

## **Peony Room and Nightingale Floor**

The temple's Peony Room is located beyond the reception desk to the left and is a relocation of a room from Fushimi Castle. The original room was used as a study area by the warlord and national unifier Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598). It is said that the outlaw hero Ishikawa Goemon (1558–1594), a semi-legendary thief who gave what he stole to the poor, snuck into this room. The assassination attempt was unsuccessful. Goemon was captured and then famously executed by being boiled alive in a cauldron.

The room is named for its paintings of peonies by the artist Kano Sanraku (1559–1635). The central image of the room is a statue of the bodhisattva Jizo, the savior of sentient beings, which is flanked on the left by a statue of Amida, the Buddha of infinite light, and on the right by Nyoirin Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion.

The hallway leading to the Main Hall has an unusual feature for a Buddhist temple, a so-called nightingale floor (*uguisubari*). The floor is so named because the boards make a chirping sound when walked upon. Nightingale floors are found in a number of castles, palaces, and Shinto shrines throughout Japan. The first nightingale floors may have produced sounds merely as an accidental by-product of dry floorboards, but scholars believe that later versions were intentionally designed to squeak in order to warn against intruders. Yogen'in has this special feature because of its status as a temple affiliated with the long-ruling Tokugawa samurai clan.