

## Matsudaira Toshogu Shrine: Main Shrine and Ceiling Paintings

The Main Shrine is the central feature and most sacred part of Matsudaira Toshogu. It is where shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) is enshrined as a Shinto deity alongside Matsudaira Chikauji (d. 1394?), the founder of the Matsudaira family. The Main Shrine was built in 1931 in the *gongen-zukuri* style that is a hallmark of shrines favored by the ruling warrior class during the Edo period (1603–1867). In this style, the worship hall (*haiden*), liturgy hall (*saimonden*), and main sanctuary (*honden*) are all under one roof. Only the worship hall is open to the public. Its lattice ceiling is decorated with 108 images of local flowers and other plants painted by the Toyota-based lacquer artist Ando Noriyoshi (b. 1947). The paintings were finished in 2015 as part of the building's renovation, undertaken to commemorate 400 years since Ieyasu's death.

Each of the 108 images is painted on a round background of cedar wood, coated only with clear lacquer so that the grain of the wood is visible. Black lacquer is used to create the circular framing around each painting and to cover the rails that create the lattice. The images depict plants such as white and red plum blossoms, dwarf bamboo, and chrysanthemums, and are arranged into four sections to represent the seasons. The central painting on the eastern end features the rising sun, while that on the western end includes the full moon. In each corner is an image of *futaba aoi* (*Asarum caulescens*, a species of wild ginger), the plant that inspired the Matsudaira-Tokugawa family emblem. That crest features a mythical three-leaved version of the two-leaved *futaba aoi*, which can be seen growing outside the Main Shrine.