

## **Konpiradō**

Konpiradō is a small hall located just outside the grounds of Eiheiiji Temple. It is dedicated to Konpira Daigongen, a kami (Shinto deity) associated with ships and the sea. The hall was built to express gratitude for the safe return of Eiheiiji Temple's founder, Zen Master Dōgen (1200–1253), after his studies in China.

Konpira Daigongen is a syncretic deity that combines elements from Buddhism and native kami worship. In a purely Buddhist context, Konpira is known as one of the Twelve Heavenly Generals who protect the Medicine Buddha. Over time, Konpira became affiliated with both a Shinto deity named Ōmononushi no Kami and a water dragon who is worshipped at Mt. Zōzu, in Kagawa Prefecture. The head shrine of Konpira Daigongen, called Kotohiragū, is still located there. This mixing of religious practices was quite common until the Meiji era (1868–1912), when the government mandated a clear distinction between Buddhism and Shinto.

Every year on July 9, the residents of the neighborhood near Eiheiiji Temple gather at Konpiradō and chant sutras while lighting candles and incense to pray for the prosperity of the temple, sound health, and the fulfillment of various wishes. Afterward, the monks join the residents and share in a meal prepared by the temple's cooks, indicating the close connection between the temple and its surrounding neighborhood.