

## Hongu Shrine

Among the oldest sacred structures in Nikko, it is believed that Hongu Shrine was constructed during the Nara period (710–794). The deity Ajsukitakahikone no Mikoto, the son of Onamuchi no Mikoto, is enshrined here.

In 766, Shodo Shonin (735–817), the holy ascetic who established Nikko Futarasan Shrine and Rinnoji Temple, crossed the Daiya River into Nikko, and built a small shrine. The Hongu Shrine is thus considered the birthplace of the Nikko Futarasan Shrine.

The building to the front is the prayer hall, while the rear building is the main hall where Ajsukitakahikone no Mikoto is enshrined. There is a door at the back of the shrine from which Mt. Nantai was worshipped. One of the ancient beliefs in Shinto is that the mountains are sacred spaces where divinities and ancestral spirits dwell.