

Daikuin (Kitchen and Administrative Building)

The Daikuin is a multipurpose building that contains the temple administrator's offices, the temple facility management office, and a lecture hall. The first floor is the kitchen, where the temple's head cook (*tenzo*) and his assistants prepare a type of Buddhist vegetarian cuisine called *shōjin ryōri*. The Daikuin consists of three upper stories and a basement. It was rebuilt in 1929 using wood and reinforced concrete by Morota Gumi, a construction company that specialized in temple and shrine architecture.

An altar near the kitchen holds a statue of Idasonten, a guardian deity of temples and a general who serves Zōchōten, one of the Shitennō (Four Heavenly Kings). It is said that after Shakyamuni Buddha died, a demon stole some of his cremated remains. Idasonten chased after the demon to retrieve the relics, and he became known as a protector of precious objects and a gifted runner. His name is still used to refer to someone who is especially quick on their feet.

A huge wooden pestle hangs by the entrance to the Daikuin. The pestle was carved from a tool used to pound and flatten the ground for construction work during the Meiji era (1868–1912). The pestle, which is heavily worn, was kept to remind the monks to strive to help others, even if it will require personal hardship. In recent years, it has become popular to touch the pestle when visiting Eihei-ji Temple, as this is said to improve one's cooking skills.