

The History of Sengakuji Temple

Sengakuji temple was built by the ruling shogun of the day Tokugawa Ieyasu near the Imperial castle of Edo (Sotosakurada). In the 17th year of the Keichō period (1612 AD), he held a memorial service dedicated to the soul of Imagawa Yoshimoto who was dependent upon the Lord of Imagawa in early days. It was upon this occasion that Zen priest Monnan-Shūkan, Imagawa's grandson, became the first abbot of this temple.

However, in the 18th year of the Kanei period, the temple was completely destroyed by a disastrous fire. The temple was then removed from Sotosakurada to its present location in Takanawa village by the combined efforts of such feudal Lords as Kuchiki, Niwa, Asano, and others. This temple, one of the 3 great temples of Edo, had within its power over 1/3 of the Soto-Zen sect in the city of Edo. Here in this temple, great crowds of monks swarmed from all over the county, to practice Zen, study Buddhism and it was here that many of them were ordained priests.

After the heroic deed of Genroku period took place, this temple became known with fame all over Japan as the resting place of the 47 loyal retainers of Akō. Even today, many followers come unceasingly, some to practice Zen, others as a place of worship and still others to pray for the repose of the souls of the 47 loyal retainers of Akō.