

Yui Wakamiya Shrine

Yui Wakamiya is the birthplace of the Hachiman faith in Kamakura. It was established in 1063 by Minamoto no Yoriyoshi (988–1075), a military commander serving the emperor in Kyoto. In 1051, Yoriyoshi was dispatched to northeastern Japan to subdue rebellious samurai there. Before his departure from Kyoto, he prayed to Hachiman, the guardian deity of his clan, to whom the Minamoto traced their ancestry. Yoriyoshi emerged victorious after a 12-year campaign, and on his way back to Kyoto stopped in Kamakura to rest. It was during that sojourn that he founded Yui Wakamiya to express his gratitude to Hachiman.

In 1180, more than a century later, Yoriyoshi's descendant Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–1199) made Kamakura his base of power, expanding the city and establishing a new Hachiman shrine, Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, at its center. Relying on Hachiman to continue watching over the Minamoto, Yoritomo amassed a force against the rival Taira clan, which controlled the court in Kyoto. Yoritomo was victorious in the five-year Genpei War, after which he seized control of Japan and established the country's first warrior-led government in Kamakura.

Yui Wakamiya still stands on its original site in Zaimokuza, a seaside neighborhood just east of the main approach to Tsurugaoka Hachimangu. Also known as Moto Hachiman (Original Hachiman), it serves as a tangible reminder of the considerable role the Minamoto clan played in the history of Kamakura.