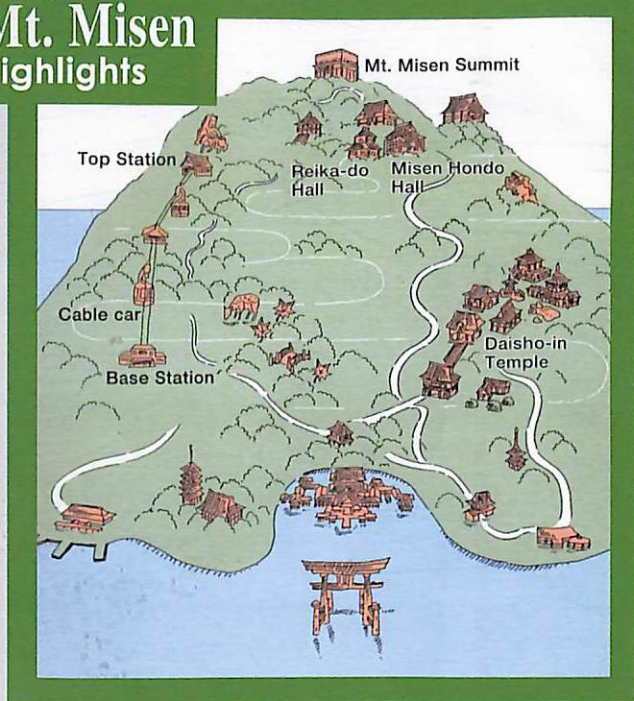


Miyajima Mt. Misen Highlights



The Sacred Mountain of Mt. Misen

Mt. Misen is situated in the center of Miyajima Island, known as one of three most beautiful scenic spots in Japan. The mountain was opened as an ascetic holy mountain site by Kukai, posthumously called Kobo Daishi, in the autumn of 806 when he underwent ascetic practice for one hundred days on the mountain. The fire lit by Kobo Daishi is said to have been burning for 1200 years. The fire was used to light the Flame of Peace in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. On the mountain are various spiritual sites which remind us of the holy deeds performed by Kobo Daishi. The panoramic view from the top of the mountain is magnificent.



Eternal Fire



Reika-do Eternal Fire Hall

Information about Climbing Mt. Misen

A ninety-minute hike up a fairly steep path from Daisho-in Temple takes you to the top of Mt. Misen. On the way back, another route is available. After a thirty-minute walk to the station on the top, you can take the cable car back down the mountain.

Annual Events

◆New Year Ritual <January 1 to 3>

Starting at 12:00 AM New Year's Day, special rituals are offered for family happiness, health and realizing worshippers' wishes.



New Year Ritual

◆Setsubun Warding - Off Evil Ritual <February 3>

After the Dai-hannya Sutra Chanting Ritual for warding off evil, bean and mochi rice cakes are thrown to bring in good fortune.



Setsubun Warding - Off Evil Ritual

◆Ceremony for Kitchen Knives <March 8>

The ceremony is held to give thanks to old kitchen knives that are no longer usable. It also offers a memorial service for the animals that have lost their lives.



Ceremony for Kitchen Knives

◆Fire Walking Ritual <April 15 and November 15>

Grand Rituals are held twice a year to honor the Three Awesome Forest Deities of Mt. Misen. During the Goma Fire Ritual, which uses the Eternal Fire lit 1200 years ago, worshippers walk over burning coals while praying for health.



Fire Walking Ritual

◆Kannon Grand Ritual <August 10>

It is believed that if worshippers offer prayers to Kannon Bosatsu, or Deity of Mercy, on that day, they are given the same blessings as if they offered prayers for forty-eight thousand days.



Kannon Grand Ritual

◆Lantern Ritual <September 9 to 11>

Worshippers offer countless numbers of lanterns in the wish for an everlasting peaceful world.



Lantern Ritual

Miyajima Misen

Daisho-in Temple

210 Miyajima-cho, Hatsukaichi-shi, Hiroshima-ken, Japan
739-0592 TEL (0829)44-0111 FAX (0829)44-0428
<http://www.galilei.ne.jp/daisyoin/>
Open: 8AM - 5PM No admission fee is required.

MIYAJIMA MISEN

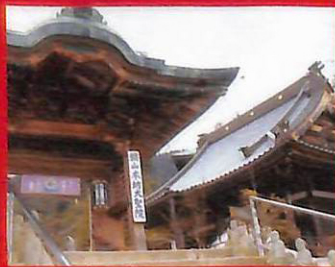
DAISHO-IN TEMPLE



Seated Image of Fudo Myo-o (Important Cultural Asset)

Daisho-in Temple

Daisho-in Temple is one of the most prestigious Shingon temples in the western part of Japan. In the 12th century, Emperor Toba founded his prayer hall in the temple. The temple had close links with Imperial Family until the 19th century. Emperor Meiji honored the temple by staying there in 1885. Until the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the temple had had twelve affiliated temples. It also had a close relationship with Itsukushima Shinto Shrine on Miyajima Island.

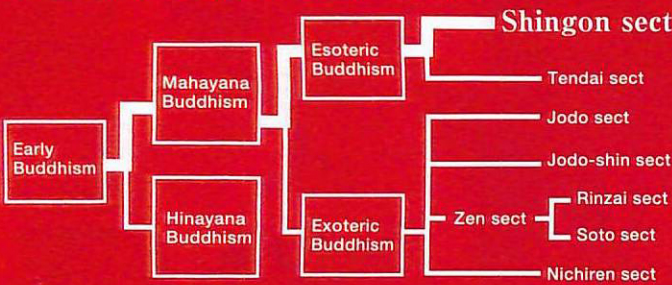


Some Information about Buddhism

Buddhism is a world religion founded by Shakyamuni, or the historical Buddha, in India on the River Ganges in the 5th century BC. The supreme objective of Buddhism is to reach Buddhahood by attaining enlightenment and eradicating suffering through practicing Shakyamuni's teachings. It is believed that Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the 6th century AD.

The Shingon Sect and Other Buddhist Sects in Japan

The Shingon sect is known as esoteric Buddhism in Japan. The sect teaches that humans can attain enlightenment through rituals combining physical, spoken and mental disciplines.



Kobo Daishi Kukai, Founder of the Shingon Sect

Kukai, posthumously known as Kobo Daishi, is the founder of the Shingon sect. In 804, aged 31, he went to Tang China. He mastered profound esoteric teachings under Keika, a leading Buddhist priest, in the then-capital city of Xian. His achievements include establishing the first comprehensive school for common people and repairing irrigation ponds. Kobo Daishi is also well-known as one of the three greatest calligraphers of Japan.

Introduction to Buddhist Deities

In esoteric Buddhism, Dainichi Nyorai, or Cosmic Buddha, is believed to embody Buddhist philosophy, and other various Buddhist deities are incarnated in figures of Dainichi Nyorai. There are four groups of Buddhist deities: Nyorai, Bosatsu, Myo-o, and Ten.



Amida Nyorai Image

[Nyorai] 如来

Nyorai, commonly called Buddhas, are the highest deities in Buddhism. They are the ones who have attained enlightenment. As a sign of their enlightenment and liberation from desire, all Nyorai images are without possessions such as jewelry or other ornaments.



Juichimen Kanzeon Bosatsu Image

[Bosatsu] 菩薩

Bosatsu, or Bodhisattvas, are the ones who are undergoing ascetic training to attain enlightenment. However, Bosatsu are not ordinary ascetics. They are the ones who are committed not to becoming Nyorai unless all sufferers on earth are saved. To show their determination, Bosatsu images hold various objects.



Namikiri Fudo Myo-o Image

[Myo-o] 明王

Myo-o deities are the envoys from Dainichi Nyorai, or Cosmic Buddha. Their fierce facial expressions show their strong determination to make humans follow Buddhist teachings. The frighteningly faced Fudo Myo-o, or Immovable King, holds a sword and rope as manifestations of his determination.



Bishamon Ten Image

[Ten] 天

Ten are originally ancient Indian deities and are guardians of Buddhism. Ten images are often placed close to Nyorai or Bosatsu images, showing their commitment to protecting these divine entities. Bishamon Ten, symbol of victory and wealth, is among them.

Tengu, Indispensable Entities to the Holy Sites on Mountains

Tengu, with wings and long noses, have been considered to possess supernatural powers since ancient times. Various Tengu legends and faiths were created, leading them to deification. Tengu are indispensable to the holy sites on mountains.



Additional Information

Q What is syncretism of religions?

Syncretism of religions in Japan is a long-practiced religious belief which incorporated indigenous Shinto with Buddhism in pre-modern times. From the 8th century, Buddhism temples enshrined Shinto deities, and affiliated Buddhist temples were built in the precincts of Shinto shrines until 1868, when the new Meiji government issued a ban forbidding Buddhism and Shinto syncretism.



Q Why do Jizo Bosatsu wear red bibs?

Jizo Bosatsu images are depicted differently from other Bosatsu images. Jizo images are usually depicted as Buddhist monks holding walking sticks. In some cases, Jizo images are wearing red bibs and caps like babies. Parents who have lost their children take good care of Jizo images, as though they were their lost children.



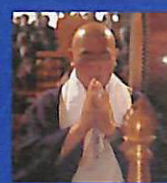
Q What is the Goma Ritual?

At temples belonging to the Shingon sect, you might see a priest at the Buddhist altar chanting Shingon words and keeping a little fire burning. This is called the Goma Ritual. Priests burn sticks called Goma that hold the prayers of worshippers and chant the Shingon words, asking for magical power from the deities.



Q What is Shingon?

In the Shingon sect, Buddhist priests and worshippers chant the Shingon words in the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit. It is believed that through chanting the Shingon words, humans show their allegiance to various Buddhist deities and acquire blessings. "Nam Honzon Kaie", meaning "I entrust myself to all deities", is the Shingon phrase applicable to all deities.

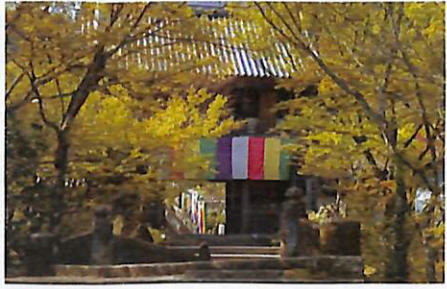


Some Common Practices at Daisho-in Temple

People typically rinse their hands and mouths with water contained in the basin located near the Niomon Gate. When standing in front of Buddhist deities, it is customary to put your hands together, chant some Shingon words while clearing your mind, and bow.

1 Niomon Gate

This serves as the official gateway into the temple. A pair of guardian king statues stand by the gate. Nio kings are believed to ward off evil, and are determined to preserve Buddhist philosophy on earth.



2 Dai-hannyakyo Sutra

The six hundred volumes of Dai-hannyakyo Scripture were introduced from India by a Chinese monk named Sanzo. It is believed that touching these sutras will bring you enormous fortune.



3 Reiho-kan Hall

This hall was established to exhibit treasures possessed by Daisho-in Temple. These include the oldest seated Fudo Myo-o image with braided hair in Japan, designated as an important cultural asset by the central government.



4 500 Rakan Statues



Lining the steps to the temple are the statues of five hundred of Shaka Nyorai's disciples. These images all have unique facial expressions.

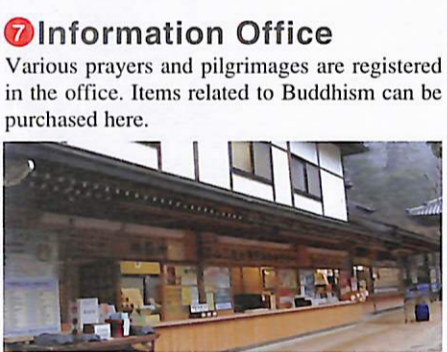
5 Belfry

The bell was rung to tell the time in the morning, afternoon and evening in the past. Now it is rung to start the time for worship.



6 Sutra Registration Office

In this office, worshippers receive an acknowledgement from the temple after offering sutra transcription or recitation.



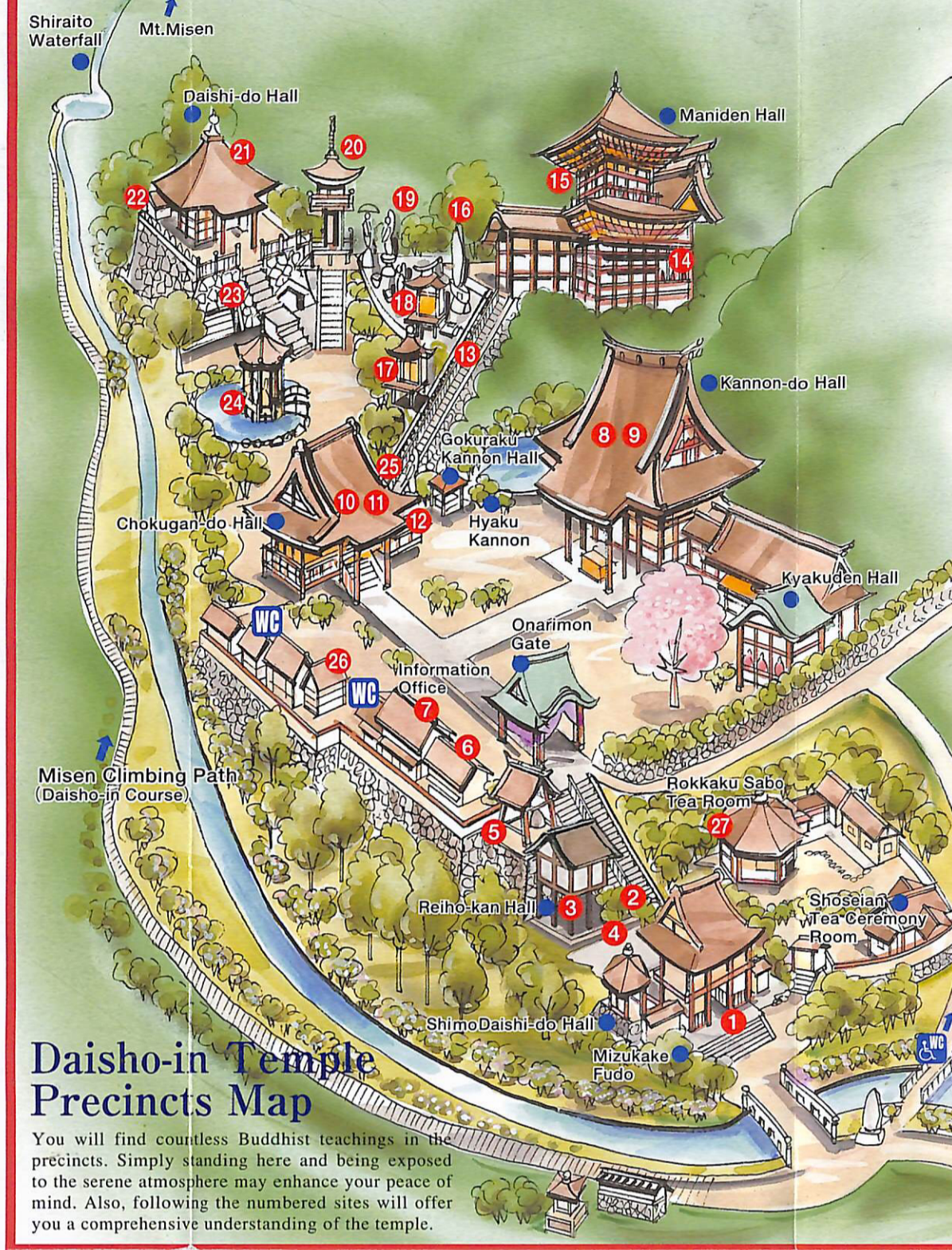
8 Juichimen Kanzeon Bosatsu

This image of Kannon Bosatsu or Deity of Mercy has eleven heads, implying a commitment to look for all living creatures on earth to save them. The image was enshrined at Itsukushima Shinto Shrine in the past. This fact shows the close connection between Shinto and Buddhism.



9 Sand Mandala

A gigantic mandala using colored sand depicts the divine figure of Kannon Bosatsu, the symbol of mercy. The mandala was made by Buddhist priests from Tibet.



Daisho-in Temple Precincts Map

You will find countless Buddhist teachings in the precincts. Simply standing here and being exposed to the serene atmosphere may enhance your peace of mind. Also, following the numbered sites will offer you a comprehensive understanding of the temple.

10 Namikiri Fudo Myo-o

Fudo Myo-o, or Immovable King, is an incarnated figure of Dainichi Nyorai, or Cosmic Buddha. The image is characterized by the fierce face to show his determination to destroy evil. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, one of three great unifiers of Japan in the 16th century, prayed to this image for safety at sea and victory in battle.



11 1000 Fudo Images

Commemorating the succession of the current (77th) head priest, one thousand Fudo myo-o, or Immovable King, images were donated by worshippers. The Goma Ritual of burning wooden sticks on which prayers are inscribed is held at ten o'clock every morning.



12 33 Incarnated Kannon Images

Kannon Bosatsu, or Deity of Mercy, is believed to have been incarnated thirty three times to save the common people from their suffering. To show gratitude, thirty three incarnated figures are placed here.



13 Mani Wheel

Spinning the wheel is believed to invite blessings equivalent to reading one volume of the Hannyashinkyo, or Heart Sutra.



14 Maniden Hall

Maniden Hall is the main prayer hall where Sanki Daigongen, or the Three Awesome Deities of Mt. Misen, are enshrined. Countless worshippers come and pray asking for contentment in their daily lives, good health and longevity. Prayers accompanied by a taiko drum are offered every day.



15 Maniden Bodaisho Room

One thousand images of Amida Nyorai, or Buddha of Infinite Light, believed to take the deceased to West Paradise, have been donated by worshippers. The temple's priests offer eternal memorial services for the ancestors of the worshippers.



16 Hochozuka Monument

A ceremony to give thanks to old kitchen knives that are no longer usable is held before this monument on March 8th.



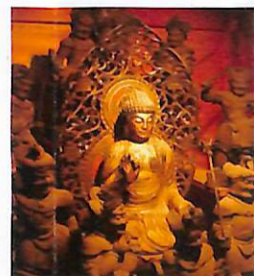
17 Aizen Myo-o

King Aizen Myo-o is believed to save humans from worldly desires involving lust or sexual passion, thus leading to enlightenment.



18 Yakushi Nyorai

Yakushi Nyorai, or Medicine Buddha, is believed to maintain the health of worshippers.



19 Mizukake Jizo

Seven Jizo Bosatsu images are placed here, centered on the one believed to redeem the spirits of deceased babies and children. Worshippers pour water on each of the Jizo images to console the souls of the loved ones.



20 Amida Nyorai

A prince of the Imperial Family served as the head priest of the temple. He was a devout follower of Amida Nyorai, or Buddha of Infinite Light, believed to take humans to West Paradise.



21 Daishi-do Hall

Kukai, posthumously known as Kobo Daishi, founder of the Shingon sect in the 9th century, is enshrined here.



22 Ichigan Daishi

If a worshipper prays for only one wish, that one wish is realized through the mercy of Kobo Daishi, founder of the Shingon sect.



23 Henjyokutsu Cave

In this dimly lit cave are the sand and the principal Buddhist icons of the eighty eight temples of the prestigious pilgrimage route on Shikoku. Worshippers believe that they are given the same blessings as people who make the pilgrimage to all the temples on the route.



24 Hakkaku Manpuku Hall

Miyajima's famous Seven Deities of Good Fortune are enshrined in this octagonal hall. Believed to invite good fortune, a ceremony to appreciate these deities is held on July 7th every year.



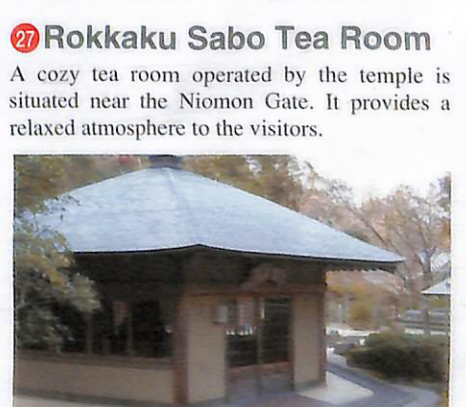
25 Shaka Nehan Hall

The image shows Shaka Nyorai, or Shaka Buddha, entering Nirvana surrounded by his sixteen disciples.



26 Worshippers' Hall

Worshippers can use this hall for sutra transcription between 9 AM and 3 PM. All visitors are welcome to taste herb tea comprised of 16 herbs for good health.



27 Rokkaku Sabo Tea Room

A cozy tea room operated by the temple is situated near the Niomon Gate. It provides a relaxed atmosphere to the visitors.