

## **Shoboji Temple**

Shoboji is a well-preserved example of seventeenth-century temple architecture with noteworthy statues, paintings, and scenic gardens. This Buddhist temple was established in 1191 as the memorial temple of the Shimizu family by an ancestor who was a retainer of Minamoto Yoritomo (1147–1199), the founder of the Kamakura shogunate. From 1546, Shoboji was also tasked with the duty of praying for the safety and prosperity of the country by decree of Emperor Go-Nara (1497–1557).

Shoboji benefited greatly from the generosity of Okame no Kata (1576–1642), a daughter of the Shimizu family who became a consort of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), the first Tokugawa shogun. The main hall, the larger abbot's quarters, and the *karamon* gate were built in 1630 with donations from Okame and are nationally designated Important Cultural Properties. The main hall houses a statue of Amida Buddha from the Kamakura period (1185–1333) as the principal object of worship, and its painted wooden interior still mostly retains its original colors. The larger abbot's quarters and the drawing room contain classical Chinese and nature-themed paintings on sliding doors, and the rear garden of the temple is a Place of Scenic Beauty designated by Kyoto Prefecture. A large statue of Amida Buddha that once was enshrined in the octagonal Hakkakudo hall nearby was moved to the Ho'unden hall at Shoboji for safekeeping in 2008.

The temple is usually not open to the public, but visiting is possible several times a year on special occasions.