

Waniguchi Temple Gong

The temple gong was dedicated to Menuuma Shodenzan Temple in 1339. The inscription indicates that the town of Menuuma was known as Fukukawa in the fourteenth century. The gong measures 31 centimeters across and is decorated on the front and back with a pattern of concentric circles.

This *waniguchi* (lit., “crocodile mouth”) gong is made of cast bronze and has two loops at the top to attach it under the eaves of a gate or temple. A wide “mouth” is cut along the curve of the lower half to amplify the sound. Worshippers strike the gong by swinging a heavy rope suspended in front of it. The sound is thought to attract the attention of the deities as the worshippers pray.

The temple gong is a Designated Cultural Property of Saitama Prefecture and is on display at the Saitama Prefectural Museum of History and Folklore, in Omiya, Saitama Prefecture. A similar gong hangs from the eaves of the Niomon, the closest gate to the main hall.