

Main Hall (Kondō)

The Main Hall is the largest building at Tōji. It houses a statue of Yakushi Nyorai, the Buddha of medicine and healing, who has been venerated at the temple since its founding in 796. Many Japanese temples are built around a similar central hall where the principal Buddhist deity is enshrined. In the seventh and eighth centuries, worship of Yakushi Nyorai was strongly associated with the emperor and the court, making it a fitting deity for the temple built to protect the emperor's new capital of Kyoto.

The Main Hall was the only major building at Tōji until the temple's expansion under Kūkai (774–835), who became abbot in 824. Kūkai transformed Tōji into a headquarters for Shingon Buddhism, the esoteric school of Buddhism he founded after studying in China.

The original Main Hall burned down in 1486. Rebuilding was delayed for more than a century due to a series of civil wars. The current structure was completed in 1603. The building is designated a National Treasure, while the statues of Yakushi Nyorai, the Twelve Heavenly Generals, and two attendant bodhisattvas are Important Cultural Properties.