

Shidōden (Memorial Hall)

The Shidōden is a memorial hall where daily services are held for deceased laypeople and their relatives. The hall, which was last rebuilt in 1926, enshrines mortuary tablets that bear the names of individuals who received memorial services at the temple. Monks at Eiheiji Temple conduct Buddhist memorial services on a regular basis for up to 50 years after each person's passing. The inner part of the Shidōden is known as the *shariden* (reliquary). It contains an altar dedicated to Ksitigarbha, a bodhisattva whose name can be literally translated as "earth womb." Ksitigarbha is said to envelop and soothe the suffering of all people with infinite compassion, just as the earth has the power to nurture all lives.

A large set of wooden prayer beads (*ōjuzu*) measuring 18 meters long and weighing 250 kilograms hangs inside the Shidōden. It was offered to the temple by an anonymous donor from Nagoya after the end of World War II as a prayer for lasting peace.