

## **O'o Jinja Shrine**

O'o Jinja Shrine stands on Mt. O'o on the eastern side of the [Usa Jingu](#) shrine grounds. It is an auxiliary shrine where an important oracle was received during an imperial succession dispute in the eighth century.

In 749, the deity Hachiman was transferred from Usa to Nara (then the capital of Japan) for a pilgrimage to Todaiji Temple during construction of the Great Buddha statue. On the journey back, before Hachiman could be returned to Usa Jingu, an oracle declared that the deity should be temporarily enshrined on Mt. O'o while the main sanctuary on Mt. Ogura underwent purification. O'o Shrine was built for that purpose in 765. Historians believe that the delay in Hachiman's return to his base of power was the result of maneuvering by prominent political figures in Nara, who were wary of the growing influence of Usa Jingu.

Hachiman resided at O'o Shrine for 15 years. During that period, the powerful Buddhist monk Dokyo (700?–772) attempted to be named the next emperor. According to some versions of events, a Dokyo supporter claimed that an oracle from Hachiman had foretold peace throughout the land if Dokyo took the throne. To verify the statement, the reigning Empress Shotoku (718–770) dispatched a courtier named Wake no Kiyomaro (733–799) to Usa in 769. The oracle he received at O'o Shrine said the throne must only be occupied by a member of the imperial bloodline, which helped prevent Dokyo from becoming emperor and preserved the traditional order of succession.

Though Hachiman was later returned to the main sanctuary at Usa Jingu, the site on Mt. O'o remains sacred as a place where the deity is believed to have appeared and spoken his will. The current O'o Shrine building was constructed in 1937 and repaired in 2020. A nearby shrine on Mt. O'o called [Go'o Jinja](#) is dedicated to Wake no Kiyomaro in honor of his loyalty to the imperial family.