

## **Kogetsuin Temple**

Kogetsuin is a temple of the Jodo (Pure Land) school of Buddhism that overlooks the eastern end of the village of Matsudaira (Matsudaira-go) at the foot of Mt. Rokusho. It is the ancestral temple of the Matsudaira family and has been the main Buddhist site of worship in the area since the time of Matsudaira Chikauji (d. 1394?), the first head of the family.

The temple was founded under the name Jakujoji in 1367 by a traveling monk on behalf of the Ariwara, the first family to cultivate land in what became Matsudaira-go. In 1377, Chikauji expanded the temple and renamed it Kogetsuin. He also donated a statue of Amida Buddha and funded the construction of several halls and other structures. Kogetsuin thereby became the Matsudaira family temple, a status that was to ensure its prosperity for centuries.

After Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), a Matsudaira descendant, unified Japan and established the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867), Kogetsuin was granted significant lands. The third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu (1604–1651), is said to have donated the temple's former gates and main hall. Subsequent Tokugawa shoguns continued to support Kogetsuin to ensure the upkeep of their ancestors' tombs. Those tombs are located at the very back of the grounds, on a small terrace above the graves of the temple's former priests.