

Shoin Shrine is located on the former lands of the Sugi family on the outskirts of Hagi. Yoshida Shoin (born Sugi Toranosuke in 1830) grew up here and taught here periodically until his execution in 1859.

The school where Shoin taught, Shokasonjuku, was restored in 1890, and a small private memorial was erected nearby. Seventeen years later in 1907, two of his most famous students, four-time prime minister Ito Hirobumi (1841–1909) and the diplomat and bureaucrat Nomura Yasushi (1842–1909), built Shoin Shrine behind their former school as a monument to their teacher.

From 1936 to 1940, donations arrived from all over Japan for the construction of a brand-new shrine located at the rear of the property. Although work lapsed during World War II, the new copper-roofed shrine was completed in 1955. The roof was replaced in 2007 on the 100th anniversary of the shrine's founding. The original shrine building is now called Shomon Shrine and is still maintained on the property as a shrine for Shoin's students.

As the shrine complex has expanded, it has come to encompass several historical buildings from the Edo period, including two museums and countless landmarks to the life of Yoshida Shoin and other Meiji revolutionaries.

Approaching Shoin Shrine from the street, a large stone memorial is visible to your left. This is a monument to the 1862 meeting of three Meiji revolutionaries—Tagami Toshichi (dates unknown) of Satsuma, now Kagoshima Prefecture, Sakamoto Ryoma (1836–1867) of Tosa, now Kochi Prefecture, and Kusaka Genzui (1840–1864) of Choshu, now Yamaguchi Prefecture. Their meeting took place at an inn that once stood on this site.

After passing through the shrine's first *torii* gate, to the immediate left is another large stone memorial commemorating the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Meiji period, erected in 1968 and inscribed with words written by Sato Eisaku (1901–1975), Japan's then-prime minister, recipient of the 1974 Nobel Peace Prize, and a native of Yamaguchi Prefecture.

Farther down the path is a large stone inscribed with a poem Yoshida Shoin wrote to his parents shortly before his execution in 1859.

In the center of Shoin Shrine is the Shokasonjuku Academy and the old residence of the Sugi family. The Academy is listed as a National Historic Site and is on the UNESCO World Heritage List as one of the "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution." The Sugi residence which lies behind it is an excellent example of a lower-ranking samurai home from the Edo period. In the Shiseikan building nearby displays many artifacts connected to Yoshida Shoin.