



The Otagi Nenbutsu-ji Temple is hidden in the hills of far western Arashiyama. The beautiful grounds are home to 1,200 moss-covered *rakan* statues that represent the disciples of Buddha. Originally founded by Empress Shōtoku in 776 CE in Kyoto's famous geisha district, the temple was destroyed by a flood, a civil war, and a typhoon. The new temple's remarkable transformation began in 1955 in Arashiyama and was completed by novice *rakan* sculptors who depicted an array of expressions on the 1,200 faces—from laughter to prayer.

*Otagi Nenbutsu-ji Temple, Kyoto*

