

Kasuga Myojin Shrine

Kosanji Temple's Kasuga Myojin Shrine is dedicated to Kasuga Daimyojin, the collective name for the four Shinto deities enshrined at Kasuga Taisha Shrine in Nara, an ancient capital of Japan. A shrine in the grounds of a Buddhist temple may seem unusual today, but it reflects the religious beliefs of Kosanji's founder Myoe (1173–1232).

Myoe combined teachings from the Kegon and esoteric Shingon schools of Buddhism, and followed ideas of his time identifying native Shinto deities with Buddhist deities. He loved Kasuga Taisha Shrine and visited frequently. His reverence for Kasuga Daimyojin was said to be so strong that he even heeded the deity's advice not to make a pilgrimage to India, something he had long hoped to do.

A fusion of religious customs was once widespread in Japan, and many Buddhist temples were associated with Shinto shrines. Similarly, many Shinto deities were interpreted as manifestations of Buddhist deities. In fact, Kosanji Temple's Sekisuiin once enshrined the Shinto deities Kasuga Daimyojin and Sumiyoshi Myojin.

Syncretic practices continued in Japan until new laws separated the two religions at the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–1912). These regulations were introduced following the restoration of rule to the emperor.