

Shinden Main Hall

The Shinden, or Main Hall, was not part of the original design for Sanzen-in Temple. In fact, it previously stood in central Kyoto and wasn't moved to Sanzen-in until the late Meiji era (1868–1912). Members of the imperial family began to serve as abbots of the temple in the twelfth century, and the main hall served as their primary residence. It is also traditionally used for Osenboko, a service of Buddhist chanting that dates to the reign of Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192) who ruled for three years from 1155.

In one of the chambers, there is a raised seat for the emperor or his representatives to pray on imperial visits. Due to the importance of such guests, the room was carefully positioned to offer the best views of Yuseien Garden. The Gyokuza Room, also known as the Rainbow Room, displays the painting of a rainbow by Shimomura Kanzan on its sliding doors.

Though not open to public view, the main object of worship in the hall is a statue of Yakushi Ruriko Nyorai, a Buddha with healing powers. The statues of three other Buddhist deities are on display, all designated National Treasures: Amida Buddha, Kannon, and Fudo Myo-o. The temple's primary teaching is that Earth is paradise and every human being is a Buddha.