

Thomas Edison Monument

Thomas Alva Edison (1847–1931) was a prolific American inventor, innovator, and businessman. He developed and improved many devices that had a significant impact on modern life. It is believed that Edison's work on the incandescent light bulb has a strong connection to Yawata, and this monument was erected to commemorate Edison and his achievements.

When Edison was developing an electric lighting system in 1878, he needed to create a long-lasting and reliable light bulb. The key was finding a suitable material for the filament. He tried thousands of options, from metals to cotton thread and even beard hair, and concluded that bamboo was the most promising. Then Edison's assistants were sent to collect bamboo samples from around the world, including Kyoto. High-quality bamboo specimens gathered on their journey did indeed produce especially durable filaments that burned for over 1,000 hours, and this discovery greatly contributed to the spread of incandescent light bulbs. It is believed that Edison used bamboo from the grove near Iwashimizu Hachimangu Shrine, recognized throughout Japan for its excellent quality, as filaments in his light bulbs.

The first monument to Edison was built on the grounds of Iwashimizu Hachimangu in 1934. It was moved to this location in 1958 and was redesigned in 1984.