

The Kamakura Period (1185-1333)

With the Establishment of the *Samurai* Government, Kamakura Became the Political Center of Japan.

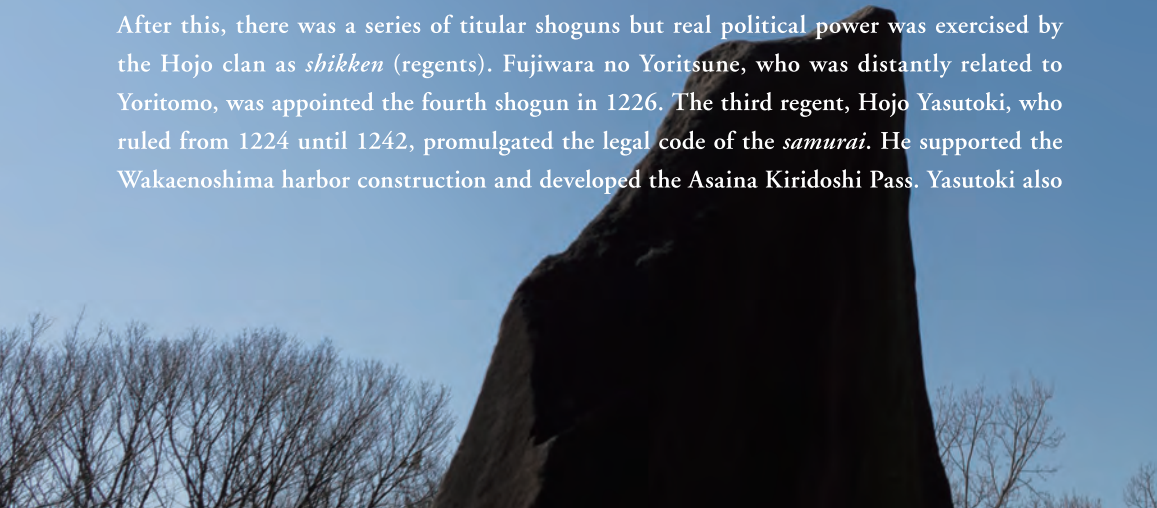
Kamakura prospered as a *samurai* city for over 150 years from 1180, when Minamoto no Yoritomo arrived in Kamakura with his many *samurai* warriors, until 1333, when the regent Hojo Takatoki committed suicide and the shogunate ended.

After the Heiji Rebellion in 1159 ended in a Taira victory over the Minamoto clan, Yoritomo was captured by Taira no Kiyomori and banished to the Izu Peninsula. After twenty years in Izu, Yoritomo raised an army and established a base at Kamakura in 1180 from which to attack the Taira clan. In 1185 Yoritomo defeated the Taira clan and appointed *shugo* (governors) and *jito* (land stewards who managed manors and collected taxes) to the provinces. In 1192 Yoritomo was appointed shogun. This marked the beginning of the Kamakura shogunate, a *samurai* government consisting of the *Kamakuradono*, or the shogun who was the leader of the *samurai* warriors, and the *gokenin*, vassals who served the *Kamakuradono*.

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Yoritomo created Wakamiya Oji Avenue and Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine became the center of the city. After Yoritomo died in 1199, Yoriie was appointed the second shogun. However, Yoriie was opposed by his mother, Hojo Masako, and his maternal grandfather, Hojo Tokimasa, who later assassinated Yoriie. Sanetomo, Yoriie's younger brother, became the third shogun. Sanetomo was assassinated by Kugyo, a son of Yoriie. This brought an end to the Minamoto line of the Kamakura shogunate after just three generations.

After this, there was a series of titular shoguns but real political power was exercised by the Hojo clan as *shikken* (regents). Fujiwara no Yoritune, who was distantly related to Yoritomo, was appointed the fourth shogun in 1226. The third regent, Hojo Yasutoki, who ruled from 1224 until 1242, promulgated the legal code of the *samurai*. He supported the Wakaenoshima harbor construction and developed the Asaina Kiridoshi Pass. Yasutoki also



carried out administrative duties and ran courts to strengthen the Hojo clan's regency.

During the period from 1268 until 1284 when Hojo Tokimune was eighth regent, the Mongol Empire twice tried to invade Japan. They withdrew on both occasions. In order to prepare for a third invasion, the Kyushu region needed to be fortified, and as the financial burden on vassals increased, their disaffection with the shogunate rose.

Nitta Yoshisada, who sided with the anti-shogunate movement led by Emperor Godaigo, attacked Kamakura in 1333. The Hojo clan, including the 14th regent, Hojo Takatoki, and his vassals committed suicide. Yoshisada took control of Kamakura. This marked the end of the Kamakura shogunate.





Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine's lower worship hall in the foreground and the main shrine at the top of the stone steps.

Minamoto no Sanetomo (1192-1219)

Minamoto no Sanetomo was the second son of Yoritomo and Hojo Masako. He became shogun at the age of 12. When Sanetomo was 28, he was killed by his nephew, Kugyo, at Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine. Sanetomo was known as a *tanka* poet and one of his poems is included in *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu*, a famous collection of *tanka* poems.

In the
footsteps of
the Literati

1104 Egara Tenjinsha Shrine

Brilliant Red Shrine Contrasts with the Mountain Greenery

Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine in Fukuoka, Kitano Tenmangu Shrine in Kyoto and Egara Tenjinsha Shrine in Kamakura are considered by some to be Japan's three great Tenjin shrines. Yoritomo designated this shrine as a tutelary shrine for the protection of his office and residence in the northeast of the city (believed to be an unlucky direction).



Plum blossoms were loved by the 9th-century scholar Sugawara no Michizane, who was deified at Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine.

1180 Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine

The Main Shrine, the Heart of Kamakura City

After the defeat of Taira no Tadatsune, Minamoto no Yoriyoshi built a branch shrine of Iwashimizu Hachimangu Shrine (in Kyoto) near the Yuigahama seashore (where Motohachimangu Shrine is currently located). A hundred years later, when Minamoto no Yoritomo, five generations after Yoriyoshi, came to Kamakura, the shrine was moved to the current location. Yoritomo was devoted to the Hachiman deity, the tutelary god of warriors, and *samurai* warriors in other provinces followed his example. As a result, many Hachimangu shrines were built across Japan. After the death of Yoritomo, Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine was supported by the Hojo clan. Toyotomi Hideyoshi (in the 16th-century) and the Tokugawa clan (from the 17th to 19th-centuries) were also patrons of the shrine. The ancient great ginkgo tree at the shrine fell in 2010, but shoots are now sprouting from its base.



Digging Deep into Kamakura

Yabusame Ritual Brings the Kamakura Period Back to Life

The Yabusame Ritual, archery on horseback, is held every year during Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine's Reitaisai festival in September. Yabusame Ritual started in 1187 at the ceremony for the release of captive animals, a traditional Buddhist ceremony. Re-enacting the yabusame of the Kamakura period, archers in period hunting costume gallop down a 260 meters track at high speed and shoot arrows at three targets one after another. Other events with origins in the Kamakura Period such as Jomashinji and Bugaku dance and music are also held at the shrine.

*Yabusame is also held during the Kamakura Festival in April.



The Yabusame Ritual at Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine's Reitaisai festival.

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1182 Wakamiya Oji Avenue

Kamakura Period City Planning

Wakamiya Oji Avenue stretches from the main building of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine straight to the ocean. Wakamiya Oji Avenue was built by Minamoto no Yoritomo. The raised approach to the shrine called *dankazura* extends from the second *torii* gate to the third *torii* gate. According to some historical records, such as *Azuma Kagami*, this approach was created to pray for the safe delivery of Yoritomo's first child by his wife, Masako.



Wakamiya Oji Avenue continues for approximately 1800 meters from the Namerigawa Bridge, passing through the first and second *torii* gates, to the third *torii* gate at the Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine entrance.

Digging Deep into Kamakura

Minamoto no Yoritomo's City Planning

Wakamiya Oji Avenue, a thoroughfare approximately 33 meters wide, continues straight from Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine to the ancient Tokaido road that crosses Yuigahama. The Tokaido road linked Edo to Kyoto. The raised section, called the *dankadura* in the center of the street was built by Hojo Tokimasa's vassals who transported soil and rocks to build it. Wakamiya Oji Avenue is an enduring symbol of Kamakura.



1951

**Former Main Building of the Kamakura Annex,
Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Modern Art
(Kamakura Bunkakan Tsurugaoka Museum)**

A guiding presence for culture and the arts in the turbulent years of postwar reconstruction

Just six years after the end of World War II, while Japan was still under Allied occupation, the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Modern Art opened as the country's first public museum dedicated to modern art.

The project began when art professionals connected to Kanagawa established the Kanagawa Artists' Roundtable and set out to build a museum. The group consisted of 33 members, including painters and scholars such as Ikuma Arishima, Sotaro Yasui, Seiji Chokai, Kiyokata Kaburaki, Seison Maeda, and Shinsui Ito.

The building was designed by Junzo Sakakura (1901–1969). After graduating from the Department of Aesthetics and Art History at Tokyo Imperial University, Sakakura traveled to France and trained in the studio of the renowned modernist architect Le Corbusier. He later received the Grand Prix in the architectural category at the 1937 Paris International Exposition for his design of the Japanese Pavilion.

The museum, a two-story structure with a total floor area of 1,575 square meters, may appear modest by today's standards. Yet at the time it became a major topic in Japan's architectural community in the immediate postwar period. To commemorate its opening, the museum held its inaugural exhibition, "Cézanne and Renoir."



The building's clear floor plan is organized around a central courtyard, with functions arranged along its perimeter. The principal spaces are elevated on the second floor and supported by rows of columns that form a pilotis—a feature derived from Le Corbusier's concept of the "Museum of Unlimited Growth." While adopting this modernist principle, Sakakura also sought harmony with the natural surroundings. By incorporating materials distinctive to Japan, he created a unique architectural space where modernism and Japanese tradition coexist.

Descending the stairs from the second floor leads to the pilotis, where the space opens toward Heike Pond. On clear days, reflections from the rippling water shimmer across the ceiling, forming rings of light.

A New Beginning as the Kamakura Bunkakan Tsurugaoka Museum

For 65 years, the Kamakura Annex carried out pioneering museum activities with an international perspec-

tive. However, following the expiration of its land lease with Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine, the museum closed on March 31, 2016.

In November of the same year, the building was designated an Important Cultural Property by Kanagawa Prefecture. In December, the land was returned and the building was transferred free of charge from the prefecture to Tsurugaoka Hachimangu.

Subsequently, renovation work was undertaken to preserve the historic architectural design while strengthening the structure, restoring original elements, and improving functionality through modern technologies. In June 2019, the building reopened as the new cultural hub, Kamakura Bunkakan Tsurugaoka Museum.

With a renewed mission to introduce the cultural richness of Kamakura, the museum carries out activities that connect the "history" of the past with the "future," centered on the heritage of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu.



Former Main Building of the Kamakura Annex, Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Modern Art
Grand staircase at the west front entrance (top) / South exterior view (bottom)
Photograph: Fumio Murasawa (1951)

1185

Koyurugijinja Shrine

A pilgrimage to Enoshima
Visiting the guardian shrine of Koshigoe.

Sasaki Moritsuna, who served Minamoto no Yoritomo after Yoritomo was banished to Izu, built a branch shrine of Hachiojigu Shrine in Omi Province (current Shiga Prefecture) here. Later Nitta Yoshisada rebuilt the shrine to pray for victory over the Kamakura shogunate. The name of the shrine was changed to Koyurugijinja in the Meiji Period.



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1185

Zeniarabenzaiten Ugafukujinja Shrine

Money Washed in the Spring Water is
Believed to Bring Good Fortune

During a famine, Minamoto no Yoritomo offered up prayers to save the people. Ugafukujin, the harvest and fertility deity, appeared to him in a dream and told him about this spring. Hojo Tokiyori also prayed to this god and washed money for prosperity. To this day the spring attracts crowds of people washing money.



This shrine is unusual because visitors must pass through a tunnel to enter the shrine.



Digging Deep into Kamakura

How Were the Five Great Rinzaï Temples of Kamakura Decided?

In the Southern Song Dynasty in China (1127-1279), five temples were chosen and ranked as the Five Great Temples. This system was adopted by the Kamakura shogunate to rank Rinzaï Sect temples. Initially the five temples were selected from Kyoto and Kamakura but in 1386 five temples were selected from each of the cities. Nanzenji Temple in Kyoto is always placed ahead of the other temples in Kyoto and Kamakura. The ranking in Kamakura is: Kenchoji Temple first; Engakuji Temple second; Jufukuji Temple third; Jochiji Temple fourth; and Jomyoji Temple fifth. These five temples were managed by the shogunate.

1188 Jomyoji Temple

Karesansui Rock Garden

This temple was founded by Ashikaga Yoshikane, who was Hojo Masako's younger sister's husband. Yoritomo and Masako held Taiko Gyoyu, the first head monk, in very high regard. Although the temple was originally called Gokurakuji, the name was later changed to Jomyoji. Jomyoji Temple is the fifth of Kamakura's Five Great Rinzaï Temples.



Karesansui Rock Garden in the Immaculate Temple Precinct

Digging Deep into Kamakura

Views of Kamakura Unchanged since Ancient Times

"Several hundred boats were moored in a line" This description of the beach at Yuigahama appearing in the *Kaidoki*, a traveler's journal written in the Kamakura Period, suggests a flourishing economy.

Lady Nijo, author of the autobiographical late 13th-century *Towazugatari*, records walking through the Gokurakujizaka Kiridoshi Pass. This pass was known for the panoramic view of the beach it afforded. Ancient travelers knew they had arrived in Kamakura when they reached this pass.



Yuigahama and Zaimokuza Beach viewed from the steps of Jojuin Temple.

1189

Remains of Hokkedo Temple (Graves of Minamoto no Yoritomo and Hojo Yoshitoki)

Graves of Two Significant Figures of Kamakura

The site where Minamoto no Yoritomo's grave stands today is believed to be the remains of Hokkedo Temple. Yoritomo built a private Buddhist hall to enshrine a statue of the Shokannon as his personal guardian image. After his death, the hall came to be known as Hokkedo and was used for memorial services in his honor. In an open area near Yoritomo's grave lies the grave of Hojo Yoshitoki, the second regent of the shogunate. Yoshitoki was the brother of Hojo Masako and served as regent when Yoritomo's son, Sanetomo, served as shogun.

Although nothing resembling a grave remains today, archaeological excavations have uncovered the remains of a hall, revealing that a separate Hokkedo was built to hold memorial services for Yoshitoki.



A multi-leveled tower called a *soto*, rebuilt by Shimazu Shigehide, the eighth lord of Satsuma Domain. (Grave of Minamoto no Yoritomo)