

## **Imperial Graves**

Beside the extensive grounds of Sanzen-in Temple are the graves of two emperors from the Kamakura period (1185-1333). Both leaders resisted the growing influence of the warrior class and were ultimately defeated in battle.

Go-Toba was just three years old when he became the 82nd emperor of Japan. He ruled from 1183 to 1198, when the shogun forced him to abdicate. His son, Juntoku, became the 84th emperor and ruled from 1210 to 1221. As a “cloistered emperor,” Go-Toba still retained some influence during his son’s reign, which he used to raise an army in an attempt to regain his power. These efforts proved to be in vain, as he was defeated in a series of battles that culminated in a clash at Uji, just outside Kyoto, in 1221.

Go-Toba was banished to the Oki Islands, part of present-day Shimane Prefecture to the southwest, where he died in 1239 at the age of 58. Emperor Juntoku was removed from the throne and banished to Sado Island, off the coast of Niigata Prefecture to the north. He died in exile in 1242 at the age of 44.

Both former emperors were cremated on the islands where they died, but their remains were reunited at this site in 1919. The memorial includes two stone pillars bearing the emperors’ names, a stone *torii* gate, and a 13-story stone pagoda.