

## Jizōin Temple Grounds

The main entrance to Jizōin Temple is marked by a large gate, called the *sōmon*, which was built in the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568–1603). The path leading into the temple complex is flanked on either side by thickets of *mōsōchiku* bamboo, which can grow up to 25 meters tall. Although not present at the time of the temple's construction, the thickets led to the temple's popular nickname, "Temple of Bamboo" (Takenotera). To the left of the main hall is the 600-year-old gravesite of the temple's founders, while to the right a path leads to the abbot's quarters and attached Zen garden. Reconstructed in 1686 with the assistance of the Hosokawa family, the residence is divided into four rooms in which the monks of the temple lived, studied, and practiced. The residence opens onto a Zen garden called the Garden of the Sixteen Arhats. Several stones stand upright in the garden, and those that represent the arhats are said to be turned slightly to the left, as if they are looking out toward Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine.

One of the most famous residents of Jizōin Temple was the monk Ikkyū (1394–1481). Widely believed to be the unrecognized son of Emperor Gokomatsu (1377–1433), he spent the first six years of his life at Jizōin Temple with his mother. It is said that he never spoke of his royal lineage and treated aristocrats and commoners the same.