

Raigo-in and the Teachings of Ryonin

Sho-o Daishi Ryonin (1072–1132), the founder of the Yuzu Nenbutsu sect of Japanese Buddhism, restored Raigo-in Temple in 1109 after years of disuse. Originally constructed in the ninth century, the temple is one of the oldest within the Tendai sect of Buddhism.

The temple buildings constructed by Ryonin were all destroyed in a fire in November 1426. The present main hall dates from the sixteenth century. Three statues in the temple's inner sanctum were brought here after surviving other fires in Ohara during the Muromachi period (1336–1573).

Ryonin is said to have been a master of all seven Japanese variations of *shomyo* Buddhist chanting, and even created an original unified style. He believed that “one person is all people, all people are one person; one practice is all practices, all practices are one practice.” The “yuzu” in his sect's name can be translated as “circulating.” The term encapsulates the idea that one person's recitation of a religious chant influences all others, and vice versa. This circulation helps to bring about the rebirth of all in paradise.