

Aoi no ma (Important Cultural Property)

The Aoi no ma, or Hollyhock Room, is the first and largest of three contiguous reception rooms near the entrance of the Sanbō-in. As the room closest to the entrance, it has the lowest status, known as *gedan* (lower level), with an actually slightly lower floor compared to the other two rooms. The name of the room derived from the Aoi Matsuri (Hollyhock Festival), which is depicted in paintings on the sliding door panels that form its interior walls. The paintings are attributed to Ishida Yūtei (1721–1786). Now rather faded, the paintings show the stately yet vibrant procession of the Imperial envoy and his escort as they travel from the lower Shimogamo Shrine to the upper Kamigamo Shrine to the north.