

Jizōin Temple

Jizōin Temple was constructed in 1367 by Hosokawa Yoriyuki (1329–1392), an eminent member of the powerful Hosokawa family, who held several prominent positions in the Ashikaga shogunate. Following the dying wish of the second shogun, Yoshiakira, in 1367 Yoriyuki assumed the role of deputy shogun (*kanrei*) and advisor to the third shogun, who was then just 10 years old.

Yoriyuki built Jizōin Temple, which enshrines an image of the bodhisattva Jizō. Jizō is said to be a protector of children—such as the young shogun—and was also the tutelary deity of the Ashikaga family, who controlled the shogunate. Yoriyuki gave the position of temple founder to the Zen monk Hekitan Shūkō (1291–1374), of whom Yoriyuki was a close follower. It was Shūkō who added the Zen garden that would later become one of the temple's most famous features.

With the support of Yoriyuki, and through his connections to the emperor's court and to the Ashikaga shogunate, the temple grew to cover 170,000 square meters and include 26 branch temples. However, power struggles between local daimyo escalated into a widespread conflict known as the Ōnin War (1467–1477), during which forces opposed to the Hosokawa family burned the temple complex to the ground. Some artifacts were saved, including the head of the statue of Yoriyuki and the principal image of Jizō, which dates to the Heian period (794–1185). The Hosokawa family moved on to consolidate their power in the Kyushu region, leaving what remained of the temple to fall into disrepair. Many centuries later, in the early Edo period (1603–1867), the abbot's quarters were rebuilt with the support of the Hosokawa family.