

Yashimaji Temple

Yashimaji Temple is one of the most eye-catching sites on Yashima. The temple is believed to have been founded in 754 at a location on the north side of the mountain by the Chinese monk Jianzhen (Ganjin in Japanese; 688–763), who established the Ritsu school of Buddhism in Japan. In the early ninth century, the temple was converted to a Shingon Buddhist sanctuary by the priest Kukai (774–835), who also had the temple moved to its current location on the south side of the plateau. The temple is the 84th stop on the 88-temple Shikoku Pilgrimage.

Kukai is said to have carved the temple's main object of worship, a statue of the Thousand-Armed Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion. The statue was originally kept in the main hall (*hondo*) but is now on display in the temple museum. The statue and the main hall building, as well as the temple bell dating to 1223, are designated Important Cultural Properties.

Also on display in the museum are Buddhist sculptures, along with artifacts and items relating to the Battle of Yashima, which took place in 1185. Beside the main hall is a shrine to Minoyama Daimyōjin, a legendary *tanuki* (raccoon dog) spirit said to be able to take any form.