

Seated Statue of Founding Abbot Shōkū

Inside the Kaisandō (Founder's Hall) is a carved wooden statue depicting Engyōji's founding abbot, Shōkū (910–1007), seated in a meditative posture. The large dome of the statue's head is offset by a slender body draped in loosely fitting monk's robes. The statue's hands are now missing, but the placement of its arms suggests that they met with the palms together in a gesture of prayer, or perhaps held a begging bowl. These interpretations are supported by the statue's humble countenance, which suggests a simple monk in prayer rather than a stately image of the founding abbot. Although the statue's origin is not known, its style and composition suggest that it was created in the early eleventh century. It was originally housed within Sengaku'in, one of the six subtemples of the Engyōji complex.