

## **The Main Hall of Kokokuji Temple**

The Main Hall (Hatto) is the spiritual heart of the Kokokuji Temple complex and is dedicated to Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha. The hall is notable for its two-tiered hip-and-gable roof, decorative roof tiling, and complex wooden bracketing that supports the eaves. The current structure dates from 1797.

The hall houses numerous Buddhist statues, including the gilded principal statue of Shakyamuni. The figure is seated upon a lotus pedestal and is flanked on both sides by statues of the Four Heavenly Kings, the protectors of Buddhism. On the ceiling, a painting of a dragon guards the hall.

A corridor leads from the back of the Main Hall to the Meditation Hall (Zazendo). From there, a second corridor continues to the Founder's Hall (Kaizando). The Founder's Hall enshrines Shinchō Kakushin (1207–1298), a monk instrumental in the propagation of Zen Buddhism in Japan. He served as the head monk of Kokokuji Temple for much of the latter part of the thirteenth century. Kakushin is also referred to as Hotto Enmyō Kokushi (lit. “perfectly awakened national teacher of the Dharma lamp”), a title granted posthumously by Emperor Godaigo (r. 1318–1339). The Founder's Hall houses a wooden statue of Kakushin and is built over the Zen master's burial site. The current structure dates from 1823.

The Meditation Hall and Founder's Hall are closed to the public, and the Main Hall is only open during temple events. Visitors can look inside the Main Hall through the slatted panels of the main door and may view the exteriors of all three halls on a walk around the temple grounds.