

Completed in 1609, the main hall was built in the layout of a *hojo*. *Hojo* were originally used as living quarters for monks, but by the 1600s the *hojo* and its design were used for the main halls of Zen temples. The main hall of Zuiganji is a masterpiece of the lavish architectural style of the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568–1600). Date Masamune (1567–1636), the feudal lord who commissioned Zuiganji, turned to the established artisanal centers of Kyoto and Wakayama in western Japan to realize his vision for the temple. He imported both the materials for the hall—mostly Japanese cypress and zelkova wood—and 130 master craftsmen who oversaw its five-year construction. The hall was designated a National Treasure in 1953.