

## **Chinese Juniper Trees**

The seven Chinese juniper trees (*Juniperus chinensis*) on this path are thought to have been planted by Kenchoji Temple's founding abbot, Lanxi Daolong (1213–1278). Daolong was a Chinese Zen master who came to Japan in 1246 to teach Zen Buddhism.

Legend has it that when Daolong left China, he brought juniper seeds with him. Knowing he was unlikely to return to China, Daolong planted saplings from those seeds at Kenchoji as a reminder of his home.

Since then, the trees have flourished, surviving the fires that destroyed most of the temple during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The largest of the seven trees is 13 meters tall and its trunk has a circumference of 6.5 meters. The trees have been listed for preservation by the city of Kamakura.