

### **Statue of Cloistered Emperor Goshirakawa**

Although Hōjūji was originally established in 989 by an aristocrat of the Fujiwara family, the temple's historical profile is now inextricably tied to retired emperor Goshirakawa (1127–1192). After only three years on the imperial throne, Goshirakawa retired in 1158 and took Buddhist vows. Undergoing a range of induction rituals, Goshirakawa assumed the title of Dharma Sovereign (*hōō*) and set about building a massive temple-palace [palace-cloister] in the vicinity of Hōjūji from which he would rule the country for the succeeding three decades. There is a statue of Goshirakawa at his grave carved by revered sculptor Unkei (1150–1223) in the early thirteenth century. The sculpture is enshrined within a gilded cabinet and hidden from public view, and temple lore holds that the 1,001 statues of Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, at Sanjūsangendō all face this image.