**Sankoji Temple**

Sankoji Temple on the slope of Mt. Kamose is best known for the scenic view it commands of the Kyoto basin. The vista encompasses Mt. Hiei and the eastern Higashiyama mountains, the Kitayama mountains in the north, Kyoto itself, and the cities of Uji and Kizugawa. The temple is quite popular to visit in autumn when maple trees in the area turn red and orange. In addition, Sankoji is located next to Yoshiminedera Temple, so they can be easily enjoyed in one trip.

*A Place of Many Buddhist Teachings*

The temple’s origin dates to 1074, when the Tendai school monk Gensan (983–1099) built a hermitage that he named Kitao Ojoin. In 1213, Shoku (Seizan Kokushi, 1177–1247), the founder of the three Seizan schools of Buddhism, revived the hermitage as a training hall to practice *nenbutsu*, the continuous recitation of the name of Amida Buddha. Shoku named the temple Sankoji, as the mountains behind the temple seemed to resemble the three-pronged ritual vajra (*sankosho*). In 1951, Sankoji separated from the Tendai school and became the head temple of an independent Seizan school, embracing and teaching doctrines of the Tendai, Shingon, Risshu, and Jodo schools.

*Hondo (Main Hall) and Its Treasures*

It is difficult to enshrine the temple’s principal object of worship, the Buddha’s Eye Mandala, in the current Hondo, so a golden statue of Fudo Myo-o (the Immovable Wisdom King) presently serves as the principal image. The sculpture used to stand in front of the Buddha’s Eye Mandala before the Hondo was reconstructed in its current location. Other statues portray Amida Buddha on a pedestal with *sankosho* motifs, Prince Shotoku (574–622), Gensan, and Kukai (Kobo Daishi, 774–835), the founder of Shingon Buddhism. Ketaibyo Mausoleum in the right wing enshrines a statue of Shoku placed on a high pedestal that conceals memorial stone pagodas for Shoku and the poet Rensho (1178–1259), his disciple.