

### **Sojiji Soin Monastery**

Sojiji was founded in 1321 by Zen master Keizan (1268–1325), who is credited with spreading the Soto school of Zen Buddhism in Japan. Keizan made Sojiji a center of Soto Zen training and it quickly became one of the school's two head temples. In 1898, Sojiji was completely destroyed by fire. Sojiji Soin (lit. "Sojiji Ancestor Temple") is a monastery built on the same site.

Notable structures include the *hatto*, or Dharma Hall. The *hatto* is a wooden building that hosts special ceremonies and is adorned with gold, Wajima lacquer, and intricate transom carvings depicting the life and teachings of Keizan. Dentoin is the mausoleum of Keizan and is the most revered structure at Sojiji Soin. Dentoin honors Keizan's spirit, although his remains are not buried here.

Visitors to Sojiji Soin can experience guided Soto Zen meditation. Those who stay in the monastery overnight can try longer meditation sessions and vegetarian Buddhist cuisine. Advance reservations are required. One of the priests speaks fluent English and German.

Parts of Sojiji Soin are under construction due to damage in a 2007 earthquake. Renovations will be completed in December 2020.