

Gohotendo, Hall of the Guardians of the Buddhist Law

Constructed in the early seventeenth century, this hall was originally part of the private quarters of the abbot of Rinnoji, the *monzeki*. Since the *monzeki* was a member of the imperial family and also head of the Kan'ei Temple in Tokyo and the Enryakuji Temple near Kyoto, he required a separate private place of worship, which purpose this hall served. In 1871, a fire broke out in the private quarters of the *monzeki*, which destroyed all of the buildings except for this hall and the Kuromon Gate.

Gohotendo originally enshrined the deities Bishamonten, Daikokuten, and Benzaiten, who are considered more approachable than the three principal deities of Rinnoji Temple—Senju Kannon, Amida Nyorai, and Bato Kannon respectively. These deities are members of a group of divinities known as the Gohoten, guardians who are said to protect Buddha's law and disciples, hence the name of the hall.