

### **Daishoin: Eternal Flame**

The eternal flame of Mt. Misen is said to have burned on the summit ceaselessly since the year 806, when the legendary Buddhist priest Kukai (774–835) lit it to perform the purifying *goma* fire ritual that is central to Shingon Buddhism. The monks of Daishoin watch over Kukai's flame day and night at Kiezu no Reikado Hall, where it burns on a long candle beside a statue of a Buddha and is also used to light the fire in the hearth in the middle of the hall, where holy water is boiled in a large iron pot. Over the years, the flame of Mt. Misen has been split into several parts to ensure its survival. On August 1, 1964, one of its offshoots was used to light the Flame of Peace in Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park, which will burn until all nuclear weapons have been scrapped and the threat of nuclear war has been eliminated.