

Daishoin: Onarimon Gate

An *onarimon* is a gate for the exclusive use of high-ranking individuals such as a shogun or an emperor. *Onarimon* were built at important temples and at the estates of distinguished noblemen, and were generally opened only on the occasion of a stately appointment. The original Onarimon at Daishoin was constructed for a visit by Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) in 1885. Daishoin was chosen as the monarch's temporary residence when he visited the island because it was the only structure on Miyajima with a *jodan no ma*—an “upper-level” room with a raised platform. This arrangement was chosen to ensure that the emperor's quarters were on a higher level than those of his entourage. The gate was used by Emperor Meiji during his 1885 visit, but it burned down in a fire two years later. The current version was built in 1914, and no emperor has ever passed through it. It is now kept open for all who visit Daishoin, regardless of their status.