

### Three-Story Pagoda

Traditionally Buddhist pagodas were built as memorials for important saints, although now they are mostly thought of as enshrining Buddhist statues. The Five Buddhas of Wisdom, with Dainichi Nyorai at the center, are housed inside the pagoda. Sixteen Rakan, Buddhist saints said to have attained Nirvana, are carved in relief on the inner walls.

Built in 1712, the pagoda is 25 m tall and is listed as an Important Cultural Property. Three-dimensional carvings of dragons, *kirin* (auspicious mythical hoofed creatures) and *baku* (mythological chimera said to devour bad dreams) decorate the beams holding up the roof of each story. These mythical beasts were said to appear in times of peace, and thus collectively they represent a prayer for peace. The panels of clouds and water carved out of large panels of wood, which are under the eaves of the pagoda, are a very unusual feature.

The lacquer and polychrome decoration were restored between 1981 and 1983 to its original splendor, based on documents dated 1803.