
24. Daishoin: *Itsukushima Folding Screen*

The *Itsukushima Folding Screen* is a highly detailed, map-like painting of Miyajima seen from the northwest, and depicts a view similar to that enjoyed by visitors approaching the island by ferry today. Approximately 5 meters wide and 1.7 meters tall, the artwork portrays Itsukushima Shrine, Daishoin, and Mt. Misen, as well as homes along the coast and local people going about their daily lives. It is thought to date to the mid-1800s and was stored at Daishoin until 1868, when it fell victim to the results of government policy.

The new government of Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) initiated a policy that favored the native Shinto religion over Buddhism, which led to a reduction of funding and the confiscation of property of temples throughout the country. Many temples, including Daishoin, had no choice but to sell off much of their remaining holdings to stay solvent. The *Itsukushima Folding Screen* was among the artworks sold to private buyers, and its whereabouts were long unknown. Well into the 2000s, however, the owner of the painting donated it back to Daishoin, where it is now occasionally displayed to the public during festivals and other events.