

Sanbō-in, National Treasure

Sanbō-in, the historical residence of the abbots, was built in 1115 by Shōkaku (1057–1129), the 14th head of Daigo-ji. The current structure dates to 1598, when it was reconstructed as a part of the 16th-century renovation program by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The name Sanbō-in derives from *sanbō*, the Japanese translation of the Sanskrit term *triratna* and the Buddhist concept of the Three Jewels' that refers to the Buddha, the Dharma (the law as taught by Buddha), and the Sangha (or monastic community).

The Sanbō-in residence is composed of several buildings and a garden that extends over more than 5,000 m² (ca. 5980 yd). The stately Drawing Room Omote-Shoin is a classic example of the architecture and interior design from the Momoyama period (1568–1600). The sliding door panels here are decorated with paintings on gold-leaf, a departure from the more somber adornments favored in earlier periods.

The garden of the residence is carefully designed to allow for greatest visual impact when viewed from inside. This design is attributed to Toyotomi Hideyoshi himself, who famously held an opulent banquet during the cherry blossom season in 1598, rebuilding Sanbō-in especially for this occasion. The garden has remained a popular spot for viewing the blossoms in spring to this day, featuring stones, ponds, waterfalls and moss, all of which represent an idealized nature and act as traditional elements of Japanese horticultural design.