

## Dankazura

The 450-meter Dankazura walkway extends to the Third Torii gate, which marks the entrance to the grounds of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu. The elevated path was originally built in 1182 by Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199), the first Kamakura shogun and founder of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu. He ordered the construction of a road paved with stone running from the shrine to the sea. The project was undertaken to pray for the safe delivery of an heir, as Yoritomo's wife Hojo Masako (1156–1225) was pregnant at the time. It was completed in time for the birth of their son, Yoriie (1182–1204), who would become the second Kamakura shogun. The design may have also served a defensive purpose: the path once had moats on both sides, and it appears to become narrower toward the shrine grounds, thereby making it easier to repel an **enemy attack**.

The Dankazura has undergone repeated changes over the centuries, including removal of the portion between the First Torii and Second Torii in 1878 to make room for the tracks of the new Yokosuka Railway Line. The cherry trees along the path were replanted in 2016 when the walkway was repaired, and usually bloom from late March to mid-April. Cherry blossom season is followed by the flowering of azaleas later in spring.