

Gegu (Lower Shrine)

[Usa Jingu](#) is a rare example of a large shrine complex with two shrines dedicated to the same deities. In addition to the [Jogu \(Upper Shrine\)](#), the main shrine on top of Mt. Ogura, there is also the Gegu (Lower Shrine) at the base of the mountain, both enshrining Hachiman, the Hime Okami, and Empress Jingu. An old local saying states that “if you don’t visit the Gegu, you have completed only half a pilgrimage,” reflecting the importance of praying at both places when visiting Usa Jingu.

The Gegu was first built in the early ninth century, about one hundred years after the Jogu. Though the enshrined deities are the same, they have different divine characteristics. For example, at the Jogu Hachiman is worshipped as a guardian of the country, while at the Gegu he is revered as a protector of the people and their livelihood, including industries such as farming and fishing. One theory suggests that the differentiation arose because the Jogu was originally accessible only to the elite, so the Gegu became the place of worship for the general populace.

In the past, the Gegu was also used to prepare sacred food and drink offerings for the deities. At present, it primarily serves as a location for daily prayer rituals carried out by shrine priests. The Gegu is sometimes used to enshrine the Jogu deities during large-scale repairs to the main sanctuaries. The current Gegu buildings were reconstructed in 1939.