

Yasha Jindō

The figures inside these two small structures originally stood guard at either side of the temple's south gate. The statues were moved inside the temple grounds after a legend arose that people who passed by the gate without paying due respect to these deities became cursed with misfortunes. They were moved to their current location in 1596.

The statues are said to have been carved by Kūkai (774–835), the great Buddhist teacher and abbot of Tōji. They are popularly known as *yasha*, or guardian spirits. The *yasha* on the east side is male, and the one to the west is female. Thought to be incarnations of the deities Monju Bosatsu and Kokūzō Bosatsu, they are both known for their wisdom. Despite their reputation for throwing curses, in another tradition these *yasha* have the power to relieve toothaches.