

Main Hall

The Main Hall of Saidaiji was built entirely of wood and measures 25 meters by 18 meters. It was erected in 1752 just north of where the temple's Eastern Pagoda once stood. Believed to have been seven stories tall, the pagoda's stone ruins are still visible today.

The Main Hall contains a number of treasures, including two Important Cultural Properties. The principal object is a statue of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, made in 1249 at the request of the priest Eison (1201–1290). On the wall behind it is a painting of 16 Buddhist sages with a range of lively, almost comical expressions. The other great treasure in the Main Hall is a magnificent statue of Monju, the bodhisattva of wisdom, seated on a lion and surrounded by his four servants. Eison's followers created this work in 1290, after their master's death, to honor his legacy and strong faith in Monju.

Every October, the Main Hall is used for two special Shingon Ritsu religious services: Komyo Shingon Dosha Kaji Daiho-e (the Mantra of Light and the Sand Consecration Ceremony). These solemn rites allow the public a rare chance to witness the essence of esoteric Shingon Buddhism.