

Main Hall/Golden Hall (Kondo)

The main worship hall at Yakushiji, the Kondo, was built to enshrine the temple's principal images, the Yakushi Triad. Conceived by Emperor Tenmu (631–686), the Kondo and the rest of the complex was initially located in Fujiwarakyo (present-day city of Kashihara), which was the capital from 694 to 710. When the capital was subsequently relocated about 30 kilometers north to Heijokyo—present-day Nara—so, too, was the temple, which found a new home at its current site in what is now Nishinokyo district.

The Kondo has succumbed to several disasters since the eighth century, including a major fire during the period of widespread warlord rivalries (Sengoku; 1467–1600). A temporary hall was built to house the Triad, but for centuries, the temple had no permanent main hall.

In 1968 reconstruction efforts commenced in earnest with funds raised via donations, received in exchange for storing the donors' handwritten copies of Buddhism's Heart Sutra, one of the shortest Buddhist sutras, dedicated in the name of the donor. Today 1 million of those sutras, a fraction of the total, are stored in a repository above the Yakushi Triad (the remainder are stored inside other temple buildings).

The reconstruction, replicating the original, was completed in 1976. The roof is covered with tiles molded and fired to replicate fragments excavated from Yakushiji's original Fujiwarakyo site.