

Central Golden Hall

Statue of Shaka Nyorai

This splendid golden statue is a representation of Shakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, who attained awakening and vowed to save sentient beings in the fifth century BCE. The statue is dated to 1811 and is the fifth replacement of the original one, which was dedicated in 645. The right hand is lifted with the palm toward the viewer in the dispelling-fear gesture (*semui-in*) while the left rests on its lap, forming the wish-fulfilling gesture (*yogan-in*). Together, these hand gestures represent the great compassion of Shakyamuni, also known as Shaka Nyorai, who dispels fear and bestows tranquility of mind upon all sentient beings.

Carved of joined wood blocks, lacquered and gilded, this sculpture is the main image of the Central Golden Hall. It is also the principal icon of the Kofukuji Temple complex as a whole. Although of comparatively recent construction and refurbished for the reconstruction of the Central Golden Hall, it reproduces the classic style and scale of its predecessors in harmony with the images surrounding it.