

Main Hall

The Main Hall (Sairaido) is a reconstruction of a hall that once stood within the temple's gardens but was destroyed during the Onin War (1467–1477). Sairaido's principal object of worship is Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light who saves all who trust in him, delivering them to the Pure Land, or paradise, in the afterlife.

Amida is said to have appeared in a dream to the head priest of Saihoji Temple. Upon waking the next day, the priest discovered the statue in the hall's inner sanctum, inside the small altar shrine where it still sits today. It is unusual to find an image of Amida in a Zen temple, which more typically features a statue of Kannon (the bodhisattva of compassion) as its principal object of worship. Over the course of its long history, Saihoji has served as a temple of two other Buddhist schools, the Hosso school and the Jodo (Pure Land) school. The Amida statue reflects the continuing influence of the Pure Land school, which places great emphasis on belief in Amida. Sairaido is also known for its extraordinary *fusuma* sliding door paintings and as a place where visitors can offer prayers to Amida Buddha.