

## **Tendai and Jodo Sects**

Byodoin temple is now an independent place of worship that does not belong to a particular Buddhist school. Instead, it is an important religious site for both the Pure Land (Jodo) and Tendai schools of Buddhism. Within the grounds are temples representing both: Saishoin belongs to the Tendai School and Jodoin serves the followers of the Pure Land School.

Tendai Buddhism can trace its roots back to 806, when it was founded by the priest Saicho (767–822), posthumously known as Dengyo Daishi. The school rose to prominence during the Heian period (794–1185) and competed with other schools to become the most influential at the imperial court. When doctrinal or political disagreements arose, many of its priests left to set up other schools; and it was further weakened by the transfer of the imperial capital from Kyoto to Edo, modern-day Tokyo, in 1869.

The Jodo School was established in 1175, and it and its offshoots are the most widely practiced forms of Buddhism in Japan. It was founded by Honen (1133–1212), who entered a temple at the age of nine and lived the rest of his life as a priest. Honen was condemned for reaching out to people who had previously been excluded from Buddhist practice, including women and the lower classes. Exiled in 1207, he was pardoned in 1211 and permitted to return to Kyoto, but died a year later.