

Site of Koma-dera Temple

Name: Koma-dera Temple Site (Morinomae and Komadera, Kamikoma, Yamashiro-cho, Kizugawa)

Date registered: August 30, 1940 (additional registration: February 22, 2010)

Registered area: 20,100.5 m²

Koma-dera was a temple founded in the early 7th century, in the Asuka period. The temple grounds covered an area about 190 meters east-west and about 180 meters north-south (the central area enclosed by the cloister was about 61.9 meters east-west and about 65.6 meters north-south). The temple was located on a riverbank hillside on the north bank of the Kizu River where its flow sweeps around from the west to the north, while a dock for boats along the river (the Koze site) was on the opposite bank. The area covered by the historical site registration is about 60% of the total grounds.

The name "Koma-dera" can be seen in the 18th tale in the Nihon Ryoiki collection of Buddhist oral legends compiled in the 9th century. The area around the temple contains several places with the word "koma" in their name, such as Kamikoma (Upper Koma) and Shimokoma (Lower Koma). The temple is believed to have got its name from a Korean clan known as Koma (Goryeo in Korean), who came to Japan from Goguryeo, the kingdom which ruled the northern part of the Korean peninsula between the 4th and 7th centuries. The temple buildings were laid out in the Hokkiji style, with a pagoda to the east and a kondo (main hall) to the west, with a lecture hall at the rear from which the cloisters spread out like wings, enclosing the pagoda and main hall and joining at the middle gate. Unusually, the south gate, middle gate, and main hall are lined up on a north-south axis.

Major renovations to the Koma-dera buildings were carried out from the late Nara period to the early Heian period, but the temple is believed to have been completed lost during the Kamakura period.

Excavation of the temple site were carried out in 1938, prior to its registration as a historic site, and between 1984 and 1988, while a basic survey prior to its development of the historic site was carried out between 2005 and 2009.

The development of the historical site was started in 2010 and completed in 2021 with the opening of the Historic Site Park.