

Jodo Shinshu Sect and Hirakata Jinaimachi [TempleTown]



Hirakata Mannenji Temple, Picture of Noted Places in Kawachi
It depicts Mannenji Temple on the hill and Hirakata-shuku on the riverbank, but the relative locations of honjin [accommodations], Higashi-Gobou, and Nishi-Gobou are different from the actual locations.

Hirakata was closely associated with the Jodo Shinshu sect. The encounter between Hirakata and the sect dates back to the erection of Junkoji Temple during the Warring States period of Japan. In 1559, Jitsuju, the 27th child of Renryo, the head priest of Honganji Temple, joined Junkoji Temple, leading it to flourish as a temple led by the head priest's clan. Jitsuju left behind a diary entitled Shishinki, which vividly describes the lives of the people living in Hirakata. The diary says that Junkoji Temple was the center of such town areas as Kuranotani, Kaminochō, and Shimonochō, where many people resided, including merchants with trade names for handling oil, salt, miso, etc. Such settlements centered around Shinshu-sect temples are called jinaimachi. Hirakata Jinaimachi was located on a plateau and centered around present-day Hirakata Kaminochō. However, as the influence of Honganji Temple declined, Junkoji Temple was abandoned and the jinaimachi fell into decline. In the Edo period, Hirakata-shuku [post town] was formed along the Yodogawa River, presumably entailed by the transfer of the urban functions on the plateau to the post station. Afterwards, Honganji Temple split into Higashi [eastern] and Nishi [western] Honganji Temples. In 1682, Higashi Honganji Temple gave the name Ganshobo Temple to a temple restored in Hirakata. On the other hand, Nishi Honganji Temple gave special treatment to Jonenji Temple as a temple directly under the control of the head temple. It seems that local people called Ganshobo Temple "Higashi-Gobou" and Jonenji Temple "Nishi-Gobou."

