

## **Datsueba and Ubado Hall**

In Buddhism it is believed that the deceased must cross the Sanzu River, which lies at the border between this world and the afterlife. The riverside is guarded by the fearsome watchwoman, Datsueba, who forces those who would cross into the next world to shed their clothes. Her companion, the demon Keneo, hangs the clothes on a tree branch to measure the weight of their sins.

A striking depiction of Datsueba is housed within Ubado Hall, a small building along the stone path to the top of Yamadera. The hall is a symbolic gateway between paradise above and hell below. In the past, worshippers shed their clothes and cleansed their bodies, symbolically purifying their spirits with water from a small stream that trickled down the mountain. They offered their clothes to Datsueba and changed into new attire before continuing upward. With each step, worldly sins and desires are said to be gradually extinguished.