

Hakkakudo (Octagonal Hall)

Hakkakudo is the only remaining hall of the important Buddhist structures that used to be part of Iwashimizu Hachimangu, historically a shrine-temple complex that practiced a syncretic fusion of Shinto and Buddhism. The architectural style of this eight-sided hall is rather rare: it is not a regular octagon, so its sides are not all of equal length. Hakkakudo once housed a three-meter-tall wooden statue of Amida, a Buddha strongly connected to the deity Hachiman still worshipped at the main hall of Iwashimizu Hachimangu.

Hakkakudo was originally constructed in the thirteenth century and was rebuilt and repaired several times with donations from high-ranking nobility and powerful lords. Its current shape dates back to the seventeenth century. In 1868, the Meiji government ordered the separation of Shinto and Buddhism, and all Buddhist structures had to be removed from Iwashimizu Hachimangu. To save Hakkakudo, a former chief abbot of the nearby Shoboji Temple had it moved to this location atop an ancient burial mound in 1870.

The statue of Amida, now a nationally designated Important Cultural Property, was displayed at the Kyoto National Museum from 1998 and transferred to Shoboji in 2008. In 2012, both the past and present locations of Hakkakudo were designated National Historic Sites as part of the Iwashimizu Hachimangu precincts.