

The Kondō at the Temple of Chishakuin

The Kondō (main hall) sits at the physical and religious center of the temple of Chishakuin. The original structure was commissioned by Chishakuin's tenth abbot Senkai in 1704 and was completed next year. The quick completion of such an ambitious project was made possible through a generous donation from Lady Keishōin (1627–1705), the mother of the fifth Tokugawa shogun Tsunayoshi. The patronage is indicative of the strong support the temple received from the Tokugawa house throughout the period when they governed the country (1603–1868).

The Kondō was destroyed by fire in 1882 and remained unrestored for almost a century. To commemorate the 1200th birthday of Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi, 774–835), the founder of Shingon Buddhism, the Kondō was rebuilt in 1975. The principal icon is a statue of Dainichi who is flanked on either side by the mandalas of the two words. Both Dainichi and the mandalas are central to Shingon Buddhist teachings.