

Daishoin: Miroku no Ma

The Miroku no Ma, or the Miroku Room, inside Daishoin's Kannon-do Hall is dedicated to the bodhisattva of the future. Buddhist scripture describes this deity as a millenarian figure who will appear on Earth in the future as a successor to the historical Buddha. Worship of this deity is particularly common in Tibetan Buddhism, and it is Daishoin's connection with Tibet that explains why the Miroku Room is part of the temple. Shingon, the esoteric school of Buddhism to which Daishoin belongs, shares doctrinal elements and historical roots with Tibetan Buddhism. Both developed from the Vajrayana tradition (also known as Tantric or Esoteric Buddhism), which is called *mikkyo* ("secret teachings") in Japan, and they maintain a certain level of interaction even today.

It was this relationship that brought the Dalai Lama to Daishoin in 2006 to celebrate 1,200 years since the temple's legendary establishment by Kukai (774–835), the founder of Shingon Buddhism. On that occasion, the Dalai Lama consecrated the golden statue of Miroku now displayed in the chamber and decorated with colorful Tibetan streamers. In front of the statue is a sand mandala, a vivid representation of the core beliefs of Vajrayana, created by the monks who accompanied the Dalai Lama in 2006.

The Miroku Room is not merely a memento of that momentous visit. Tibetan monks residing in Japan visit Daishoin on the eighth day of every month to conduct a ceremony in the chamber.