

## Eternal Flames

A pair of Eternal Flames (*jumetsu no hoto*) burn in the lanterns that flank the statue of Shakyamuni Buddha in the main worship hall of Chusonji Temple. Every morning, priests light candles on the altar using fire from these sacred eternal flames.

The eternal flame was originally kindled by Saicho (767–822), the Japanese Buddhist monk who founded the Tendai sect of Buddhism in Japan, and it has burned continuously for over 1,200 years. Saicho first ignited the flame at Enryakuji Temple on Mount Hiei, in Shiga Prefecture. That flame was split in 1958, and a portion brought to Chusonji Temple, which is one of only two temples in the Tohoku region to possess this sacred flame.