

Raigo-in Temple and the Three Main Buddhist Statues

The three statues on the altar in Raigo-in Temple's inner sanctum were once objects of worship at other Buddhist temples in Ohara. They were brought here after their original temples were destroyed by fire during the Muromachi period (1336–1572).

The three main Buddhas are the Yakushi Nyorai Buddha, the Shakamuni Buddha, and the Amida Nyorai Buddha. All three are Important Cultural Properties. Carved from wood and covered with lacquer, they serve as examples of the elegance and delicate features typical of the Heian period (794–1185). As a group, the three statues are thought to keep a watch on the past, present, and future.

The main altar is flanked by two guardian kings: Fudo on the left and Bishamon-ten on the right. Both date from the late Heian period.

Raigo-in is one of the oldest temples of the Tendai sect of Buddhism. It was constructed in the ninth century as a training hall for *shomyo* Buddhist chanting by Ennin (794–864).

The temple subsequently fell into disuse before being restored in 1109 by the priest Sho-o Daishi Ryonin (1072–1132). Originally a priest at a temple on Mount Hiei, Ryonin moved to Ohara and restored the temple. He also revived the chanting of *shomyo* at Raigo-in. The extensive temple buildings were all destroyed in a fire in November 1426. The present *hondo*, or main hall, dates from the sixteenth century.