

Nitenno Guardian Figures

The Nitenno figures on either side of the Kisomon Gate protect the temple complex. These dynamic figures, dressed in Chinese-style armor, are two of the Shitenno (Four Heavenly Kings), who protect the cardinal directions and guard the world against evil spirits. On the left of the gate is Jikokuten, lord of the east and protector of the nation. On the right is Bishamonten, lord of the north and protector of Buddhist law. The fearsome figures are depicted crushing demons underfoot—an act that represents their power to defeat evil. The Nitenno figures are presumed to have been carved at the same time the gate was constructed, in 1851.