

Omote-Shoin, the Drawing Room

The stately Drawing Room of Sanbō-in, known as Omote-Shoin, consists of three rooms, the lowest of which can be transformed into a stage. The floors of middle and upper rooms are both slightly elevated so that an audience can attain a better view of the performances. The plays performed here belonged to the performance art of *noh*, the classical Japanese dance-drama that developed since the 14th century, typically accompanied by *kyōgen*, a comic act often performed as an interval during *noh* performances.

The sliding door panels in the upper room are painted with scenes of a willow tree in each of the four seasons, a repeated appearance of the love of seasonal landscapes in Japanese art. The middle room is decorated with paintings of mountains. The paintings in both rooms are of unknown authorship but are thought to be by an artist associated with the Hasegawa Tōhaku (1539–1610) atelier, which specialized in detailed depictions of nature. The peacock images in the lower room are by Ishida Yūtei (1721–1786), a painter known for his skilled flora and fauna.

Together these rooms are designated as National Treasure.