

Painted Sliding Partitions (*Fusuma-e*) by the Hasegawa and Kanō Schools

The sliding partitions (*fusuma*) that separate the interior rooms of the Shaka-dō Hall are decorated with paintings from two of Japan's foremost artistic lineages: the Hasegawa and Kanō schools. The Kanō school was established by Kanō Masanobu (1434–1530) during the mid-Muromachi period (1336–1573), and it quickly earned a reputation as the preeminent school of Japanese painting and the favored artistic school of the shogunate. This position was contested by the newly formed Hasegawa school, established by Hasegawa Tōhaku (1539–1610) during the Momoyama period (1568–1600), largely considered the golden age of Japanese art. During this period, both schools produced works that have been recognized as National Treasures.

For much of Japanese history, artists were supported by the patronage of aristocratic families who commissioned them to decorate their homes or favored temples. In order to secure work, Hasegawa Tōhaku spent much of his career competing for this patronage with the foremost artist of the Kanō school, Kanō Eitoku (1543–1590). During the fierce competition of the Momoyama period, the artwork at a particular temple or home was typically produced by either the Hasegawa school or the Kanō school. The decision of which school to hire generally depended on the individual preferences of the family or the chief priest of the temple.

In spite of this trend toward favoritism, works by both the Kanō and Hasegawa schools appear side by side at Eikandō. For example, the piece titled *Tigers and Bamboo* in the Tora no Ma (on the hall's west side) was painted by an artist of the Hasegawa school, but *Pines*, in the neighboring Shiki no Ma, was produced by the Kanō school. Apparently, even the artists themselves were resistant to letting their work share space at the temple, and Eikandō is believed to be the only place where it is possible to see artwork by both schools in the same building.

The Hasegawa and Kanō schools are both characterized by a monochromatic palette of diluted ink (*sumi-e*) and a style that blends Chinese-style art (*kanga*) with Japanese-style art (*yamato-e*). It can be difficult to distinguish pieces by the two schools, but the treatment of certain common elements such as rocks and trees is often used as a basis for comparison.