

Shirahata Shrine

This black-lacquered shrine is decorated with gilded carvings of five dwarf bamboo leaves and three gentian flowers. The design is the family crest of the Minamoto clan, the founders of the Kamakura shogunate, the first warrior-led central government, and Tsurugaoka Hachimangu. Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199) and his son Sanetomo (1192–1219), the first and third Kamakura shoguns, are enshrined in the shrine as Shinto deities. The two were originally enshrined in separate shrines on the Tsurugaoka Hachimangu grounds after their deaths. The two shrines were combined in 1888, when Shirahata Shrine was established here. The name *shirahata* (white flag) refers to the banners used by the Minamoto clan in battle, which inspired Yoritomo's name as a deity: Shirahata Daimyojin (Great Luminous Deity of the White Flags). People pray to Yoritomo, a conquering warrior and distinguished nobleman, for victory and success in academic pursuits, while Sanetomo is remembered for his artistic and literary talent.