

Daizenji Temple

Daizenji is a Buddhist temple of the Soto Zen school, founded in 1645 as the memorial temple (*bodaiji*) of the Oyamada family, who were high-ranking Shinto priests at [Usa Jingu Shrine](#). The Zendo Hall houses several valuable statues that were originally enshrined at [Mirokuji Temple](#), the main temple in the Usa Jingu complex during the thousand-year period of syncretic Shinto and Buddhist worship. The Meiji government issued an order to separate the two religions in 1868 and Mirokuji was demolished in 1871, but some of its Buddhist statues were preserved and five of them were later brought to Daizenji.

In the center of the Zendo is a seated statue of Yakushi Buddha, the deity of medicine and healing, which was the principal object of worship at the Kondo (Main Hall) of Mirokuji. Yakushi is depicted with a medicine jar in the left hand and the right hand raised in the gesture of dispelling fear. The statue (2.8 m) was carved in the second half of the Kamakura period (1185–1333) from *hinoki* cypress using the *yosegi-zukuri* joined woodblock technique and was originally finished with lacquer covered with gold foil. It is a rare example of a large and well-preserved statue of Yakushi Buddha from the Kamakura period and is a nationally designated Important Cultural Property.

The other four statues from Mirokuji were made in the Muromachi period (1336–1573). Flanking Yakushi are two attendants, Nikko and Gakko, the bodhisattvas of sunlight and moonlight, respectively. On the far left and far right are wrathful Wisdom Kings Aizen Myo-o and Fudo Myo-o, who act as protectors of Buddhism, subduing evil and converting non-believers. Despite the differing states of preservation, all the statues are important works that provide valuable insight into Mirokuji and the sacred objects once enshrined in the temple.

The principal object of worship of Daizenji is a statue of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, enshrined in the Hondo (Main Hall). A gilded statue of Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, is installed in the small Kannondo Hall to the right of the temple gate.

Daizenji is located on the right bank of the Yorimo River, about a ten-minute walk from Usa Jingu. The grounds are open to the public, but visitors who wish to enter the halls need to contact the temple in advance or ask the staff. Please note that inquiries are accepted only in Japanese.