

Takebe Taisha Shrine

Takebe Taisha Shrine dates from the eighth century and is designated the *ichinomiya* (chief shrine) for what is now Shiga Prefecture, a special status it has held since at least the Heian period (794–1185). The shrine is dedicated to Yamato Takeru, the legendary warrior prince who wielded the magical sword considered one of the imperial regalia of Japan. There are many shrines dedicated to Yamato Takeru throughout Japan, but Takebe Taisha is one of the oldest.

Three cedar trees stand clustered together in front of the main shrine building. The trees are the symbol of the shrine and are considered sacred. The eight smaller shrines on either side of the main building are dedicated to different deities, complementing the Yamato Takeru shrine.

Takebe Taisha has a treasure hall featuring statues of Shinto deities made in the Heian period. The ancient artifacts have been designated Important Cultural Properties. Also on display are the *mikoshi* (portable shrines) used during the annual Senkosai Festival on August 17.