

### **Shōshibō Imperial Hall**

When emperors visited Tōji, they were received in a sumptuously decorated hall called the Shōshibō. Emperor Go-Uda (1265–1324) lived in the Shōshibō Imperial Hall for three years. Until the time of the Meiji Restoration (1868), emperors often took religious orders after abdicating the Chrysanthemum Throne. Emperor Go-Uda wanted to make Tōji a place for scholarship and the study of Shingon. Another emperor, Kōgon (1313–1364), lived in the hall for about six months while rival warlords fought for control of Kyoto.

The present hall is a reconstruction built in 1934 to mark 1,100 years since Kūkai, the Buddhist teacher and abbot who expanded Tōji in the ninth century, is believed to have entered eternal meditation.

The hall consists of six rooms, each decorated with a different motif. The sliding *fusuma* doors in five of the rooms are decorated with ink wash paintings. In contrast, the walls of the Imperial Messenger Room (Chokushi no Ma) are covered in gold leaf, and its *fusuma* are adorned with richly colored paintings of cranes and mountain scenes.