

Kasuga Jinja Shrine

Kasuga Jinja Shrine was founded in 807, in the early part of the culturally rich Heian period (794–1185). It enshrines four deities: Takemikazuchi no Mikoto, Iwai Nushi-no Mikoto, Amatsu Koyane no Mikoto and Hime no Mikoto. The main hall (*honden*) was erected by daimyo of the domain Sakai Tadaaki in 1674, and the present-day worship hall (*haiden*) was built in 1739. The Sakai family that had been the daimyo since 1622 had admitted that Kasugajinja Shrine possessed its land and had protected Kurokawa Noh that had been performed as Shinto ritual noh.

The shrine has had many names throughout its history. In 1727, it was known as Kurokawa Mura Shisho Daimyoin and, in 1793, its name was changed to Kasuga Daimyoin, as found on a wooden name table used in connection with noh performances. In 1868, the name was changed to Kasuga Jinja Shrine following the issuance of a government decree ordering the separation of Shinto and Buddhist places of worship.

Many festivals are held at Kasuga Jinja Shrine throughout the year including:

January 1: Saitan Festival (to celebrate a solar New Year and pray for peace and a bountiful harvest in the coming year)

February 1-2: Ogi Festival (to celebrate a lunar New Year and pray for peace and a bountiful harvest in the coming year)

March 23: Kinen Festival (to pray for a bountiful harvest and flourishing production in the coming year)

May 3: Reitai Festival (to worship the deities and pray for peace, prosperity, and a bountiful harvest in the coming year)

August 20: Kaze Festival (to pray for protection of the rice from strong winds)

December 30: Ooharai Festival (to cast out impurities and welcome a new year)

Most Shinto shrines also have a periodic festival held every so many years to celebrate the founding of the shrine. In the case of Kasuga Jinja Shrine, it is every 20 years.