

Musashi Mitake Shrine

Musashi Mitake Shrine is a destination for pilgrimage and ascetic mountain training, with a history that spans two thousand years. The shrine is located at the peak of Mt. Mitake (929 m). Several deities are venerated here, including Okuchimagami, a wolf deity, and Zao Gongen, the principal deity of Shugendo, a mountain religion that draws on Shinto, Buddhism, Daoism, and asceticism. The Treasure Hall houses a collection of swords and armor, many dedicated to the shrine by samurai in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The *haiden*, or worship hall, has been rebuilt several times. The hall used to face south towards the samurai capital of Kamakura in Kanagawa Prefecture during the Kamakura period (1185–1333). Later, in the seventeenth century when Edo (present-day Tokyo) became the center of power for the Tokugawa shogunate, the worship hall was rebuilt and rotated 45 degrees to face east, to protect the shogun's capital.

A path from the left side of the main hall leads to a series of smaller shrines. Tokiwa Kakiwasha Shrine (built in 1511) is the largest, painted black with gilded details. It enshrines the deities of all 47 prefectures of Japan. At the rear of the complex is a shrine dedicated to the wolf deity Okuchimagami, who is said to have saved a legendary warrior in the mountains here in the first century CE. Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), the first shogun of this period, is enshrined in the Toshosha, a small wooden shrine marked with a pair of gilded Tokugawa crests.