

Kashodo Hall

Located beside the main hall, the two-story Kashodo Hall is Hokuokuji Temple's second major building. The top floor is a drawing room, while the ground floor is used for zazen meditation and Buddhist memorial services. The hall is not generally open to the public.

On Sunday mornings the hall hosts a weekly meditation session on the first floor. Everyone is welcome, although the classes are in Japanese and can be quite challenging for casual participants. Students and monks must sit or kneel for long periods on a thin cushion on the floor in silent contemplation. Wooden plaques on the wall list the names of regular attendees, some of whom have been coming to meditate at Hokuokuji for 50 years.

Two statues are enshrined in the open inner sanctum at the front of the hall. One is an exceptionally detailed wooden statue of the temple's founding priest, Tengan Eko (1273–1335), seated in a chair. The statue's smooth contours make it look more like clay than wood. It dates to 1347 and survived the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, which leveled many of the temple buildings. Beside it is a statue of Kassapa Buddha wearing a flowing red and blue robe. This statue is a replica—the original, destroyed in a fire in 1800, was made by the famous Buddhist sculptor Takuma Hogen.

There is a small garden behind the Kashodo Hall, believed to have been designed by Tengan Eko. It is a typical Zen rock garden, with a carp pond and stream, surrounded by trees and bounded by the temple's bamboo grove.