

Sanno-in

Saicho is said to have built this hall during the Enryaku period (782–806). Enryakuji temple takes its name from the Enryaku period, one of only four temples in Japan to have been granted this honor.

The central images enshrined here are of the Sho Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, and the Thousand-Armed Senju Kannon Bodisattva of mercy, hence the temple's alternative name "Senjudo."

Enchin (814–891) began his studies under Saicho's senior disciple Gishin when he was fourteen. He went to study in Tang China in 853, five years after Ennin's return. Enchin returned in 858 at the age of thirty-nine, having studied the latest developments in Esoteric Buddhism in addition to Tendai Buddhism. During his tenure as Tendai Abbot (868–891), the Sanno-was his main residence.

This temple housed the sutras and commentaries that Enchin had brought from China. This was one of the three collections, the Sannozo. The other two were the texts that had been originally brought by Saicho when he founded the Tendai school of Buddhism at Mount Hiei, and the collection of esoteric Buddhist texts gathered by Ennin. Since Enchin went to China after Ennin, the hall was alternatively known as the "Goto-in" (Later Tang China Temple), as opposed to Ennin's "Zento-in" (Earlier Tang China Temple).

The hall served as a memorial to Enchin after his death, enshrining a statue of Enchin in which his bones were placed. A hundred years later, a dispute about leadership of Mount Hiei broke out between the Ennin- and Enchin-branches of Tendai, and this statue was carried down from Mount Hiei and placed in Miidera, the temple that became the headquarters of the Enchin branch, in the city of Otsu at the foot of the mountain.

The Senju Kannon statue that was originally enshrined in the Sanno-in Hall is kept at Enryakuji and designated an Important Cultural Property.

Sanno-in (also called Goto-in: Later Tang China Temple)

Senju Kannon (Thousand-Armed Avalokitesvara)

Sho Kannon (Noble Avalokitesvara)

Senjudo (Thousand-Armed [Avalokitesvara] Hall)

Sannozo (Sanno Collection)

Shingonzo (esoteric materials)