

Wakamiya Shrine

The Wakamiya Shrine is the second most important shrine at Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, after the Main Shrine. The term *wakamiya* is used for a sub-shrine which enshrines a child of the central deity of the main shrine or has a special relationship to that deity, and the four deities enshrined here are all related to Emperor Ojin, or Hachiman, the guardian deity of the warrior class and of the nation of Japan, who is enshrined in the main shrine. The four deities are Ojin's wife Empress Nakatsu, his son Emperor Nintoku, Nintoku's wife Empress Iwano, and their son Emperor Richu, all semi-mythical figures. This arrangement of an upper and lower shrine dates from 1191, when Tsurugaoka Hachimangu was rebuilt after a fire. Before 1191, there was only one shrine, which stood close to where Wakamiya is today.

The current building was completed in 1624 and is designated an Important Cultural Property. It is in the same *gongen-zukuri* style as the Main Shrine, with the worship hall (*haiden*), offering hall (*heiden*), and main sanctuary (*honden*) all under one roof. The building is decorated with sculptures of guardian lions and peonies. This combination is considered auspicious in Chinese mythology because the lion is the king of beasts while the peony is the queen of flowers.