Tenneiji Temple

Tenneiji Temple of the Rinzai school of Buddhism was officially founded by the Zen master Guchu Shukyu (1323–1409). After beginning his training as a monk in Kyoto, Guchu traveled to China at the age of 19. There, he trained under the monk Shikkyu Keiryo (Jixiu Qiliao; 1269–1351), who was quoted as saying, "In all of China there is not one who understands my teachings, but only Guchu who came from Japan." Upon his return, Guchu entered Nanzenji Temple in Kyoto, but was unsatisfied with the extravagance of life in the capital and moved to the Tamba region to become head priest of Tenneiji in 1365.

The temple buildings have been destroyed by fire twice, first in 1777 and again in 1961. Only two buildings survived the second fire: the hall enshrining the founders, which was built in 1793, and the hall dedicated to the Buddha Yakushi, buddha of medicine and healing, which was built in 1794. Both are designated Cultural Properties of Kyoto Prefecture. The founders hall is an unusual hexagonal structure with white plaster walls. The hall dedicated to the Buddha Yakushi has a huge ceiling painting of a dragon by the artist Hara Zaichu (1750–1837). It is painted in a style known as *happo nirami*—no matter where you stand in the room, the eyes appear to follow you.

Visitors to the temple are free to walk through the neatly kept gardens and view the buildings from the outside. Additionally, the temple will allow groups with appointments to enter the buildings and view the dragon painting.