

The Muromachi Period (1336-1573)

Creation of the Kamakura-fu in the Muromachi Period; Kamakura in the Warring States Period.

In 1333, Nitta Yoshisada and other warriors who sided with the Emperor Godaigo against the Kamakura shogunate, attacked Kamakura. The Hojo clan including the 14th regent, Hojo Takatoki, who ruled the Kamakura shogunate, and his vassals committed suicide, bringing the Kamakura shogunate to an end. The Kenmu Restoration under Emperor Godaigo began and Ashikaga Tadayoshi, younger brother of Ashikaga Takauji, entered Kamakura. The Imperial restoration soon failed and Takauji established the Muromachi shogunate in Kyoto.

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Takauji considered Kamakura to be important to his shogunal government. He established the Kamakura-fu, a regional government office, and appointed his son Motouji as the Kamakura *kubo*, or governor, to rule over the Kanto Plain, Kai and Izu. The Uesugi clan later inherited the position of Kanto kanrei (deputy shogun).

With the creation of the Kamakura-fu, Kamakura became the center of the Kanto provinces and commerce and industry flourished. Later, the Kamakura *kubo* fell out with the shogun in Kyoto and as well the *kubo* and the Kanto *kanrei* vied with each other. Civil war broke out in the Kanto region (around Tokyo) followed by civil war in the Kansai region (around Kyoto). During the Warring States Period, Kamakura went into gradual decline.

1380 Meigetsuin Temple

The Hydrangea Temple

Meigetsuin Temple was originally a sub-temple of Zenkoji Temple (now ruined). Meigetsuin is also known as the Hydrangea Temple, and was the first temple in Kamakura to become famous for its gardens.

The Meigetsuin *yagura* tomb, where Buddhist images such as Shaka-nyorai were carved into the rock, is the largest tomb in Kamakura. The garden behind the main hall is open to the public in June for the irises and in November for autumn colors.



Most of the hydrangeas along the approach to the temple are *himeajisai* (hydrangea serrata).

1436 Hongakuji Temple

Nichiren Sect Temple Located on the Site of Ebisudo Hall where Nichiren Stayed

Minamoto no Yoritomo built Ebisudo Hall where Komachioji Street crosses the Namerigawa River as a tutelary hall for the shogunate. Nichiren, a famous Buddhist priest in the Kamakura Period who founded the Nichiren School of Buddhism, stayed at this hall before traveling to Mt. Minobu. Ebisudo Hall was destroyed by fire when the Kamakura shogunate fell. Subsequently, Hongakuji Temple was built on the site.



Beyond the *niomon* gate can be seen the thatched roof of the large main hall.



Hand-painted amulet called a "*Nigiri fuku*" brings good luck

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The Edo Period (1603-1867)

Kamakura Became a Tourist Destination in the Edo Period

Although Kamakura declined during the Warring States Period, its fortunes changed in 1603 when Tokugawa Ieyasu established the Edo (Tokugawa) shogunate. He declared that Kamakura was the birthplace of *samurai* government and the shogunal government moved to support the shrines and temples of Kamakura. Kamakura then started attracting people from Edo as a pilgrimage destination and holiday resort. Buddhist monks and members of the *samurai* class began visiting historic sites associated with Minamoto no Yoritomo (the founder and first shogun of the Kamakura shogunate). As traffic on the Tokaido road between Kamakura and Edo increased, Kamakura became a popular destination for the townspeople of Edo as well. This was started by the *Shinpen Kamakurashi* (The Newly Edited Guide to Kamakura), which was compiled over an 11-year period by order of Tokugawa Mitsukuni, and published in 1685. This eight-volume guidebook was based on the *Kamakura Nikki*, a travel journal written by Mitsukuni when he toured Kamakura, and the precursor to today's guidebooks. Many people came to Kamakura, referring to this guidebook's detailed explanations and illustrations of places of scenic and historical interest. Utagawa Hiroshige's *ukiyo-e* print, which depicts tourists flocking to Enoshima, attests to Kamakura's popularity. From the middle to the latter part of the Edo Period, other guidebooks and maps similar to the *Shinpen Kamakurashi*, such as the *Kamakura Meishoki* and the *Kamakura Ezu*, were published. It is no exaggeration to say that the popularity of Kamakura as a tourist destination had its beginnings in the Edo Period.

Late in the Tokugawa shogunate, gun batteries were established along the Kamakura coast in order to provide coastal defense against foreign ships coming to Japan. Yoshida Shoin, Sakamoto Ryoma and other patriots of the end of the Edo period stayed in Kamakura.

1636 Eishoji Temple

Kamakura's Only Convent

Eishoji Temple is Kamakura's only convent and was founded by Lady Okachi, a concubine of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa shogun. It stands on the site of a mansion owned by her ancestor, Ota Dokan. The temple has many architectural treasures such as the *sammon* gate with its fine sculptural decorations, the Buddha hall, the bell tower, the *shido* hall and its *karamon* gate. Since the temple prospered with the support of the Tokugawa family, the Tokugawa clan emblem, a three-leaf hollyhock, can be found in the hall and on other buildings.



Stunning two-story *sammon* gate. Beautiful carvings including a dragon and tiger can be seen under the first-floor eaves.

Kamakura Meishoki

Forerunner of Kamakura Guidebooks

A number of Kamakura guidebooks for sightseeing were published in the middle of the Edo Period when many townspeople travelled to Kamakura. The woodblock-printed *Kamakura Meishoki*, one of the most well-known of these guidebooks, introduced sightseeing spots such as Enoshima to the south of Kamakura, Kamakura City and the Eight Views of Kanazawa together with historic sites and their histories. Many copies of the *Kamakura Ezu*, a map showing the locations introduced in the *Kamakura Meishoki*, were also printed. It is said that these guidebooks and maps were produced based on *Shinpen Kamakurashi* (The Newly Edited Guide to Kamakura) which was compiled on the orders of Tokugawa Mitsukuni.



An illustration of the *torii* gate of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine appears on the cover.

Digging Deep into Kamakura

Kamakura Specialties that Became Famous in the Edo Period

From Enoshima to Kamakura via Shichirigahama...this route was already popular in the Edo Period. There were many teahouses lining the route. Local specialties such as the first bonito fish of the season and Kamakura lobsters were very popular with visitors from Edo (present day Tokyo). Chikaramochi, a sticky rice cake sold at Chikaramochiya, a confectionary store that has operated for 300 years in Gokurakuji Sakashita, is one of the first Kamakura souvenirs and is still popular today.