

Kasagidera Temple's Bronze Bell (Gedatsusho, the bell of liberation)

Cast in 1196 in the Chinese style, Kasagidera Temple's bell is a designated Important Cultural Property of Japan. This bell has six notches at its base; it is the only bell in Japan with this shape. It was cast and donated to Kasagidera Temple by the renowned monk Chogen as a gesture to Jokei (1155–1213), the influential Buddhist monk scholar who was residing at Kasagidera Temple at the time.

According to temple legend, when Jokei was residing at Kasagidera Temple the earth suddenly rose up in a mound before him and a servant of Enma, the lord of the underworld, appeared. The servant told Jokei that Enma had heard of his eminence and wisdom, and sent the servant to fetch Jokei so Enma could learn more about Shaka Nyorai, the historical Buddha. Jokei agreed and spoke with Enma at length about Shaka Nyorai. As he did so, Enma was so impressed by Jokei's eloquence that bestowed a gift of gold dust to Jokei. This gold dust, it is said, was used in the casting of Kasagidera Temple's bronze bell.