

Shirahata Shrine

Shirahata Shrine is located next to Yanagihara Pond, just east of Wakamiya Shrine. Enshrined here are Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199), the founder of both the Kamakura shogunate (warrior-led government) and Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, and his son Sanetomo (1192–1219), the third Kamakura shogun. Both men were deified after death and enshrined on the Tsurugaoka Hachimangu grounds, originally in separate shrines. These shrines were combined in 1888, when Shirahata Shrine was established on its current site.

The Minamoto family crest, which consists of five dwarf bamboo leaves and three gentian flowers, is prominently displayed on the black-lacquered Shirahata Shrine. The name *shirahata* (white flag) refers to the banners used by the Minamoto clan in battle, which inspired Yoritomo's deity name: Shirahata Daimyōjin (Great Luminous Deity of the White Flags). Visitors 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.