

## Fuji, Wisteria

The beautiful pink and purple blooms of the fuji, or wisteria plant, appear in the spring. Fuji is native to Japan, and features throughout the shrine. It is the crest of Kasuga Taisha Shrine and is used in the headdresses worn by shrine maidens. Wisteria is the official crest of the Fujiwara clan, who established Kasuga Taisha Shrine and held important posts in the imperial court in the Nara period (710–784).

Sunazuri no Fuji, the ancient wisteria growing on the grounds of Kasuga Taisha Shrine, is more than seven centuries old. Its name means “the wisteria with flowers drooping down to reach the sand” because its pendant clusters of flowers often measure more than one meter in length. This wisteria is depicted in the *Kasuga Gongen Genki*, a picture scroll that was donated to Kasuga Taisha Shrine in 1309.