

## Aizendo Hall

Aizendo Hall was built in 1635, making it the oldest wooden structure in Taketa. It began as part of a temple called Daishoin, but in 1874 it was converted into the new main hall of Ganjoin Temple, the principal site of worship at Oka Castle. Ganjoin was relocated to the hilltop site of Aizendo Hall after the castle was demolished.

The square structure is an intriguing example of temple architecture from the early Edo period (1603–1867). Distinctive features include an overhanging tent roof, which is supported by an intricate construction of interlocking wooden brackets. Faces are carved into the pieces at the corners of the roof, the edges of which are held up by sculptures of small demon-like creatures called *jaki*.

Aizendo is thought to be beneficial for matchmaking; the temple's main deity, Aizen Myo-o, is believed to control love, marriage, and household harmony.

The interior walls of Aizendo are decorated with murals depicting heavenly beings such as the *tennyo*, celestial figures that lead the dead to paradise. Due to the delicate nature of these seventeenth-century murals, the hall is only open to the public twice a year, in spring and autumn. Aizendo has been designated an Important Cultural Property.