

Maiden (Lower Worship Hall)

The Maiden (Hall of Dance) is located in front of the grand stone staircase that leads to the Main Shrine. It is also known as the Lower Worship Hall, where people may pray to the deities enshrined within the Main Shrine. Many rituals and performances of sacred dance and music, as well as traditional Shinto weddings, are held there every year. The building is lacquered in red and black and decorated with carvings and paintings of flowers, leaves, and birds, which symbolize the presence of water.

The site was formerly occupied by a corridor attached to an adjacent shrine. In 1186, Lady Shizuka (1165–1211), a renowned court dancer, performed there for Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199), the founder of the Kamakura shogunate. Shizuka was the mistress of Yoritomo's estranged half-brother, and recited poems revealing her longing for her lover when ordered to perform for the shogun. This angered Yoritomo, who wanted Shizuka executed, but his wife intervened to save her life. This story was later recounted in epic plays and chronicles.