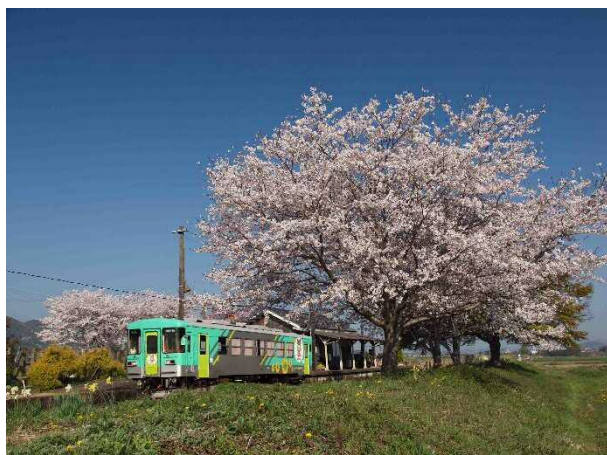
Source: Hyogo Fukei Hyakusen (100 Sights in Hyogo) (published by Kobe Shimbun Sogo Shuppan Center), Hyogo Hyakkei I (100 Famous Views in Hyogo) (published by Kobe Shimbun Sogo Shuppan Center), Kasai City website, Kasai City Tourism and Urban Development Association website

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	Famous sights	Top 100 sights in Hyogo that I like (Hyogo Prefecture)
	Festivals and events	Sentoe, Gohyaku Rakan Autumn Leaves Lightup, Lamp-lighting event
	Associated parties	
	Organizations	Kasai City Historic Road Volunteer Guides Hojo Elementary School History Guides
	Related sights	Hojo Sumiyoshi Shrine, Sakami Temple, Hojo no Shuku (scenery forming region)



## Hojo Railway

: a view of Japan's rural landscape from the train window



Hojo Railway  
allows you to  
enjoy the  
seasonal wayside  
scenery



The Hojo Railway which links a 13.6km stretch of railway from Ao Station to Hojo Station in approx. 22 minutes is a third sector (joint public-private venture) mode of public transportation that came about after the phasing out of the former Hojo National Railway Line. While it is a mini railway line with 8 stations, it is familiarly known as a sightseeing line as there are numerous must-see sights on the wayside, such as the Saigoku Sanjushansho pilgrimage sight Hokkesan Ichijo-ji Temple and Kasai Furubokke Nature Park, as well as Sakami-ji Temple, Sumiyoshi Shrine, and Hojo-no-Gohyakurakan (the five hundred disciples of the Buddha in Hojo).

The single-car train rail bus runs through a tranquil, rural landscape with verdant hills in the background is also popular as a photographic subject. It is not simply a mode of transport, but allows you to indulge in its various appeals, such as a “relaxing time that only a local line can afford you with,” “rural landscape that spreads out before you outside the train window,” “relaxing engine noise and vibration,” “unmanned stations reminiscent of the bustle of times gone by.”

Source: Hyogo Fukei Hyakusen (Top 100 Sights in Hyogo) (published by Kobe Shimbun Sogo Shuppan Center), Kasai City Tourism and Town Development Association website, Kasai City website, Hato-ni-Gutto Kitaharima website

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	Famous sights	Top 100 sights in Hyogo that I like (Hyogo Prefecture)
	Festivals and events	Hojo Railway Wayside Cherry Blossom Festival, Beetle Train, Pine Cricket Train, Santa Train
	Associated parties	
	Organizations	Volunteer stationmaster
	Related sights	Ichijo-ji Temple, Kasai Furubokke Nature Park, Sagami-ji Temple, Sumiyoshi Shrine, Gohyakurakan, Kasai Apls, Hyogo Prefecture Flower Center, among others



## Old Japanese Navy Uzurano Airfield Site

### : precious wartime heritage sites from the Pacific War



Airfield site



Underground air command center site



Uzurano Peace Memorial



Machine gun turret site



Air-raid shelter site



Explosives storehouse site



Uzurano Airfield Site (Himeji Naval Air Corps Uzurano Airfield, Kawanishi Airplane Himeji Factory Uzurano Plant site) is an old Japanese navy airfield site which was built when the Pacific War began to worsen to foster superior pilots. Construction began in 1942 and was completed in 1943. At the time, the air corps consisted of approx. 320 youth aged 17 to 25 gathered from across the country, who after receiving 30 hours of flight training there, were dispersed to various air corps units. By 1945, the Kamikaze Special Attack Corps “Shirasagi (White Egret) Squadrons” were formed from cadets, and 63 precious lives were lost by war’s end.

Still today, numerous historic properties remain near these airfield sites, such as air-raid shelters and machine gun turrets.

Source: Kasai City website, Kasai City Tourism and Town Development Association website

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	Famous sights	
	Festivals and events	
	Associated parties	
	Organizations	Uzurano Peace Monument Preservation Society, Uzuranonakacho Hanakazoku Society
	Related sights	Hojo Railway, Hokkeguchi Station