

Shorenji Temple

Shorenji Temple was originally a Zen temple called Jorinji. The main hall was rebuilt in 1737 in the style of the Jodo Shinshu sect of Buddhism. Jodo Shinshu (The True Essence of the Pure Land Teaching) is a school of Pure Land Buddhism founded by Shinran (1173–1263), a former Tendai monk. It is the most common type of Buddhism practiced in Japan today.

The temple is famous for its large demon-shaped decorative ridge-end tiles (*onigawara*) that are said to ward off evil. The main gate of the temple features a dragon relief sculpture.

Shorenji is also renowned for its *koma no kane* (Korean bell). The copper bell was made on the Korean Peninsula during the Koryo period (918–1392). It dates from 963, making it one of the oldest Korean bells in Japan. It has been designated a National Important Cultural Property of Japan.

For generations, the temple was a gathering place for local academics and scholars, including the Rai brothers, Rai Shunsui and Rai Shunpu.

Shorenji features a famous garden called Shogien, many important artworks, and the Rai family's ancestral graves.