The project is a zazen hall for Choraku-Ji, a 400-year-old temple of the Soto sect located on the banks of the Abukuma River in Fukushima City. The owner wishes to use modern technology to construct a new zazen hall that harmonizes with both the temple’s old wooden buildings and the greenery on the premises. We have created a tranquil and highly spiritual space by interpreting in a modern context such traditional architectural elements as the deep shade created by a grand roof, the high floor structure, the fusion between building and nature, the dynamic beauty of the structure, etc.

A white-plaster enclosed space, the zazen hall provides a simple contrast to the open space of the entrance hall below. The zazen hall is cantilevered, extending outward to create an open hallway space underneath that is continuous with the surrounding greenery.

A staircase connects the upper and lower floors. The cantilevered concrete steps, embedded with steel plates for support, reflect the cantilevered zazen hall and evoke in visitors a feeling of floating as they rise into the zazen world upstairs.

High sidelights create the impression of a roof suspended above the box-shaped plastered hall. The deep eaves, sharply edged with shaped steel, create a deep shade. Although the second-floor zazen hall is an enclosed space, a sense of nature and the passage of time are felt in the light and wind that pass through the high sidelights and the floor air vents, imparting an even deeper sense of tranquility.