

Uhojin Temple

[LEGENDS]

According to tradition, Uhojin Temple was established in 812 by the Buddhist priest Kukai (774–835), founder of the Shingon school of esoteric Buddhism to which Uhojin ascribes. Kukai was one of the most influential priests of his time and had the support of the imperial court, which allowed him to establish several sprawling temple complexes in Kyoto. Uhojin was one of these grand temples, but it was completely destroyed during the Onin War (1467–1477), a civil war that devastated the city. The current structures were rebuilt after a fire in 1788.

Uhojin Temple has been revered by the textile artisans of Nishijin for centuries. The area's dyers have held the temple in particularly high regard, because water from its well was said to produce the best results when mixed with dye for silk. The well was believed to never run dry, no matter how many craftsmen came to collect the water.

The tranquil grounds are an ideal place for quiet reflection in all seasons except for early spring when the cherry trees bloom, attracting large crowds. Among the trees at Uhojin is a rare type of cherry with green buds called *gyoiko-zakura*, which is thought to have been developed in Kyoto for ornamental purposes during the Edo period (1603–1867).