**History of** **Eikandō, Part 2: From Zenrinji to Eikandō**

The second period of Eikandō’s history extends some 140 years, from Eikan’s investiture as abbot to the arrival of the monk Jōhen, who led the temple’s transition to Pure Land Buddhism. During this period Eikandō was a temple of the Shingon school of Esoteric Buddhism, but East Asian Mādhyamaka Buddhism (Sanronshū) was taught there as well.

In 1072, Eikandō (then called Zenrinji) welcomed a second pivotal figure whose leadership would define the temple for centuries to come: the monk Eikan (1033­–1111), also known as Yōkan. Eikan made numerous contributions to the temple’s development, and he is considered Zenrinji’s “great revitalizer” (*chūkō no so*). It is through association with Eikan that Zenrinji came to be known more broadly by the name “Eikandō,” meaning “Eikan’s Hall.”

Eikan studied Shingon Buddhism under Jinkan (1001–1050), Zenrinji’s sixth abbot. During later periods of study at Tōdaiji Temple and on Mt. Kōmyō, he was exposed to both East Asian Mādhyamaka Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism. When Eikan returned to Zenrinji to succeed Jinkan, he introduced these two schools to the temple.

Eikan was very focused on the salvation of the common people. He encouraged the practice of reciting the *nenbutsu*, a ritual invocation of the name of Amida Buddha. Eikan believed that by practicing the *nenbutsu*, anyone could be reborn in the Pure Land, a realm where all beings can achieve enlightenment. Eikan was the first to introduce the *nenbutsu* to Zenrinji, and he is said to have recited it as many as 60,000 times each day.

Eikan’s altruism is also reflected in his many social works. He was known to commonly give his own clothes to the needy and destitute. In 1097, he established Yakuōin, a hall on the temple grounds where the sick could receive medical care and medicine made from a grove of plums that Eikan had planted.

Eikan is also responsible for bringing one of the most famous Buddhist images kept at Eikandō—the Mikaeri Amida, or “Looking-back Amida,” a relic of the miraculous appearance of Amida Buddha that Eikan witnessed in 1082.