

Seated Statue of Kongō Satta on Lotus Dais

The bodhisattva Kongō Satta (Sanskrit: Vajrasattva) is an emanation of Dainichi, the Cosmic Buddha and represents the ultimate form achievable by students of Esoteric Buddhism. Engyōji's founding abbot, Shōkū (910–1007), is said to have met Kongō Satta while training on Mt. Shosha. It was from this bodhisattva that Shōkū received indoctrination into Esoteric Buddhist teachings.

In this representation, Kongō Satta is wearing an elaborate bronze crown and garland necklace studded with precious stones. In the statue's right hand is a *kongōsho* (Sanskrit: *vajra*), a ritual weapon with various symbolic meanings, including the strength of diamond and the power of lightning, that also signifies the male aspect. In the left hand is a bell that represents wisdom and clarity, as well as the female aspect. This pair of objects is characteristic to Kongō Satta, who represents a combination of their elements. The bodhisattva is depicted in a classic meditative posture, seated with legs folded upon a lotus blossom. Each of the petals is decorated with a symbol representing the Three Jewels of Buddhism: the Buddha, his teachings (dharma), and the community of followers (sangha).

An inscription on the statue's underside indicates that it was created in 1359 by Kōshun, the official sculptor of Tōdaiji Temple in Nara and a direct disciple of Unkei (d. 1223), the founder of the celebrated Kei school. The work was constructed using a sophisticated joinery method called *yosegi-zukuri*, in which several pieces of cypress are locked together before carving. The eyes are fashioned of inlaid crystal.