

## **Ganjin's Well**

In the northwest corner of the temple complex is a well that is thought to have been excavated under Ganjin's supervision. Even today water can be drawn here, a reflection of the temple's abundant water reserves.

The entire grounds of Toshodaiji is moist year-round, with several ponds and a channel running alongside the Ordination Platform that is fed by the well's overflow. In addition, the temple premises are enclosed by the Akishino River and its sluiceways; and Ganjin's grave in the northeastern corner is located on a small "island" encircled by a modest moat, which is accessed via a shady, moss-lined path and a small stone bridge. This abundance of water means that Toshodaiji is blessed with lush vegetation, and a wide variety of flowers bloom within the temple precincts throughout the year.

According to legend, Ganjin instantly recognized these favorable conditions when he first came to survey the prospective temple grounds offered to him by Niitabe Shinno, a grandson of Emperor Tenmu (631–686), who had a residence there. Ganjin, who could not see the land due to his blindness, is said to have taken a taste of the earth, and immediately deemed it to be a place that would bring good fortune, happiness, and prosperity to those who dwelt there. He subsequently ordered the digging of a well in the grounds, which he felt was well situated according to the rules of traditional Chinese divination. The pine grove near the well was the location of Ganjin's residence.