

First Torii

The First Torii gate marks the start of the main approach to Tsurugaoka Hachimangu along Wakamiya Oji Avenue. It spans the road about 500 meters from the ocean and is, at 8.5 meters tall, the largest of the three torii gates along the route. According to legend, the stone torii was built on the initiative of Eyo (also Oeyo; 1573–1626), the wife of shogun Tokugawa Hidetada (1579–1632), after the deity Hachiman came to her in a vision and promised that in exchange for building a great torii, she would be blessed with a son. Eyo and her husband had high-quality granite brought from faraway Bizen Province (present-day Okayama Prefecture). However, ferrying the stone by sea to Kamakura and building the torii was an extremely time-consuming undertaking. Although Eyo did have a son, Iemitsu (1604–1651), who succeeded his father as the third shogun, the project was not completed until 1668, when Hidetada and Eyo's grandson Tokugawa Ietsuna (1641–1680) was shogun. The torii is designated an Important Cultural Property.