

Kondo Hall

National Treasure

Situated at the top of Yoroizaka (Armor Slope, so named for its resemblance to samurai armor), the Kondo Hall dates to the mid-ninth century, making it one of the oldest structures at Muroji. Its design is somewhat unusual in that it is a high-floored structure in front of an open, gravel prayer terrace. It is topped with a shingle roof of persimmon bark.

The hall's Shumidani platform boasts a rare arrangement of Buddhist figures: five large, halo-backed statues with 12 smaller figures in front. In the center of the back row is the Shakyamuni Buddha. To the left are statues of Monju, the bodhisattva representing transcendent wisdom, and the Eleven-Headed Kannon, also known as the bodhisattva of mercy. To the right are Yakushi Nyorai (the Medicine Buddha) and Jizo, the bodhisattva savior of sentient beings and protector of children and travelers. In the front row stand the Twelve Heavenly Generals, which date to the Kamakura period (1185–1333). These exquisitely crafted, lifelike warriors guard the 12 traditional directions. Each bears a Chinese zodiac animal upon its head. These statues are housed in the Treasure Hall, along with the statue of Eleven-Headed Kannon from March 2020.