

## Hoonji Temple

### [HIGASHIJIN]

Hoonji Temple belongs to the Jodo (Pure Land) school of Buddhism and has occupied its current grounds since the latter half of the sixteenth century. Its most prized possession is *Nakitora*, a painting of a roaring tiger thought to have been painted in China during the Song dynasty (960–1279).

The painting was donated to Hoonji in 1501 by Emperor Gokashiwabara (1464–1526), a patron of the temple who had ordered its expansion in the same year. The warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), the de facto ruler of Japan in the late sixteenth century, took a liking to the painting and had it moved to his palace.

According to legend, having the painting in his room made Hideyoshi unable to sleep, because the tiger supposedly roared through the night. The warlord promptly returned the artwork to Hoonji, where it is displayed once every 12 years, from January 1 to 3 in the year of the Tiger according to the Chinese zodiac calendar. A reproduction of *Nakitora* can be viewed at Hoonji by reservation throughout the year.