

Omi Jingu Shrine

Omi Jingu Shrine was built in 1940 and enshrines Emperor Tenji (626–672), who moved Japan's capital to Otsu in 667. Tenji is enshrined in the shrine's main sanctuary behind a large worship hall. The central part of Omi Jingu is entered through a towering, bright red gate (*romon*) that stands out amid the dense greenery of the forest surrounding the shrine. Emperor Tenji famously built the first water clock (*rokoku*) in Japan, and the shrine has a clock museum featuring numerous timepieces from Japan and around the world. A working replica of the water clock is on the grounds, and every year on June 10, a festival is held to commemorate the building of the original.

Emperor Tenji also composed the first *waka* poem in the famous *Hyakunin Isshu*, a compilation of 100 poems written by poets including many prominent members of the imperial court. The poems are the basis for a popular card game called *karuta*, in which players compete to find cards with the last part of a poem as the first part of it is read aloud. Omi Jingu is a key venue of the competitive *karuta* scene, regularly hosting tournaments including the Meijin and Queen finals, which are Japan's national championship.