

Hōrinji Temple

法輪寺



Hōrinji Temple is thought to have been built in 713 by the monk Gyōki (668–749) at the order of Empress Genmei (661–721). At the time of its construction, it was known as Kazunoidera Temple. Following the enshrinement of Kokūzō Bodhisattva by the monk Dōshō (798–875) in 829, in 868 the temple's name was officially changed to Hōrinji. Members of the

imperial family, as well as many monks who eventually went on to establish other schools of Buddhism, are known to have visited the temple. Although the temple buildings were completely destroyed in 1864 and subsequently rebuilt, as an institution the temple is believed to have a history of more than 1,200 years.

Dōshō was a student of Kūkai (774–835), the founder of the Shingon school of Esoteric Buddhism. In 829, Kūkai suggested that Dōshō travel to Hōrinji Temple (then Kazunoidera) to complete his training with the Kokūzō mantra, which involved reciting the mantra 10,000 times each day for 100 consecutive days. It is said that on the final day of Dōshō's training, the morning star fell from the sky and burned the image of Kokūzō Bodhisattva into his robes. Inspired by this, Dōshō carved a statue of Kokūzō and enshrined it as the primary image of the temple.



Dōshō is also credited with the construction of the Togetsukyō Bridge in Arashiyama, which was called Hōrinji Bridge until it received its current name more than 300 years later. Up until the mid-1800s, management of the bridge was put under the control of the monks at Hōrinji, who charged a toll and used the money they collected for upkeep of the temple and bridge.

Jūsan Mairi Ceremony and Dendengū Shrine

Jūsan Mairi is a seasonal coming-of-age ceremony in which children who have reached the age of 13 visit Hōrinji Temple to pray to Kokūzō Bodhisattva for wisdom. Although there is no written record of the first ceremony, it is believed that during the Heian period (794–1185), Emperor Seiwa (850–880) visited the temple to pray for wisdom after his thirteenth birthday. At the time, a child was considered an adult once they had experienced one full 13-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. After offering their prayers, children who participate in the ceremony are told that if they look back at the temple before they finish crossing Togetsukyō Bridge on their return home, they will have to give back all of the wisdom that was granted to them by the bodhisattva.



Dendengū Shrine originated in the 800s as Myōjō Shrine, where the monk Dōshō (798–875) enshrined Ake no Myōjō, the morning star. He believed the morning star was a manifestation of Kokūzō Bodhisattva, who was venerated there as a deity of lightning and other natural phenomena until the shrine's destruction in 1864. A temporary shrine occupied the spot until Myōjō Shrine was restored in 1956 at the request of workers in the newly formed telecommunications industry who wanted a place to pray. The shrine was reestablished and given the new name *denden*, which is written by repeating the character for “electricity.” Today, the shrine receives pilgrims from technology companies around the world with prayers for the deity enshrined there.



[Address]
Arashiyama Kokuzoyama-Cho Nishikyo-Ku, Kyoto

[Entrance Fees]
free

[Open Hours]
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
open year round

[Access]
5-minute walk from Arashiyama Station on the Hankyu Railway
5-minute walk from City Bus Stop Hankyu Arashiyama-eki-mae

[Website]
<https://www.kokuzohourinji.com/index.en.html>



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