

Mizukake Fudo

The stone statue on a rock within this sanctuary depicts Fudo Myo-o, one of the Five Wisdom Kings and a central deity in Shingon Buddhism, the school to which Ninnaji belongs. He wields a sword in his right hand and a noose in his left, ready to unleash his anger on demons and other enemies of Buddhism. As is customary for images of Fudo, the statue has a halo of flames and a sturdy rock base, which is said to represent the determination of Fudo Myo-o (*fudo* means “immovable”). *Mizukake* means “to pour water” and the long ladles provided are used to pour water onto the statue before saying prayers.

According to legend, the statue was discovered in a flooded Kyoto river sometime during the Edo period (1603–1868) when a bystander heard it call for help. Once out of the water, the deity asked to be taken to Ninnaji, where it was placed on a rock next to a spring. The water from that spring is now gathered in the basin in front of the statue.