

## **Futaiji Temple's Main Hall, Pagoda, and Southern Gate**

### **Main Hall**

This is Futaiji Temple's main hall, which dates to the late Kamakura period (1185–1333).

Notice the crisscross latticework on the transoms separating the inner and outer sanctuaries. This pattern, referred to as "Narihira lattice," is said to have adorned the robes of poet Ariwara no Narihira (825–880), the founder of Futaiji.

The east end of the hall houses a subsidiary shrine to Ise Jingū, Japan's most highly revered Shinto shrine. On the opposite side is a statue of Prince Abo (792–842), Narihira's father, across from which is a display case of *kawara* roof tiles signed by famous visitors.

### **Pagoda**

This pagoda dates to the mid-Kamakura period (1185–1333), making it the

oldest structure at the temple. Single-story pagodas of this type are rare. In fact, it is thought this pagoda once had a second story that was destroyed between 1873 and 1923. Inside the pagoda are paintings of the Shingon Hasso, the Eight Patriarchs of the Shingon sect of Buddhism. The doors are opened once a year on May 28, the anniversary of the death of temple founder Ariwara no Narihira (825–880). Poems by Narihira are engraved on large stone monuments that stand to either side of the pagoda.

### **Southern Gate**

This is Futaiji Temple's main entrance. Built in 1317, the gate is one of several historical structures at the temple. Futaiji also houses Buddhist statues made during the Heian period (794–1185) and a stone coffin excavated from one of Nara's many burial mounds.

A close inspection of the gate's doors will show that they differ in age.

Some sections date to the Kamakura period (1185–1333), and others to the Meiji era (1868–1912). The older sections are dotted with small holes, likely created when local farmers stuck their hand-scythes into the door for

temporary safekeeping.