

## **Nankun-sha**

Nankun-sha is the second stop in the Hattatsu Mairi ritual. The towering 1,000-year-old camphor tree next to the building is believed to be a manifestation of the shrine's patron deity, the god of agriculture Uka no Mitama no Mikoto, one of the many representations of the deity Inari. The shrine is thought to protect business partnerships and marriages—the pair of entwined camphor trees nearby forms a “couple.” Visitors pray for prosperity as well as for the safety and stability of their families.

If you make a donation at Nankun-sha, you will receive a clay figurine of a beckoning cat called *shōfuku neko*. These prosperity-bringing charms come in two types: with either left or right paw raised. Visitors who collect 48 *shōfuku neko* of a single type can exchange them for one larger cat. One each of the larger left-pawed and right-pawed cats, along with 48 of the smaller figurines, can in turn be traded for a cat of the largest variety. Obtaining a pair of left- and right-pawed *shōfuku neko* in the largest size is no small feat: it requires performing the Hattatsu Mairi every month for 24 years.