

## **Kusho Myojin Shrine and Lanterns**

Kusho Myojin is a Shinto shrine on the grounds of a Buddhist temple—a reminder of how these religious traditions were closely intertwined throughout much of Japanese history. The amalgamation of Shinto and Buddhism endured for more than a thousand years until 1868, when a series of government orders officially separated the two. This split, however, was far from absolute, and Shinto shrines often still serve as guardians for Buddhist temples, as is the case with Kusho Myojin and Ninnaji.

Nine Shinto deities are enshrined in the three buildings that make up Kusho Myojin: one in the main hall and four in each of the two adjacent halls. All of the deities are also enshrined at major Shinto shrines elsewhere in Kyoto, and are believed to be gathered here in one place to ensure the safety and prosperity of the imperial court, with which Ninnaji had a special relationship. The deity Hachiman, a guardian of the imperial family and of warriors, is enshrined in the main hall.

The three stone lanterns in front of the gate date back to 1644, the year the current shrine buildings were completed. They are in the Oribe style, named after tea master and lantern designer Furuta Oribe (1544–1615), and are distinguished by the rounded shape of the upper portion of their pedestals and the jewel-like knobs on their crowns.