



Yokoku-ji Yanagidani Kannon

One of Kyoto's Three Nishiyama Temples



Main Hall, Yokoku-ji

At a Glance

FOUNDED 806

FOUNDER Enchin

LOCATION Nagaokakyō, Kyoto

PILGRIMAGE No. 17, New Saigoku Kannon Pilgrimage

PRINCIPAL IMAGE Eleven-faced, Thousand-armed, Thousand-eyed Kannon

KNOWN FOR Prayer for eye health, Okōzui spring, Jōdo-en Garden, and flower chōzu

Overview & History

Yokoku-ji stands in the Nishiyama hills of Nagaokakyō, Kyoto, and is widely known as Yanagidani Kannon. According to temple tradition, the monk Enchin was guided here by a dream in 806 and received a vision of Kannon in a valley filled with willow trees. Over the centuries, the temple became an important place of devotion, particularly for those praying for relief from eye ailments.

Tradition holds that Kūkai visited in 811 and prayed for a blind young monkey. Okōzui, the sacred spring associated with this story, remains central to the temple's tradition of prayer for eye health. After Emperor Reigen is said to have recovered from an eye ailment, the water was presented to the Imperial Court.

Highlights

The temple's religious traditions, architecture, gardens, and seasonal displays come together as parts of a living place of worship.

01

Kannon and a Living Tradition of Prayer

The principal image is an Eleven-faced, Thousand-armed, Thousand-eyed Kannon, revered as a compassionate presence who perceives suffering and extends aid in many forms. Prayer remains central to the temple, especially devotion connected with eye health.



Jōdo-en Garden

02

Jōdo-en Garden and the Upper Shoin

Jōdo-en is a scenic garden arranged around water, stone, and the surrounding hillside. It can be viewed from the Upper Shoin, a refined space with connections to the Imperial Court. Together, the architecture and garden frame a contemplative experience that changes with the seasons.



Seasonal Flower Chōzu

03

Flower Chōzu and the Seasons

Yokoku-ji is especially known today for its flower chōzu: water basins arranged with seasonal blossoms. Hydrangeas, autumn leaves, and other plants bring new color to the grounds throughout the year while inviting visitors to encounter purification and beauty together.

04

Okōzui and Imperial Connections

The sacred spring known as Okōzui is linked to Kūkai and the temple's tradition of prayer for eye ailments. Its reputation reached the Imperial Court, and the temple also preserves buildings and cultural connections associated with imperial patronage.