

Kaizando, Founder's Hall

This hall enshrines Shodo Shonin, an ascetic Buddhist monk, who founded the Nikkosan (present day Rinnoji Temple). After being initiated in Nara Buddhism, Shodo Shonin traveled to Nikko together with ten disciples to establish a temple. After founding Nikkosan, Shodo passed away at the venerable age of 83 and was cremated and originally buried in the upper reaches of this valley.

Around the time of the consecration of the Toshogu in 1617, this hall was constructed and Shodo Shonin's remains were moved to their current location behind this building. The grave is marked by a five-layered stupa, a tower of five stones carved in varying shapes. Although built in the seventeenth century, the hall is built in the style of the oldest buildings at the Rinnoji that date back to Shodo's time. In addition to Shodo, the building enshrines ten of his disciples and the bodhisattva Jizo. Each year, the founder of the temple is remembered during a memorial ceremony held here on April 1st. On July 13th a service is held for the Bon Festival, which venerates the spirits of deceased ancestors.

The tall cliff located behind this hall is known as Hotoke Iwa, or Buddha Rock, and was so named because part of the surface was believed to resemble the face of the Buddha. Due to a rockfall long ago, the image was destroyed and now only the name remains. There are a number of damaged stone statues at the foot of the cliff. One theory is that they may have fallen here from the Toshogu, which is located at the top of the cliff.