

TITLE: Fudodo (Acala Hall)

The Fudodo, or Acala Hall, has been designated a National Treasure by the government of Japan. The hall, which is not open to the public, enshrines images of Fudo Myoo, known in Sanskrit as Acala, a highly venerated deity in the Shingon sect of Buddhism, along with his eight attendants. In Shingon Buddhism, Fudo Myoo is seen as a manifestation of the celestial Buddha, Vairocana (known in Japanese as Dainichi Nyorai), who delivers Buddhist truth through fear and might, though he also has great compassion for all people. For this reason, Fudo is often portrayed as scowling, carrying a sword and rope, and surrounded by a halo of fire.

Although the exact date of its construction remains unknown, tradition holds that the Fudodo was originally built in the ninth year of the Kenkyu era (1198) at the request of Imperial Princess Hachijo, the daughter of Emperor Toba (1180–1239). It is also believed that the original hall enshrined an image of Amitabha, also known as Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light. The Fudodo was originally constructed at a different location within Koyasan and rebuilt during the fourteenth century. It was moved to its current location in 1908 and most recently refurbished in 1996. The Fudodo has a unique architectural style, combining elements from residential buildings of the Heian period (794–1185) with elements of traditional temple architecture, like its sloping roof of *hinoki* (Japanese cypress) bark.

It is believed that the original images of Fudo's attendants were created under the direction of the sculptor Unkei (approx.1150–1223), a famed artist of the Kamakura period (1185–1333). The original statues are now kept in Koyasan's Reihokan Museum.