

Futaiji Temple Statues

Kannon

This wooden statue of Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, is the principal image of veneration at Futaiji Temple. This 1.9-meter statue is said to have been carved by poet and aristocrat Ariwara no Narihira (825–880), the founder of Futaiji. It is thought to represent his image of the feminine ideal, a notion that is supported by the uncommonly long, flowing ribbons on either side of the statue's head.

Scientific evidence indicates that the statue was likely carved in the early part of the Fujiwara cultural period (897–1185). It was originally painted with a white base pigment and brightly colored floral designs. Kannon is portrayed holding a lotus flower, which represents the blossoming of enlightenment.

Myō-ō (Five Wisdom Kings)

To either side of Kannon are statues of the Myō-ō, or Five Wisdom Kings.

From left to right, they depict:

Daiitoku Myō-ō

Kongōyasha Myō-ō

Fudō Myō-ō

Gōzanze Myō-ō

Gundari Myō-ō

All five statues are thought to have been carved in the Fujiwara cultural period (897–1185), but the inlaid crystal eyes of the Fudō Myō-ō statue were likely added a century or more later. The statue of Fudō Myō-ō can be identified by its swirling flames and flat, square plinth. The mask worn backward by Gōzanze Myō-ō, the statue back and to the right, is rarely seen in depictions of the deity, and its greater meaning is unknown.

Other Statuary

The west side of the main hall houses a statue of Prince Abo (792–842), the father of Ariwara no Narihira (825–880), who founded Futaiji Temple. The statue is thought to have been carved between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. A Heian-period (794–1185) statue of the bodhisattva Jizō shares the central altar with Kannon and the Five Wisdom Kings.