

## **Hyakudan Stairs**

The large stone stairway that leads from the southern side of the [Usa Jingu](#) shrine grounds into the [Jogu \(Upper Shrine\)](#) is called the Hyakudan. Although the name means “a stairway of one hundred steps,” there are only 99.

According to legend, an ogre once approached Hachiman, the main deity worshipped at Usa Jingu, asking for permission to eat humans. The two made a deal that if the ogre could construct a stone staircase of 100 steps in a single night, he would be allowed to indulge his appetite. The task seemed impossible, so Hachiman was surprised to discover that the ogre had already built the 99th step as sunrise drew near. To prevent the ogre from completing the last step, the deity caused a rooster to crow and announce the dawn. Since only 99 steps were finished, the conditions of the deal were left unfulfilled. In another version of the tale, the opponent is a large water-dwelling serpent that came to Hachiman wanting to expand its territory to the [Hishigata Pond](#), only to be bested in a similar manner.

The original Hyakudan staircase was rebuilt with marble during the Great Showa Reconstruction of the Usa Jingu grounds (1932–1941), keeping the 99 steps to match the legend. The Nandaimon Gate at the foot of the steep staircase was constructed at the same time. At present, the Hyakudan is closed because of safety concerns and visitors take the regular route up the western side of Mt. Ogura. People with limited mobility or families with strollers are welcome to use the monorail that runs beneath the staircase to reach the Jogu.