

Nationally registered tangible cultural property

## Jikoji Temple: Kokuzou Buddhist Hall

Location 1318 Bessho, Gosen City

Date of Designation February 23, 2012

The Kokuzou Buddhist hall is said to date back to 730 when Gyoki, a priest of the Nara period, carved two Kokuzousons (a Buddhist deity) during his travels in northern Japan and built a hall to enshrine one of them in 732. The other Kokuzouson went to Yanaizu in Aizu, and since the two Kokuzousons were separated, this area was called “Bessho” (separated place).

After being destroyed by a fire in 1717, the hall was rebuilt in 1720 under the protection of the Jikoji Temple. However, it was destroyed by a fire again in 1754, and the present hall is said to have been rebuilt shortly after.

The hall is divided into an inner sanctuary where the principal image is enshrined and an outer sanctuary where people worship. The basic structure of the hall, with its beams and pillars, is bold and powerful, creating a wonderful atmosphere.

The basic framework of the hall has been preserved in its original form, making it an extremely valuable example of a full-fledged Buddhist hall.

A festival is held on February 12th and 13th every year where the shrine is filled with a magical ambience lit by snow lanterns.

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