

**Daiho-onji Temple (Senbon Shakado Hall)**  
**[LEGENDS / HEIAN / KITANO-NISHIJIN]**

The Senbon Shakado Hall, the main hall at the Shingon Buddhist Daiho-onji Temple, is the oldest surviving wooden structure in Kyoto. Designated a National Treasure, it was built in 1227 and gave birth to a legend that still captures the popular imagination.

According to the story, the master carpenter in charge of the construction project made a serious blunder halfway through the process. He mistakenly cut one of the structure's most important pillars too short. As trees large and sturdy enough for such a pillar were difficult to come by, the carpenter was devastated.

While he anguished over his error, his wife Okame came up with a quick solution. She suggested he cut all the pillars to the same length and top them with overhanging eaves to reach the requisite height. The carpenter adopted Okame's plan, and the Senbon Shakado Hall was completed in time.

Okame, however, out of fear of someone discovering what her husband had done and how she had helped him, killed herself to protect her husband's reputation. When this tragedy came to light, Okame's spirit was enshrined on the Daiho-onji grounds to honor her sacrifice.

To this day, construction workers often come to pray at the shrine ahead of a building project. Because of Okame's act of love for her husband, Daiho-onji, where dolls depicting Okame are displayed in great numbers, has also become a popular place for people to wish for luck in marriage and a happy family.