

Zenshoji Temple

Founded in its current form in the sixteenth century, Zenshoji is a temple of the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism. It is located in the tranquil Hagiwara neighborhood, one stop away from Gero Station on the JR Takayama Main Line. It is an easy 10-minute walk from Zenshoji Station.

The temple grounds contain several structures built in the Song China architectural style. Certain parts of the temple are open to the public. Daishoin, one of the accessible rooms inside the temple, features the famous ink painting *Happo Nirami no Daruma* by renowned artist and Rinzai priest Sesshu (1420–1506). The room also contains other artwork, including some painted directly on the wooden sliding doors.

Behind the temple sits Banzaido, a well-tended sixteenth-century Japanese garden and Gifu Prefecture-designated “scenic spot,” with lush round bushes and rock arrangements stretching out into a forest. Bubbling water can be heard from a pond shaped like the kanji character for *kokoro* (心), meaning “heart” or “spirit.”

Behind the Kannondo hall, on the other side of the temple precincts, stands a 40-meter *sugi* (cryptomeria) tree said to be over 1,200 years old. Its immense trunk is approximately 10 meters in circumference.