

The Bell

A large bronze bell is suspended beneath the roof of a wooden tower on the grounds of Jorenge-in Temple. The bell was forged in 1979 by Masahiko Katori (1899–1988), recognized during his lifetime as a Living National Treasure for his bell-making skills. Katori is particularly famous for forging the Peace Bell that was placed in the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in 1964.

An earlier bell, made for the temple in 1774, was requisitioned by the government in November 1942 and melted down to assist in the war effort. The bell designed by Katori is rounder than its predecessor and serves as a fine example of his style.

While the bell has been replaced, the tower stands on the original stone platform. The bell is rung with a wooden beam suspended from the roof of the structure.

Temple bells are found in temples throughout Japan and are traditionally rung to summon priests to prayer and mark time during the day. The design of such bells gives them a penetrating tone that can carry over considerable distance.