

Kangiin Honbo Hall

Kangiin Honbo Hall was completed in 1197 by founder Saito Sanemori's son, who served as the head priest of Menuma Shodenzan Temple. The Honbo is used as the abbot's residence.

Visitors can walk around the grounds, which include a small pond and topiaries. The building has intricate carvings from the Showa era (1926–1989) under the front gable and eaves. Under the curved gable, a carving portrays a hermit riding a *ran*, a mythical bird similar to a phoenix. The hermit is likely to be Baifuku (Mei Fu), a Daoist immortal. He was said to have been a governor in China during the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), who drank the elixir of immortality. Directly below this carving is a scene depicting a child breaking a large jar to free a friend who had fallen inside. It is an ancient Chinese allegory that reminds the viewer to remain calm in times of crisis, and that no matter how precious an object is, human life is always more valuable. The Honbo is the starting point for processions during the annual spring and fall festivals at the temple and is about 200 meters from the Shodendo main hall.