

Fureai Kannondo Hall

The Fureai Kannondo Hall enshrines a Buddhist statue that was designed to be touched. The statue depicts Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, and was made with the goal of inclusivity for visually impaired people. It embodies the concept of *fureai*, which includes both literal touch and figurative connectedness, and was thus named Fureai Kannon.

The majority of statues in temples can only be viewed from a distance, making it hard for people with impaired vision to appreciate and worship the deities. The Fureai Kannon statue was created in 1991 to remedy this issue. It allows people to connect with the bodhisattva through the physical act of placing their hands upon the statue to feel the expressive facial features, the flowing folds of the robes, and other detailed shapes with their fingers.

The statue is situated low enough to be within the reach of children, and a wall inside the hall has a description of the figure in Japanese braille. Everyone is welcome to lay their hands on Fureai Kannon and interact with a Buddhist statue through touch.