

Hatto (Lecture Hall): Fasting Buddha Statue

The stone sculpture in front of the dais depicts Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, while fasting. The emaciated figure sits with eyes closed and legs crossed in the lotus position. The hollowed-out stomach and visible ribs convey the tribulations of fasting and the determination of the monks who undertake it. Six Buddhist monks in prayer are carved into the base of the statue.

The statue is a replica of a sculpture in the Lahore Museum in Pakistan that is designated a National Treasure there. The original is considered a priceless example of Gandhara art, a fusion of Ancient Greek and Indian Buddhist art that flourished on the Indian subcontinent between 180 BCE and 10 BCE. Sculptures and artworks from this period made their way through China and Korea and into Japan.

This statue is the only official replica of the original. After it was exhibited in the Aichi Expo in 2005, it was donated to Kenchoji Temple by the Pakistani government. It is a rare and precious piece of art, showing the influence of realistic Ancient Greek sculpture on early depictions of the Buddha.