

Jōyōden (Founder's Hall)

The Jōyōden is the mausoleum of Zen Master Dōgen (1200–1253), the founder of the Sōtō school of Zen Buddhism in Japan. At Buddhist temples, the Founder's Hall is more typically called the *kaisandō* (literally, “hall to those who opened the mountain”), but this hall's unique name is a reference to the posthumous title conferred upon Dōgen by Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) in 1879. The emperor referred to him as Kōso Jōyō Daishi, meaning “Great Teacher and Eminent Forbearer Who Upholds the Light.” The hall was last rebuilt in 1881.

The main altar holds a large statue of Dōgen. His statue is flanked by statues of the four abbots who followed him: Koun Ejō (1198–1280), Tettsū Gikai (1219–1309), Gien (d. 1314), and Giun (1253–1333). The frieze above the altar is decorated with intricate wooden carvings by local carpenters. Each and every morning, a select group of monk trainees (*unsui*) wake up before the rest of the temple to prepare cups of tea for the statues. This daily offering shows respect and appreciation for the abbots' teachings, and the practice has continued unbroken since the tradition was first established by Eihei-ji Temple's second abbot, Koun Ejō.