

Kaidan-in (Important Cultural Property)

Saicho's most fervent desire was to be allowed to perform ordinations of monks on Mount Hiei using only the Bodhisattva Precepts. At the time, Buddhist ordinations in Japan were allowed only at the Todaiji temple in Nara, Kanzeonji in Chikuzen (present-day Fukuoka), and the Yakushiji temple in Shimotsuke (Tochigi Prefecture), based on the Theravada branch of Buddhism. Theravada is the oldest of the two extant schools of Buddhism. The Bodhisattva Precepts differ from the teachings of Theravada Buddhism in that they teach that enlightenment can be attained in a single lifetime, even by a layperson. By performing its own ordinations, Mount Hiei would become independent of the control of the Office of Monastic Affairs in Nara.

Saicho wrote the "Regulations for Mountain Students" and "Treatise to Clarify the Precepts" to advocate for independent ordination on Mount Hiei, and repeatedly asked Emperor Saga for permission to perform ordinations.

The emperor granted Saicho's wish to build an ordination hall, which was officially approved on the eleventh day of the sixth month of 822, seven days after Saicho's death at the age of fifty-six. His senior disciple Gishin (781–833) was responsible for the construction of the Ordination Hall. It houses images of Shakamuni Buddha (the Primordial Buddha) and the bodhisattvas Monju and Miroku. Ordination ceremonies are still conducted here every year.

A stone monument reproducing the "Regulations for Mountain Students" written by Saicho, and a statue of Saicho as a young boy, stand next to the Konpon Chudo.

J: Japanese    S: Sanskrit

Kaidan-in (Precepts Platform Hall)

Regulations for Mountain Students (J. Sange gakushoshiki)

Treatise to Clarify the Precepts (J. Kenkairon)

Shakuson (S. Shakyamuni)

Monju (S. Manjusri)

Miroku (S. Maitreya)

Konpon Chudo (Central Hall)

"Single Vehicle Precepts" (J. Ichijokai)