

The Bronze Mirror of Suda Hachiman Jinja Shrine

There has been a shrine dedicated to the Shinto god Hachiman, the protector of warriors, on this spot since the ninth century. The approach to the main hall features an elegant gate with a dragon painted on the ceiling; the hall itself is surrounded by smaller sub-shrines dedicated to other deities.

The cast bronze mirror of Suda Hachiman shrine dates from around the fifth century, and is a designated National Treasure. While the original mirror is now on display at the Tokyo National Museum, a large replica is displayed at the shrine.

This artifact, which is inscribed with 48 kanji characters, is particularly important because it gave researchers insight into the period when Japan was just starting to use written characters imported from China. Several of the kanji characters on the mirror are reversed, indicating that the artisans who made it were not yet familiar with this type of written script.