

Sanshōkaku (Reception Hall)

The Sanshōkaku is used to accommodate large groups when holding lectures and zazen (seated Zen practice). Its most remarkable feature is its coffered ceiling, which is decorated with 230 unique paintings.

The hall exhibits many elements of *shoin-zukuri*, a style of residential architecture characterized by decorative alcoves (*tokonoma*), sliding screens (*fusuma*), and floors covered in woven rush mats (*tatami*). This style was initially used for the abbot's quarters at Zen temples, but it began to be applied more widely during the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568–1603). Today, *shoin-zukuri* is the style commonly used for traditional Japanese-style rooms in both households and inns.

The Sanshōkaku was rebuilt in 1994, but some of the original timbers remain and can be distinguished by their darker color. The paintings that adorn the alcoves of the coffered ceiling are primarily of birds and flowers with seasonal associations. The paintings were created by 144 artists of Tokyo-based schools using traditional techniques and materials. In addition to the birds, five other creatures are also depicted in the paintings: two carp, two *shishi* (Chinese guardian lions), and one squirrel. It is said that something pleasant will happen to anyone who can spot these five particular paintings.