

Shitoan Hall

Shitoan Hall, built in the late nineteenth century, stands at the highest point of the upper garden. This worship hall is dedicated to those with a close connection to the temple's history. Statues and memorial tablets inside represent Gyoki (668–749, tablet only), Muso Soseki (1275–1351, tablet and statue), Fujiwara Chikahide (unknown, statue only)—the Matsuo Taisha Shrine priest who enlisted Soseki's help in restoring Saihoji—and his wife (statue only). Standing between the couple is a plaque commemorating the priest Shinnyoho Shino (799–881, statue only), a disinherited son of Emperor Heizei (774–824) who was formerly known as Prince Takaoka. Shino, who was a devout Buddhist, entered the priesthood under the wing of revered Buddhist monk and scholar Kukai (774–835), also known as Kobo Daishi.