

Shōdenin Shoin

Like Jo-an, the Shōdenin Shoin was constructed in 1618 as part of Oda Uraku's residence at Kenninji Temple. It is only one part of the original whole, which was called the Shōdenin. The Shōdenin complex functioned as a sub-temple within the larger Kenninji grounds, and it contained a Buddhist worship hall in addition to Uraku's private chambers, gardens, and tea house. The Shoin, or "study," of the Shōdenin was a part of the residence where Uraku could entertain guests, read, or relax.

Different parts of the Shōdenin complex were sold to various buyers in 1908. The Shoin was sold to Mitsui Takamine, who also acquired Jo-an. As part of the creation of Urakuen, both buildings were relocated to Inuyama and restored to look as they did in Uraku's day. Even the relative positions of the buildings are faithful to the initial layout of Uraku's residential complex.

Restorations

During the 1971 reconstruction, architect Horiguchi Sutemi relied upon a 1799 illustration of Uraku's residence to restore the Shoin to its original appearance. He removed the covered walkway that the Mitsui family had added between the Shoin and the tea house, and he restored the low handrail on the Shoin's south veranda. Horiguchi also commissioned an unusually long, rectangular stone step for the south side. Next came the roof: when Meitetsu acquired the Shoin, it was roofed with ceramic tiles set in a wave pattern, but the old drawing showed flat wooden shingles. Horiguchi opted to use copper shingles that were similar in shape but far more durable.

Architectural Features

The main entrance of the Shōdenin Shoin is on the north side, beneath a gently curving eave (*karahafu*) that is traditionally associated with refinement and prestige. In addition to the tiled entryway, the building contains six rooms and a kitchen-like area called a *mizuya* on the western side. It is likely that in Uraku's day this room was not a *mizuya* but part of a hallway that connected the Shoin to the Shōdenin's worship hall.

From the entryway, dramatic bars of white can be seen on the interior walls. These lighter places show the locations of the building's wooden beams and support posts. Over time, manganese (which is naturally present in the mud plaster) leaches to the wall's surface. There it oxidizes, staining the outermost layer a brownish black. This effect is reduced, however, in areas where there is wood framing inside the walls.

Fusuma Paintings

The rooms of the Shoin are separated by large, decorative sliding panels called fusuma. Like folding screens, fusuma are often decorated with landscape paintings that span multiple panels. The Shoin's fusuma were decorated by some of the most skilled painters of Uraku's day. The central room once had fusuma paintings by Hasegawa Tōhaku (1539–1610), the founder of the eminent Hasegawa school. Each of the eight panels was decorated with a painting of one of four flowers—lotus, orchid, chrysanthemum, and plum blossom—that are a common theme in classical Chinese painting. The trees, rocks, and figures in the paintings all display Hasegawa's distinctive style, and the fusuma were likely painted during his middle years. (This would have been before the Shōdenin was constructed, so the paintings were likely brought from one of Uraku's previous residences.)

Other fusuma in the Shoin were painted with ink landscapes (*sansui*) by several members of the Kanō school—perhaps the most famous school in the history of Japanese painting. Due to the extreme age and fragility of the paintings, most of the fusuma have been removed from the Shoin for preservation. The two chrysanthemum panels by Hasegawa are not owned by Urakuen, but are thought to be in a private collection.