

Ogo Temple

This quiet temple was once the home of Ogo Shonin (1536–1608), a Koyasan priest who established the city of Hashimoto and led it to prosperity. A highly influential individual of many talents, he was responsible for the construction of the bridge (*hashi*) over the Kinokawa River that gives the city its name, and for creating three man-made ponds to ensure a constant flow of water for rice production.

Ogo was also a skilled diplomat, gaining the trust and respect of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), the feudal lord who unified Japan. During his quest to bring the country under central control, Toyotomi attacked Koyasan in an attempt to bring the notoriously uncooperative monks to heel. Ogo went to parley with Toyotomi, and managed to convince him to abandon his efforts to conquer the Buddhist center. Impressed by the monk's skills at debate, from then on Toyotomi often sent Ogo to deal with difficult negotiations all over Japan.

Ogo Temple has been burned down and reconstructed several times. The current building is thought to date to 1707. The main gate was built during the Edo period (1603–1868). It is still possible to make out the bullet holes made by the guns of the shogunate forces during the Boshin War of 1868–1869 in the dark wood of the gate. That conflict marked the end of the reign of the Tokugawa shogunate and the dawn of the Meiji era (1868–1912).

The temple is just a five-minute walk from Hashimoto Station.