

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, including the phonograph, the early motion picture machine, and the electric light bulb. It is believed that Edison's work on the incandescent light bulb is strongly connected to Yawata, and in 1934, a monument was erected in the precincts of Iwashimizu Hachimangu Shrine on Mt. Otokoyama to commemorate Edison and his achievements. The monument was moved to the current location in 1958 and was redesigned in 1984.

When Edison focused on 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 as a result, this discovery greatly contributed to the spread of incandescent light bulbs. It is believed that Edison used bamboo from the grove near Iwashimizu Hachimangu, recognized throughout Japan for its excellent quality, as filaments in his light bulbs.

To commemorate Edison's birth and death, Iwashimizu Hachimangu holds two annual festivals, on February 11th and around October 18th. The shrine also has wooden votive tablets in honor of Edison, reflecting his importance and renown in Yawata.