

**Daikōdō (Great Lecture Hall)**

The Daikōdō, or Great Lecture Hall, is the northernmost building of the central trio of structures at Engyōji known as the Three Halls. As its name suggests, The Daikōdō is a place for teaching, and is considered one of the most important buildings in the temple complex. Although the original structure was built in the tenth century by the order of Retired Emperor Kazan (968–1008), the present structure dates to the fifteenth century. Its design, a harmonious blend of continental and Japanese stylistic elements, also bears traits characteristic of the Tendai sect of Buddhism. For example, the hall's principal image, a statue of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, stands in a sunken central chamber. The figure is seated upon a lotus blossom, which itself rests upon a tapered dais that narrows at the center. The shape is suggestive of Mt. Sumeru, the five-peaked sacred mountain of Buddhist cosmology that represents the center of the physical, metaphysical, and spiritual worlds.

Shakyamuni is flanked by standing attendants whose hands are similarly poised in a mudra gesture representing the act of teaching. From their elevated position, the gilded triad gaze out across the courtyard toward the forestage of the Jōgyōdō (Circumambulatory Hall), another of the Three Halls. During certain major events of the temple's yearly calendar, dances are performed on this stage to honor these deities. The alignment of these two structures along a north-south axis and their complimentary placement show the careful planning that went into the configuration of the Three Halls.

The Daikōdō and each statue of the triad are Important Cultural Properties.