Kinkakuji
The Golden Temple

Before the goden temple was built, at the same place there was a temple called Saionji in Kamakura era. The temple was owned by a nobility, Fujiwarano Kintsune. However, as the Kamakura era ends, Kintsune, lost his power and the temple fell into disuse.

It was Fujiwarano Yoshitsune who took over the place and rebuilt the temple. In 1397, he took over the whole temple and built the 3 layered Golden tower. Because high-quality finished form of the pavilion, even after the owner has lost his power, the building has been kept until today.

The Golden temple had been preserved for long time, but it burnt down once. In 1950, July 2, before dawn there was a fire in the temple. The cause was arson attack set by a servant of the temple, who was studying in university in Kyoto. The student tried to commit suicide at backyard, but failed in killing himself. Later he spoke out the reason of putting up the fire. He said he did it to get attention of the society. However his doctor analysed he did it because of pessimistic view of reality that office workers had more power than priests despite the holiness of the place.

Because the event had such a big impact on Japanese people, it was taken as the writing theme by writers such as Yukio Mishima and Tsutomu Mizukami.

Kyoto is so-called the capital of thousand years. In the end of 8th century, the capital of Japan was moved from Nara to Heian, Kyoto. Even the function of Japan’s feudal government was moved to Edo, Tokyo, the capital was remained in Kyoto.
Yasaka Shrine

A shrine of old time. Even before the capital of Japan was moved to Kyoto, in around 656, several pavilions were built here by people who came from Kokuri, the area around today’s North Korea to the East part of China. As the time passed, in 876, Fujiwarano Mototsune built a Shoja (vihara), a house monks. And more of pavilions were built by many people, forming today’s Yasaka shrine. The shrine is located on Gion. Near from the downtown of Kyoto city, Kwaramachi.

Yasaka shrine is famous for the ceremony, Gion Matsuri, held in July every year. The ceremony is counted as one of the three biggest Matsuri in Japan. Matsuri is held throughout July, starting in the 1st and ending in 31st.

The beginning of Gion Matsuri was a ceremony to pray for Gods for health. In 869, contagious disease spread out, so people set 66 lances of the field and prayed for Susanoo and other gods who are Gods enshrined in Yasaka shrine. So amulets with shape of a lance are still sold during the Matsuri.

Kiyomizu Temple

Fabulous view from the main hall
Kiyomizu temple was first built by a monk Enchin in 798 beside the Mt. Otoha. It was not a luxurious monuments like you see it today, but just a small hall. In 1633, by the lord Iemitsu, 3rd lord of Tokugawa family, donated money to the temple and constructed many monuments.

There are interesting story about Kiyomizu. As you can see on the picture below, there is a main hall cropping out the mountain. There is a lore saying “if you jump out from the hall of Kiyomizu and survive, your wish will be granted.” So during the Edo period, 234 jumps were counted. Today it is prohibited to jump out from here.