

Shishinkaku Hall

During the Kamakura period (1185–1333), devoting one's life to the Buddhist priesthood and pursuing enlightenment meant cutting oneself off from past ties. It also meant leaving behind parents and other family members. During his life of devotion, Nichiren often missed his parents and former teachers in his hometown. He would climb to the top of Mt. Minobu and pray for his deceased parents and Buddhist mentor, both of whom were buried in present-day Chiba Prefecture.

Since Nichiren had many enemies both in the government and in rival Buddhist schools, he was not able to return to his hometown often. As a result, he could not be at his parents' side when they were dying. It is said that this was one of Nichiren's deepest regrets. To honor his parents, Nichiren had Shishinkaku Hall (lit., "hall of parental remembrance") built on top of Mt. Minobu.

The Mt. Minobu summit where Nichiren would think of his parents is called the "summit of familial bonds." Near the hall are four large cedar trees said to have been planted by Nichiren himself. He planted the first two trees in honor of his mother and father, the third tree for the doctor who lived with him near Mt. Minobu, and the fourth in honor of the whole country.

To reach Shishinkaku, visitors can take a cable car from Kuonji Temple to the top of Mt. Minobu, which rises to a height of 1,153 meters. The ride to the top takes around seven minutes. On the temple grounds is a souvenir shop that serves fresh *dango* (sweet rice dumplings). The nearby vista point affords a fine view of Mt. Fuji to the east on clear days. The phenomenon known as "Diamond Fuji," during which the sun rises directly above the peak of Mt. Fuji, creating an effect as if a sparkling diamond is sitting on the peak, can be observed in the early morning from March to September.