

Entsuin Temple

This small temple is located next door to Zuiganji Temple and offers a more intimate look into the private life and interests of the Date family, who once ruled the Sendai domain (which encompassed present-day Miyagi Prefecture).

Entsuin Temple was founded in 1647 to honor Date Mitsumune (1627–1645), the grandson of Date Masamune, the founder of the city of Sendai. Mitsumune was slated to become the Sendai domain's third ruler and is said to have shown promise of becoming as talented and influential as his grandfather. However, he passed away at the young age of 19, in circumstances that some say were the result of foul play.

The rock garden inside the temple gate is arranged to resemble the islands of Matsushima Bay. A stone stairway, smoothed by time and the footsteps of visitors, leads to Mitsumune's grave, the Sankeiden, which is an Important Cultural Property. The altar inside frames a wooden statue of the 19-year-old on horseback, flanked by the deities of battle. The altar's colorful paintings on gold leaf are unusual, with roses, spades, clover, and crosses depicted in a manner highly reminiscent of Western art of the time. It is thought that these designs may have been influenced by an expedition Date Masamune sent to Rome in 1615.

The Daihitei, the temple's main hall, was originally located in Edo (the former name of Tokyo), and was one of Mitsumune's favorite places to rest and enjoy cool breezes. After his death, the entire structure was moved to Matsushima to honor his memory.

Entsuin's grounds are dotted with maple trees, making it a popular spot to view the autumn leaves. There are a wide variety of flowers to see throughout the year, including a rose garden inspired by the roses painted on Mitsumune's tomb.