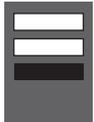


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Kamakura (, Kamakura-shi?) is a city located in Kanagawa, Japan, about 50 kilometres (31 mi) south-south-west of Tokyo. It used to be also called Renpu (short for Kamakura Bakufu or Kamakura Shogunate). Although Kamakura proper is today rather small, it is sometimes considered a former de facto capital of Japan as the seat of the Shogunate and of the Regency during the Kamakura Period, but the city was politically and administratively linked to the ancient capital of Kyoto during this period.

According to The Institute for Research on World-Systems,[2] Kamakura was the 4th largest city in the world in 1250 AD, with 200,000 people, and Japan's largest, eclipsing Kyoto by 1200 AD.

As of March 1, 2010, the city has an estimated population of 174,016 and a density of 4,390 inhabitants per square kilometre (11,400 /sq mi). The total area is 39.60 square kilometres (15.29 sq mi).

Kamakura was designated as a city on November 3, 1939.

Kamakura has a beach which, in combination with the temples and the proximity to Tokyo, makes it a popular tourist destination. Kamakura's bay has a surf break off of the headland point, albeit an inconsistent one, which makes it at least a second-tier destination for surfers. It is also noted for its senbei, which are crisp rice cakes grilled and sold fresh along the main shopping street.

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## History

The earliest traces of human settlements in the area date back at least 10,000 years. Obsidian and stone tools found at excavation sites near Joraku-ji were dated to the Old Stone Age (between 100,000 and 10,000 years ago). During the Jomon period, the sea level was higher than now and all the flat land in Kamakura up to Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gu and, further east, up to Yokohama's Totsuka-ku and Sakae-ku was under water. Thus, the oldest pottery fragments found come from hillside settlements of the period between 7500 BC and 5000 BC. In the late Jomon period the sea receded and civilization progressed. During the Yayoi period (300 BC–300 AD), the sea receded further almost to today's coastline, and the economy shifted radically from hunting and fishing to farming.

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The Azuma Kagami describes pre-shogunate Kamakura as a remote, forlorn place, but there is reason to believe its writers simply wanted to give the impression that prosperity was brought there by the new regime.[9] To the contrary, it is known that by the Nara Period (about 700 AD) there were both temples and shrines. Sugimoto-dera was built during this period and is therefore one of the city's oldest temples. The town was also the seat of areal government offices and the point of convergence of several land and marine routes. It seems therefore only natural that it should have been a city of a certain

## Geography

Surrounded to the north, east and west by mountains and to the south by the open water of Sagami Bay, Kamakura is a natural fortress. Before the construction of several tunnels and modern roads that now connect it to Fujisawa, Ofuna and Zushi, on land it could be entered only through narrow artificial passes, among which the seven most important were called Kamakura's Seven Entrances, a name sometimes translated as "Kamakura's Seven Mouths". The natural fortification made Kamakura an easily defensible stronghold. Before the opening of the Entrances, access on land was so difficult that the Azuma Kagami reports that Hojo Masako came back to Kamakura from a visit to Sotozan temple in Izu bypassing by boat the impassable Inamuragasaki cape and arriving in Yuigahama. Again according to the Azuma Kagami, the first of the Kamakura shoguns, Minamoto no Yoritomo, chose it as a base partly because it was his ancestors' land (his yukari no chi), partly because of these physical characteristics.

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## The Kamakura Period

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The extraordinary events, the historical characters, and the culture of the century that goes from Minamoto no Yoritomo's birth to the assassination of the last of his sons have been throughout Japanese history the background

and the inspiration for countless poems, books, jidaigeki TV dramas, Kabuki plays, songs, manga and even videogames, and are necessary to make sense of much of what one sees in today's Kamakura.

Yoritomo, after the defeat and almost complete extermination of his family at the hands of the Taira clan, managed in the space of a few years to go from being a fugitive hiding from his enemies inside a tree trunk to being the most powerful man in the land. Defeating the Taira clan, Yoritomo became de facto ruler of much of Japan and founder of the Kamakura shogunate, an institution destined to last 141 years and to have immense repercussions over the country's history.

The Kamakura shogunate era is called by historians the Kamakura period and, although its end is clearly set (Siege of Kamakura (1333)), its beginning is not: different historians put it at a different point in time within a range that goes from the establishment of Yoritomo's first military government in Kamakura (1180) to his elevation to the rank of Seii Taishogun in 1192. It used to be thought that during this period effective power had moved completely from the Emperor in Kyoto to Yoritomo in Kamakura, but the progress of research has revealed this wasn't the case.

### Fall of the Kamakura Shogunate

On July 3, 1333 warlord Nitta Yoshisada, who was an Emperor loyalist, attacked Kamakura to reestablish imperial rule. After trying to enter by land through the Kewaizaka Pass and the Gokuraku-ji Pass, he and his forces waited for a low tide, bypassed the Inamuragasaki cape, entered the city and took it.

In accounts of that disastrous Hojo defeat it is recorded that nearly 900 Hojo samurai, including the last three Regents, committed suicide at their family temple, Toshō-ji, whose ruins have been found in today's Omachi. Almost the entire clan vanished at once, the city was sacked and many temples were burned. Many simple citizens imitated the Hojo, and an estimated total of over six thousand died on that day of their own hand.

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### Buddhist Influence

Kamakura is known among Buddhists for having been during the 13th century the cradle of Nichiren Buddhism. Founder Nichiren wasn't a native: he was born in Awa Province, in today's Chiba Prefecture, but it was only natural to a preacher to come here because at the time the city was the political center of the country. He settled down in a straw hut in the Matsubagayatsu district, where three temples (Ankokuron-ji, Myoho-ji, and Chosho-ji), have been fighting for centuries for the honor of being the true heir of the master. During his turbulent life Nichiren came and went, but Kamakura always remained at the heart of his religious activities. It's here that, when he was about to be executed by the Hojo Regent for being a troublemaker, he was allegedly saved by a miracle, it's in Kamakura that he wrote his famous *Rissho Ankoku Ron*, or "Treatise on Peace and Righteousness", it's here that he was rescued and fed by monkeys and it's here that he preached.

### Famous Locations

Kamakura has many historically significant Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, some of them, like Sugimoto-dera, over 1,200 years old. K toku-in, with its monumental outdoor bronze statue of Amida Buddha, is the most famous. A 15th century

tsunami destroyed the temple that once housed the Great Buddha, but the statue survived and has remained outdoors ever since. This iconic Daibutsu is arguably amongst the few images which have come to represent Japan in the world's collective imagination. Kamakura also hosts the so-called Five Great Zen Temples (the Kamakura Gozan).

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The architectural heritage of Kamakura is almost unmatched, and the city has proposed some of its historic sites for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage Sites list. It must be remembered, however, that much of the city was

devastated in the Great Kant Earthquake of 1923 and that many temples and shrines, however founded centuries ago, are physically just careful replicas.

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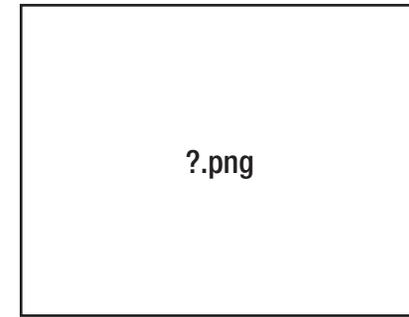
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### The Great Buddha (Daibatsu)

The Great Buddha of Kamakura is a monumental outdoor bronze statue of Amitabha Buddha located at the Kotoku-in Temple in Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan. The bronze statue probably dates from 1252, in the Kamakura period, according to temple records. It was preceded by a giant wooden Buddha, which was completed in 1243 “after five years of continuous labor”, the funds having been raised by Lady Inadano-Tsubone and the Buddhist priest Joukou of Toutoumi. That wooden statue was damaged by a storm in 1248, and the hall containing it was destroyed, so Joukou suggested making another statue of bronze, and the huge amount of money necessary for this and for a new hall was raised for the project. The sculptors were Ono Goroemaon and Tanji Hisatomo. At one time, the statue was gilded. There are still traces of gold leaf near the statue’s ears. The hall was destroyed by a storm in 1334, was rebuilt, and was damaged by yet another storm in 1369, and was rebuilt yet again.

It is unclear, however, whether the statue constructed in 1252 is the same statue as the present statue. The building housing the statue was washed away in the tsunami of September 20th, 1498 during the Muromachi period.

The statue is approximately 13.35 meters tall and weighs approximately 93 tons. The statue is hollow, and visitors can view the interior. Many visitors over the years have left graffiti on the inside of the statue. At one time, there were thirty-two bronze lotus petals at the base of the statue, but only four remain, and they are no longer in place. A notice at the entrance to the grounds reads, “Stranger, whosoever thou art and whatsoever be thy creed, when thou enterest this sanctuary remember thou treadest upon ground hallowed by the worship of ages. This is the Temple of Bhudda and the gate of the eternal, and should therefore be entered with reverence.”



Since the last hall was washed away in 1498, the Great Buddha has stood in the open air.

The Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 destroyed the base the statue sits upon, but the base was repaired in 1925. Repairs to the statue were carried out in 1960-1961, when the neck was strengthened and measures were taken to protect it from earthquakes.

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## Hase Temple (Hase-dera)

Hase-dera (known more formally as Kaikozan Jishoin Hase-dera) is one of the great Buddhist temples in the city of Kamakura in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, famous for housing a massive wooden statue of Kannon. The temple is the fourth of the 33 stations of the Bando Sanjusankasho pilgrimage circuit dedicated to the goddess Benzaiten.

The temple originally belonged to the Tendai sect of Buddhism, but eventually became an independent temple of the Jodo shu sect.

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### Statue

The statue is one of the largest wooden statues in Japan, with a height of 9.18 metres (30.1 ft), and is made from camphor wood and gilded in gold. It has 11 heads, each of which represents a different phase in

the search for enlightenment.

According to legend, the statue is one of two images of Kannon

carved by a monk named Tokud in 721. The camphor tree was so large, according to legend, that he decided that he could carve two statues with it. One was enshrined in Hase-dera in the city of Nara, Yamato Province, while the other was set adrift in the sea to find the place that it had a karmic connection with. It washed ashore on Nagai Beach on the Miura Peninsula near Kamakura in the year 736. The statue was immediately brought to Kamakura where a temple was built to honor it.

### Surrounding area

The temple also commands an impressive view over Kamakura's bay and is famous for its hydrangeas, which bloom along the Hydrangea Path in June and July. The temple is built on two levels and also includes an underground cave. The cave, called benten kutsu cave, contains a long winding tunnel with a low ceiling and various statues and devotionals to Benzaiten, the sea goddess and the only female of the Seven Lucky Gods in Japanese mythology.

Kaikozan Hase-dera is also part of the Kamakura pilgrimage circuit, also consisting of 33 sites, and is station 4 of the 33 temples of the Kanto Pilgrimage.

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### **Kamakura In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

In 1890 the railroad, which until then had arrived just to Ofuna, reached Kamakura bringing in tourists and new residents, and with them a new prosperity. Part of the ancient Dankazura (see above) was removed to let the railway system's new Yokosuka Line pass.

The volcanic eruption of Sakurajima in January 1914, covered the city in ashes. Lava flows connected the mainland with what had been a small island in the bay.

The damage caused by time, centuries of neglect, politics, and modernization was further compounded by nature in 1923. The epicenter of the Great Kant earthquake that year was deep beneath Izu shima Island in Sagami Bay, a short distance from Kamakura. Tremors devastated Tokyo, the port city of Yokohama, and the surrounding prefectures of Chiba, Kanagawa, and Shizuoka, causing widespread damage throughout the Kant region. It was reported that the sea receded at an unprecedented velocity, and then waves rushed back towards the shore in a great wall of water over seven meters high, drowning some and crushing others beneath an avalanche of water-born debris. The total death toll from earthquake, tsunami, and fire exceeded 2,000 victims.

Large sections of the shore simply slid into the sea; and the beach area near Kamakura was raised up about six-feet; or in other words, where there had only been a narrow strip of sand along the sea, a wide expanse of sand was fully exposed above the waterline.

Many temples founded centuries ago are just careful replicas, and it's for this reason that Kamakura has just one National Treasure in the building category (the Shariden at Engaku-ji). Much of Kamakura's heritage was for various reasons first lost and later rebuilt.

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