

### **Zenporitsuji Temple**

Zenporitsuji is a Ritsu school Buddhist temple located at the foot of Mt. Otokoyama. Approximately one hundred beautiful maple trees growing on the grounds give the temple its other name, Momijidera (“the maple tree temple”). Zenporitsuji was founded in the mid-thirteenth century as a family memorial temple by Zenpoji Kyusei (also known as Miyakiyo), who served as the top administrative official of Iwashimizu Hachimangu back when it was a shrine-temple complex fusing Shinto and Buddhist religious practice. Ki no Yoshiko (1336–1413), the mother of the third Ashikaga shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408), came from the Zenpoji family and was particularly generous in her support of the temple. It is said that the famous maple trees began with her donations.

The main hall and main gate of Zenporitsuji, designated Cultural Properties of Kyoto Prefecture, were constructed in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, respectively. The main hall contains many valuable statues and other works of art, the most notable being the temple’s principal object of worship, a statue of the deity Hachiman. It is said that it was originally carved in the Heian period (794–1185) to represent the bodhisattva Jizo, but came to be worshipped as a depiction of Hachiman in later years. The statue was enshrined in Iwashimizu Hachimangu during the time of syncretic worship of Shinto and Buddhism, but when the two religions were separated by government order in 1868, it was moved to Zenporitsuji. Many of the temple’s treasures are designated Cultural Properties of Yawata City.