

History of Jōjūji Temple

Jōjūji Temple, today a temple of the Ōbaku sect of Buddhism, is believed to have been established by the monk Ennin (794–864) as a temple of the Tendai sect. Although the structure was eventually abandoned, the temple was reopened between 1261 and 1264 by the head of the Hamuro family and reestablished under the Ritsu sect by the monk Eizon (1201–1290). When the head of the Hamuro family died in 1272, he was enshrined at Jōjūji, which subsequently became the Hamuro family temple. Jōjūji flourished until widespread fighting broke out between the local daimyo (Ōnin War; 1467–1477), during which this complex was destroyed, along with many other temples in Kyoto. The Hamuro family rebuilt the structure again in 1689 and invited the monk Tetsugyū (1628–1700) to operate the temple under the Ōbaku sect. It is then that Jōjūji Temple received its current name.

Ōbaku is a Buddhist sect established in 1661 by the Chinese monk Ingen (1592–1673) with the construction of Manpukuji Temple. In China, the Ōbaku sect fell within the Rinzai tradition; however, the Japanese practice of Ōbaku that developed over the following 200 years is far removed from its Chinese counterpart. The ideas introduced by Ingen include differences in temple architecture, attire, and funeral services that all show heavy influence from China's Ming period (1368–1644). Another key difference can be seen in the reading of sutras, which is done in Chinese. Unlike in other sects within the Zen tradition, these singing chants (called *bonbai*) are accompanied by instruments like the *inkin* (a small bowl-shaped bell) and large drums. Even the Buddhist images enshrined in the main hall differ markedly from their Rinzai counterparts, with depictions of robes painted in vermillion adorned with dragon motifs.