

Three-Storeied Pagoda of Shihonryuji Temple

This pagoda was originally constructed in 1241 in the area where the Toshogu now stands, and moved here later. The original pagoda was lost in a fire in 1684, and this building dates from 1685. It houses three wooden statues, one of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, accompanied by two bodhisattvas, which form a Shaka triad.

The twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac are carved into the main support column of the first floor of this pagoda. Each of these animals is associated with a different time of day and a different compass direction. The animals are placed at two-hour intervals on a clock, or 30-degree intervals for a compass. The horse is placed at the south, the rooster west, the rat north, and rabbit at the east, which correspond to 12 pm, 6 pm, 12 am, and 6 am respectively.