

Tunnel of *torii* at Fushimi Inari Jinja



SHINTO SHRINES





Komainu of Kunozan Toshogu

SHINTO SHRINES

**A Guide to the Sacred Sites of
Japan's Ancient Religion**

Joseph Cali with John Dougill

illustrations by Geoff Ciotti

A LATITUDE 20 BOOK
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I PRESS
HONOLULU



This book is dedicated to the countless victims of the
Great East Japan Disaster
and to the full recovery of our adopted country.

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Printed in China

18 17 16 15 14 13 6 5 4 3 2 1

Print-ready files provided by the author.

University of Hawai'i Press books are printed on
acid-free paper and meet the guidelines for per-
manence and durability of the Council on Library
Resources.

Printed by Golden Cup Printing Co., Ltd.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Cali, Joseph.

Shinto shrines : a guide to the sacred sites of
Japan's ancient religion / Joseph Cali with John
Dougill ; illustrations by Geoff Ciotti.

p. cm.

"A Latitude 20 Book."

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-8248-3713-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Shinto shrines—Japan—Guidebooks.
2. Shinto—Customs and practices. I. Dougill,
John. II. Ciotti, Geoff. III. Title.

BL2225.A1C35 2013

299.5'61350952—dc23

2012014967



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I N T R O D U C T I O N

This book is about visiting a small selection of the roughly eighty thousand Shinto shrines that exist in Japan today. It is also about the traditions embodied in these shrines as well as the festivals and rites that unite the Japanese people with those traditions. It provides information on Shinto architecture, history, rituals, and deities in general, and on a number of shrines in particular. We hope it will enrich your shrine-going experience.

Shinto is the older of Japan's two main belief systems, not in the sense of an organized religion with the name Shinto, but in the various local traditions and rituals that existed among the people from ancient times. The other is Buddhism, which entered the country in the sixth century with a theology, priesthood, and an organization. Shinto is based on faith in *kami*, which descend to or are embodied in everything from people to animals to natural phenomena to certain locations. Of particular note are awe-inspiring trees, boulders, mountains, or waterfalls. People went to such places to commune with the *kami* that they felt existed there. These were often at the boundaries of villages where ritual acts were performed to keep the community from harm.

The practice developed of calling *kami* to specific places, such as a clearing at the foot of a mountain, where the branch of a tree or a stone was set upright in the ground as an object for the *kami* to "occupy" temporarily. The purpose of the ritual was to placate destructive *kami*, seek protection of clan members or pray for abundant crops. The way of calling the *kami* was to purify a space (called a *yashiro*), make offerings, and speak words of praise. With the coming of Buddhism and its tendency to worship indoors, more-permanent structures were built for the *kami* to descend into. But these were not "houses of worship" in the Buddhist or Christian sense, where people enter to pray. They were just for the *kami*: humans worshipped from outside. That is why even today the smallest shrines are no larger than a cupboard on a pedestal. It was only much later that buildings were constructed for people to enter, and these worship halls (*baiden*) were *always* separate from the housing for the *kami*. Both the single *kami* sanctuary and the combination of *kami* sanctuary (*bonden*) and worship hall are known as *jinja*, or shrine.

Shrines can be found everywhere in Japan, from the densest metropolitan area to the most desolate mountaintop. They may be cared for by Shinto priests, by local communities, or by the families on whose property they reside. Small shrines may be all but forgotten, while larger ones have hundreds of staff and are visited by millions of people a year. They can be readily identified by the distinctive *torii*—a simple two-post gateway, with one or two crossbeams at the top—that stands in front of every shrine. It marks an area as a sacred space where *kami* dwell. The *torii* has become perhaps as much a symbol of Japan as the rising sun.

About this book and the selection of shrines

The book begins with a broad outline of the Shinto religion, including its history and a general description of the places of worship. After this comes a detailed description of fifty-seven shrines throughout the country. With an estimated total of eighty thousand shrines in Japan, selecting a small sample has obvious difficulties. The shrines in this book were chosen for many different reasons: their spiritual and historical importance; the beauty of the natural surroundings; the importance of their architecture; their uniqueness; or simply their popularity. Many of them would be at the top of any kind of listing, while others are purely subjective choices. We hope that the book will provide a good picture of the religion overall, as well as ample information on each shrine. Reading both the general history and the individual histories of the shrines will give a more complete picture of the religion. In most faiths, the spiritual life of the community revolves around the place of worship—the church, the mosque, the synagogue. With Shinto, the spiritual life revolves around the shrine (*jinja*), and this is where its character is most clearly defined and exhibited.

Pervasiveness of Shinto

Shinto, as a set of customs and practices, is so interwoven with the customs and practices of Japan that it is often indistinguishable as a separate entity. When a religion is deeply interwoven in the fabric of a society, it comes to pervade the culture to such an extent that even people who don't consider themselves religious can and do readily participate in its rituals. Thus, Western holidays such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Valentine's Day have roots in Christianity or other forgotten religious traditions, yet they are also celebrated as secular events. So it is in Japan that New Year's, *seisubun* (Seasonal Division), *shichigosan* (Seven-Five-Three), *tanabata* (Star Festival), and innumerable local festivals (*matsuri*) are grounded in Shinto and ancient Chinese traditions. Many of these celebrations do involve a visit to the shrine. Yet most people participate in them as they would in any other social event, without reflection on their religious or historical significance.

From radical change to pastiche culture

The average Japanese person's participation in religion has undergone many changes over the centuries, but radical changes in the Meiji period (1868–1912) established the forms in which Shinto, and to some degree Buddhism, exist today. First, the government forcibly separated Shinto and Buddhism, in a process called *shinbutsu bunri*, beginning in 1868. From at least the eighth century the two religions had been thoroughly intertwined, but new laws stipulated the removal of Buddhist symbols and buildings from shrines. At the same time came the removal or defrocking of Buddhist monks, called *shaso*, who performed rites for the *kami*. For economic and political reasons, the government also forced the consolidation of Shinto shrines, resulting in a decrease by nearly half in just a few years—from approximately two hundred thousand in the late nineteenth century to about one hundred and twenty thousand in 1929. The decrease was particularly severe from 1906 to 1911 due to a government policy of one shrine per town.

One reason for the draconian changes was to bring an end to the tripartite control of society that existed between the imperial house, the shogun, and the Buddhist-Shinto establishment. Instead,

a European-style parliamentary monarchy was set up, headed by the emperor. This was accomplished after the destruction of warrior rule that had controlled the country in various forms since the twelfth century, then the creation of a peerage system giving feudal lords positions as governors and government officials. At the same time, the emperor was restored to the center of national life, though his power was subsumed into the quasi-democratic political order that included a constitution and a prime minister. In the process, the religious establishment was remade, with new priests and rituals determined by the central government. Although the thinking harkened back to rules and rituals from the tenth century, they were intended to set the stage for the indoctrination of the country with new national ideals. These included the revived concept of religious ceremony and governance as one and the same (*saisei itchi*); a combination of Confucian morality and Shinto spirituality called “national essence” (*kokutai*) that promoted absolute loyalty to the emperor; and the notion that, as the “land of the gods,” Japan was superior to all other countries. The philosophy behind the new order had been developed under groups of so-called “nativist” and “National Learning” (*kokugaku*) scholars during the eighteenth century. In part a search for a distinctly Japanese identity (that is, one not influenced by imported beliefs), the movement gathered momentum as hundreds of years of feudal society began to collapse. It led in the end to radical nationalism and the perversion of Shinto at a national level into pure emperor worship.

Let us now fast-forward to Japan’s defeat in World War II. The emperor is made to declare to the nation in a live radio address that he is not a living god, and the complete separation of religion and state—a heretofore alien concept—becomes law for the first time in the country’s history. More importantly, the whole national experience spanning from the Meiji period through World War II results in the diminishment of the more fervent, mystical aspects of belief such as shamanism and mountain asceticism. It is partly the natural outcome of increased education and the widespread focus on material well-being, modernization, and Western-style rationalism. But it is also the result of structural changes and the dismantling of the Buddhist-Shinto religious complex that characterized pre-Meiji society.

Much has been written about the pastiche of images that Japan presents to the world today as a result of the balancing of opposing forces of change and tradition, and of Eastern and Western culture: the serious and sullen “salaryman” versus the “Shibuya gal” in her clownish makeup and defiant attitude; the placid face of the meditating Buddha versus the plastic face of the robot and its servo-driven familiars. One thing that makes this pastiche possible is people’s willingness and ability to accommodate aspects of other cultures by absorbing and redefining them as Japanese. The same basic tendency applies to social interaction as well, where the emphasis is on assimilating and identifying with the opinions of others, making them fit neatly—at least outwardly—with one’s own. It leads to a tendency to accommodate tradition while adding on the new, criticizing neither and leaving opposing systems to find a way to coexist with each other. The propensity for accommodation has worked particularly well abroad, where Japanese companies have adapted their products and business style to those of the host country, while keeping their own identity. In a broad sense, the Japanese are successful not by being smarter businessmen or better innovators, but by virtue of their patience and stamina born of a will to continuation—a virtual inability to give up and walk away. At the heart of this national psyche is the ability of the individual to renew commitment through personal and communal faith.

Faith as renewal, faith as continuum

Shinto has been associated with an insular and protective view since ancient times, and in the modern world it has shown a tendency toward nationalism and conservatism. Buddhism and Confucianism were, from their introduction in the sixth century, far more developed, worldly, and sophisticated than the native religion and might easily have overwhelmed it. Fear of being overwhelmed by the power of foreign countries has always been an undertone in Japan, yet despite this the innate ability to accommodate change while honoring the past continues to sustain the spirit of the people. Through the ages, there has developed a faith as much in renewal itself as in the underlying sense that the ability to renew implies the ability to continue, and that this very act of continuation complies with the natural order. In other words, Japanese spirituality and faith are in the very act of continuation, realized with the help of actual and ritual renewal. Or to put it still another way, maintaining continuity through the act of renewal is recognized as a religious act.

Simple, sincere, and inclusive

Japanese are notoriously ambivalent about their beliefs. Surveys conducted by the principal university for Shinto studies, Kokugakuin, reveal that only a small percentage of the population expresses affiliation with Shinto, Buddhism, or any of the numerous religious sects. Yet these same surveys reveal a high level of participation in events with religious components such as New Year visits to shrine or temple, visits to graveyards during Obon (the Buddhist festival of the dead ancestors), as well as participation in festivals and other observances.

The apparent contradiction stems from several factors. First is the distinction between belief on an intellectual level and practice. Shinto (and some sects of Buddhism) tends to focus on behavior rather than understanding doctrine. It is a sort of intuitive, active approach that places importance on correct action conducted with great sincerity. In large measure it is based on the ideas of acquiring spiritual merit, honoring the ancestors, and respecting the power of the deities through simple rituals and offerings. Much of this is focused on attaining worldly benefits (*genze riyaku*), of which there are two main types: various forms of good fortune (*kaiun*), and the prevention of misfortunes (*yakuyoke*). Thus, Japanese routinely visit temples and shrines to ask for success in business, success in passing entrance exams, and so on, or to gain the protection of the deities (for safety on the roadways, safe childbirth, etc.). This sort of belief functions in part on the level of superstition, or as sectarian custom. In the same way that having a St. Christopher statue on one's dashboard does not imply knowledge of who the saint was or even belief in God, buying amulets or attending religious festivals does not imply deep belief. Many people simply think of such practices as gaining peace of mind by ensuring good luck.

Another point is the rejection of religion as an organized group to which one swears allegiance or in which one participates exclusively. So it is that the vast majority of Japanese observe both Shinto and Buddhist customs without any sense of conflict. The word used to translate "religion" is *shukyo*, but the term has strong connotations of monotheistic religion. It explains the typical response of "no" to the question of "Are you religious?" as a statement of nonparticipation in exclusive religious activities. Part of this may be a wariness of the ways in which strict adherence to a religion can be manipulated for monetary gain or to foster submission to authority. People are

acutely aware of the dangers of the kind of fanatical devotion that led to the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyo cult in 1995. There are of course many “new religions” based on Buddhism or Shinto that have a valuable place in society, some of which command avid followers who follow exclusively the teachings of a charismatic leader. But a less fervent, more inclusive approach is clearly preferred by the majority of people.

Visiting a shrine

For the Japanese, making a visit to a shrine (*jinja mairi*) is a simple “act of faith,” accomplished without much soul-searching or thought. It may be conducted out of faith, respect, social intercourse, or even obligation, and anyone may participate. A typical visit takes only a few minutes. Some people visit every day, to make a quick prayer on their way to work. Generally the worshipper approaches the front of the shrine building, drops a few coins in the offering box, rings the bell to call the attention of the *kami*, then bows, claps, and stands for a moment in silent prayer before getting on with his or her day. There are those who visit no more than once a year during the New Year’s holiday (*oshogatsu* is the name of the holiday and the custom of the first visit to a shrine in the new year is called *hatsumode*). Children are sometimes brought by their parents, such as the first shrine visit after birth, called *batsu miyamairi* (thirty-two days after birth for boys, or thirty-three days for girls). They come again at the ages of seven, five, and three for the *shichigosan* ritual. Adolescents go to pray for good luck in school entrance exams, and adults may get married in a Shinto ceremony. One of the most common reasons to visit a shrine is to attend a yearly festival—a simple reminder that the continuity of the community is in some way related to reverence for the local deities. In other words, the shrine is very much an integral part of individual, family, and community life even where strong assertions of belief are lacking.

Faith, recreation, and cultural tourism

What benefit might there be in visiting a shrine for someone who has grown up in another country with different cultural and religious values? There are two particular benefits that come to mind, one of which is of course spiritual. Quite apart from the question of organized religion, a shrine is a place where one can fold one’s hands, bow one’s head, and say a prayer for oneself or a loved one. Though there are certain prescribed methods, the question of how or to whom one prays is ultimately a personal matter. When they pray at a shrine, Japanese are not necessarily praying to a specific *kami*. Indeed, the number of *kami* in a particular shrine and their actual names are usually unknown to the average worshipper, who may only refer to the *kami* by the name of the shrine.

A second reason to visit a shrine is for the cultural and recreational aspects. This has long been a traditional part of the Japanese experience as well. Many of the shrines selected for this book are very old and have buildings or grounds that are of historical significance. Most contain, or are designated, National Treasures or Important Cultural Properties. It means that they have a recognized importance in the history of the country or the locality. Some are significant works of architecture and art in their own right. UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee has recognized several shrines, such as Nikko Toshogu and Itsukushima Jinja, as outstanding examples of cultural value and

natural beauty worthy of special attention. Many are in stunning settings. Because the expression of Shinto faith is often in the awe one feels when standing before magnificent features of nature, shrines are often set in such places. It is one reason why, even in densely populated areas, the immediate surroundings of a shrine often act as an oasis of greenery. In other cases, the location is remote enough to keep it untouched by urban blight.

Some people criticize the sort of cultural tourism that UNESCO promotes, and such criticism may be valid. The commercialization and control of culture by corporations and governments can devalue and trivialize it. In the case of Shinto, booms in popularity based on looking for “power spots” or shrines that have been popularized through Japanese manga add to the image of culture as fad. In addition, some maintain that Shinto is a wholly Japanese religion that has no relevance to non-Japanese. This serves to remind us that a foreign culture can be easily observed, but understanding it takes far more time than a single visit affords. Culture is the shared knowledge of a society, and it cannot be shared overnight. On the other hand, to quote an expression based on the words of Lao Tzu, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Unlike great cathedrals and mosques, shrines tend to be modest affairs. Hopefully reading this book will help you to appreciate them and avoid disappointments. Many of the shrines in this book are among the most popular in the nation. It means they are often crowded, especially at peak times of the day and on holidays. If you go to such a shrine anticipating a solemn and silent communion with the spirits, it is better to visit very early in the morning. (Many shrine grounds are open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week; however, the main buildings and the area immediately around them may only be open during daylight hours.) It's hard not to feel the spirituality of a place like Fushimi Inari Taisha in Kyoto, when walking up the mountain paths through the myriad red *torii* in the early morning. On the other hand, you may want to visit when the shrine is at its busiest, such as New Year's, or at its most raucous during a festival (*matsuri*). In that case, the atmosphere reveals a more lively and convivial spirit. Or perhaps you are just another tourist on holiday; what is wrong with that? Consider that the Japanese have, from ancient times, combined devotion with recreation even to the point of wild abandon—as in the *okage mairi* (“thanksgiving pilgrimage”) between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries that saw millions literally dancing down the highways on pilgrimage to temples and shrines. However, as a foreigner, it is best to be mindful of the feelings of others, so if you came to take pictures, by all means take them, but respect the fact that some of the places you want to shoot may be off-limits. For example, most of the *bonden* where the *kami* reside are located behind a fence, making a close view impossible. Hopefully the descriptions in this book of the structures and their history will help to compensate for what can't be seen.

What Is Shinto? Its History and the Belief in *Kami*

Meaning of the word “Shinto”

The two Chinese characters currently used for Shinto are made up of “god” (*shin*) and “way” or “road” (*to*). *Shin* is an alternative pronunciation of the same Chinese character that is used to write *kami*, usually translated as “god.” The last syllable *to* is pronounced like English “toe” and

will be familiar to martial arts enthusiasts of kendo, judo, or aikido (where the same character is pronounced like English “doe”). It simply means “a way, a method,” or more literally, “a road.” The word was not always used as it is today. In ancient times, there were local cults but no single religion and no name. (Although I use the word religion in relation to Shinto in this book, some consider it a “way” similar to a martial art.) The concept of *kami* and *kami* worship was referred to by words such as *jindo*, *jingi*, *tama*, and *mono*, among others. Any book on Shinto will tell you that *kami* does not mean God in the Western sense, and that “god” is only a poor approximation.

Broad definition of Shinto

If there is one single, broad definition of Shinto, it would probably be “Shinto is a belief in *kami*.” Shinto is considered a “natural” as opposed to a revealed religion. It has no founder and no prophets. It has morality tales and myths that have been preserved in writings and influence its practices, but there is no doctrine such as the “Ten Commandments” that dictates the correct way to live as mandated by God. It is a belief system that developed over thousands of years at different locations within Japan, and is centered on local as opposed to universal beliefs. Nature is its primary source of inspiration and it has incorporated a number of elements from Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese divination (called *onmyodo* in Japanese), and from different parts of Asia. Over the centuries many of the ancient, local beliefs were formalized and nationalized by the ruling and priestly classes. This included giving names to nameless *kami* and creating shrine buildings. Finally, a radical restructuring and standardization took place between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries that is reflected in the Shinto we now find in most shrines.

What are *kami*?

As mentioned above, Shinto can be defined as a belief in *kami*, which is usually translated as “god,” “deity,” or “spirit” (Japanese makes no distinction between singular and plural). *Kami* are not like the God of monotheistic religions or even like the Buddha. Although Shinto in the eighteenth century saw new sects emerge based on the concept of a singular creator divinity, they never held sway. Shinto is not only a polytheistic, but also a pantheistic faith, meaning that *kami* manifest in everything. It is also considered animistic, because its gods are in the forces and manifestations of nature. The *kami* make themselves “present” in living beings, in the dead, in organic and inorganic matter, and in actions beyond the control of man such as earthquakes, storms, droughts, and plagues. The concept of *kami* also includes great people who are venerated as *kami* after they die and who are worshipped by subsequent generations as protectors or ancestor *kami*. This is somewhat akin to the Christian concept of sainthood—though people enshrined as *kami* were more often agents of power rather than of good works. There are times too, as in the case of the emperor, where a living person can be venerated as a *kami*.

Like the gods of Mount Olympus, *kami* perform both good and bad deeds, causing both bountiful harvests and disasters (though preventing the latter is de-emphasized in modern-day Shinto, it was once the prime motivation of *kami* ritual). To gain the blessings and avoid the destructive actions of *kami*, offerings and prayers are directed to them on a regular basis. Such offerings tradi-

tionally consisted of cloth, food, swords, horses, and other valuable objects. These days offerings by priests are primarily food and drink, or sprigs of the sacred *sakaki* tree, while those from worshippers are usually monetary. From the eighth century, *kami* were given official ranks that could be raised as a reward for good behavior. In this and other ways, *kami* came to be treated as if human, with similar emotions, needs, and desires. On the other hand, they were rarely portrayed in art in an anthropomorphic way, except under the influence of Buddhism. There is, however, one category of imported *kami* for whom visual representation is common: the *shichifukujin* discussed below.

Types of *kami*

Because *kami* worship was originally site-specific in nature, there is a great variety and number. Even where the same *kami* has been enshrined in a different location, it will take on the local traditions of its new home. In addition, the multiple nature of *kami* is a factor in their elusive image. For example, a single *kami* has a rough nature (*aramitama*), gentle nature (*nigimitama*), wondrous nature (*kushimitama*), and nurturing nature (*sakimitama*). These *shikon* (four spirits) are often enshrined separately. The complex nature of the Japanese language, whereby inconsistency even in naming is common, adds to the problem. It may be helpful to understand something of the “eight million” *kami* (*yaoyorozu*) of Shinto by looking at the various ways they are made manifest.

***Kami* of nature:** There are *kami* that reside in a certain place, or manifest in that place spontaneously or when called upon. Often the place is notable in some way: a waterfall, a mountain of distinct shape, a volcano, a large rock, a large or unusually shaped tree. Though there are many tales of *kami* making an appearance in humanoid or animal form (especially white animals), the manifestation is generally considered to be in the heart of the worshipper, or in the result that occurs from calling the *kami* (such as healing or an answered prayer). *Kami* of nature can also be manifest in the active forces such as rain, wind, thunder, fire, and sunshine.

***Kami* of folk worship:** What is sometimes called “Folk Shinto” pertains to the local beliefs and practices that grow spontaneously among the people of a given location. It is usually a result of an ad hoc blending of myths, legends, superstitions, literary works, or clan origins. It also reflects the degree of isolation or wider distribution of a particular clan or occupational group. Some folk *kami*, such as the *dosojin* (deities of roads and boundaries), tend to be phallic in nature, and are most often seen in male/female pairs. Such *kami* are generally related to the concerns of daily life such as agriculture, fishing, the hearth, fertility, disease prevention, and good or bad fortune. It could be argued that so-called “folk worship” is the origin of Shinto, its true source and the power that sustains it. Folk Shinto is closely related to shamanism and divination as well.

***Kami* of deification:** These are humans who were raised to the status of *kami* after death. There are numerous examples and various reasons for such enshrinement. For example, Emperor Ojin (r. A.D. 270–310) is enshrined as the *kami* Hachiman, who is revered as a protector of the country and a god of war. Thanks largely to his popularity among the samurai of the Kamakura period (1185–1333), there are said to be about 25,000 Hachiman shrines in Japan today. A dif-

ferent case involves Sugawara no Michizane, enshrined as the *kami* Tenman Tenjin. Though he came to be considered a *kami* of education, he was originally enshrined to appease his vengeful ghost (*goryo*), which was thought to be causing plagues in the capital of Kyoto. Today there are about 10,000 Tenjin shrines throughout the country. Another example is Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first Edo shogun, who unified the country and who decided that after his death he should be enshrined as a *kami*, for the purpose of watching over the country. His descendants duly carried out his wish, and today the magnificent Nikko Toshogu is one of the most popular destinations in Japan for worshippers and tourists alike. It was mentioned above that deification of *kami* was somewhat akin to that of a saint, but it differs in that the attributes that make a *kami* are not decided by any central authority and the person concerned is generally a secular figure such as a scholar, a general, an ancestor or benefactor of a community or clan (*uji*), or a member of the imperial family.

***Kami* of shared belief:** *Kami* that are common to a wide spectrum of geographical areas are generally those that have been spread from one original location. Such are the *kami* of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*—for example, Amaterasu, Susano-o, and Okuninushi—who were local *kami* proselytized into national figures, along with the beliefs surrounding them. The process of enshrining the *kami* of one place in another location is called “dividing the spirit” (*bunrei*). Essentially, the *kami* is “invited” to enter into a new place and installed there in a ceremony called *kanji*; there is no limitation on the number of places that a *kami* can be enshrined, nor is the power of the divided deity any less than the original. In addition to the Hachiman and Tenjin shrines mentioned above, Inari shrines are said to be the most frequent at about 32,000, followed by about 18,000 for Ise shrines. (However, though they enshrine Amaterasu and are called Ise shrines, the spirit is not divided from Ise Jingu). This process was expedited during certain periods of history, when the right to enshrine a particular *kami* was sold, as was the case with the expansion of Inari (a rice *kami*) shrines—a sort of religious franchising. Enshrinement of these *kami* expanded to the extent that today, two-thirds of existing shrines are said to be of the Hachiman, Inari, Ise, or Tenjin lineages. A word of caution: there are no precise figures on the number or type of enshrinements of a particular divinity. The numbers quoted in this book are from an old survey and probably represent guesswork more than actual accounting. (For example, the total number of just these shrines exceeds the overall number registered as religious bodies.) Indeed, the number of registered Hachiman shrines is said to be no more than two thousand. Since no comprehensive shrine count has ever been done, numbers are anecdotal and vary widely.

Kami no tsukai: Also called a *tsukawashime*, this is not a *kami* but its messenger. Generally, it takes the form of an animal such as the fox that is a messenger of the grain *kami* Inari, the deer of the *kami* of Kashima, the monkey of the Sanno (“mountain king”) of Mount Hiei, and the dove of Hachiman. A human can also become a temporary vessel for the *kami*, such as the “sacred child” (*chigo*) of the Gion Festival of Yasaka Jinja in Kyoto. Some *kami* do also manifest themselves as animals such as the three-legged crow of Kumano and the white snake of Omiwa.

***Kami* of latter-day religious sects:** From the late Edo period, new religious sects began to appear. Most are a combination of Shinto, Buddhism, Confucianism, and folk beliefs. Many were

based on the revelations of individuals who became the charismatic leaders of these sects. The revelations often included messages from a hitherto unknown *kami* that became the main object of veneration for that sect. Such deities include Ushitora no konjin, who was revealed to Deguchi Nao of the Omoto sect; Tenchikane no kami of the Konkokyo sect; Su no okami of the Mahikari sect; Uchu daiseimei of the Seicho-No-Ie sect; and Tenrio no mikoto of the Tenrikyo sect.

Imported and amalgamated *kami*: These deities came either with the immigrants who had worshipped them in their own land, or by way of Buddhism, which brought with it Indian, Chinese, and Korean traditions (including Daoist and Confucian elements). Some of the deities are called by the generic term *banshin*. Such gods as Gozu Tenno of Yasaka Jinja originated outside Japan. Buddhist deities were also called *banshin*, but in later times the term was most often applied to deities worshipped by Korean immigrants. A sort of subset of imported *kami* are the *marebito* (visiting *kami*) who come and go (as in the case of Ebisu, Sukunahikona and others), often from over or under the sea. They are associated with the mythology of the stranger who enters the isolated village for a short time, bringing prosperity or destruction. The stranger is often revealed to be a powerful *kami* whose actions depend on whether he has been treated with good or ill will.

In most cases deities were not simply imported, but also amalgamated and mixed with native traditions to the extent that they became “original Japanese” deities. One particular grouping of imported and domestic gods came to be known as the *shichifukujin* (“seven lucky gods”), which are worshipped at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines alike. They were originally individual deities that were brought together as a group in the fifteenth century, probably under the influence of the Daoist tale about the “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove.” They are often depicted together, riding in a treasure boat (*takarabune*), and are the most visually represented *kami* in terms of paintings and sculpture.

As in other parts of the world, in Japan seven is an auspicious number, and a *shichifukujin* pilgrimage (*shichifukujin meguri*) is conducted around the New Year to pray for happiness and prosperity. The pilgrimage, which predates the popular first shrine visit of the year (*batsumode*), is usually a short route of seven shrines or temples that can be completed easily in a few hours. The deities are so well known and loved in Japan that a more detailed description of them follows here.

Benzaiten: This is the only female in the group. Benzaiten was originally the Hindu god Sarasvati, daughter of the dragon king, a goddess of water, and, by extension, of things that “flow” (such as music and poetry). The god was absorbed into Buddhism as Benzaiten and brought to Japan, where she was further identified with a *kami* of grains, Uga no mitama, and also with a white snake (water is often associated with a snake or dragon). Though primarily a goddess of water (shrines to Benzaiten are mostly located near the ocean or lakes and ponds), she is also considered a goddess of the arts. The deity is depicted either in her original eight-armed form or, more often, as a two-armed, charming, lute-playing young woman.

Bishamonten: This is another Buddhist-absorbed Hindu god, who was originally called Vaisravaṇa. Bishamonten is one of the “four heavenly kings” (*shitenno*) that guard the four directions. He is a fierce warrior god who expels demons and protects worshippers of the Lotus Sutra. He is often depicted holding a spear in one hand and a pagoda in the other. The pagoda represents the

treasure house that he protects and the treasures that he distributes. Considered a god of fortune, the deity is also known as Tamonten.

Daikokuten: The deity started as the Hindu god Mahakala, depicted as a black, multi-armed deity. In China he was adopted into Buddhism as a deity of the kitchen. The Chinese characters used for his name mean “big black.” In Japan he also became associated with Okuninushi no mikoto, in which case he is called Daikoku (“great land”) sama. A god of wealth and the bountiful harvest, he is usually depicted sitting or standing on bales of rice while holding the mallet of plenty in one hand and a sack of treasure slung over his back with the other. He is also a god of fertility and often depicted as a pair with Ebisu.

Ebisu: The only original Japanese god in the grouping, Ebisu is a deity of fishermen and good fortune. His origin is ambiguous, but he was always found in fishing communities and is strongly related to a bountiful catch. He is depicted holding a fishing pole and a sea bream, which is called *tai* in Japanese. The fish is associated with good fortune because the expression *omedetai* means auspicious or joyous. Ebisu is the happiest of gods and reflective of the simple joys of the common people. He is sometimes considered the son of Daikoku.

Fukurokuju: A Chinese sage of good fortune, probably originating in Daoist tales. Associated with wealth and longevity, he is always depicted with an elongated, phallic-looking forehead, long beard, a staff, and a scroll of the Lotus Sutra. He is not amalgamated with Buddhist or Shinto deities. As a god of wisdom, good fortune, virility, and longevity, he expresses typical concerns of the Daoists.

Jurojin: Another Daoist sage, Jurojin is most likely the same god originally as Fukurokuju. Though he is not usually depicted with an elongated forehead, all of the other physical aspects and associated myths are identical. He is a god of longevity and usually depicted with animals that represent long life such as a white stag. He carries a staff and a scroll of knowledge.

Hotei: Based on a popular tenth-century Chinese sage named Pu-tai (or Budai), he is identified with the Buddha of the future, Maitreya. As a god of happiness, he is portrayed as a “jolly fat man” with a big belly sticking out of his open robe. He has a bald head and huge earlobes—signs of good luck and happiness. He carries a huge bag endlessly full of gifts together with a “wish-fulfilling fan.”

Shamanism and divination

Shamanism forms an integral part of the development of ancient Shinto. A shaman is basically a person who can communicate with the spirit world at will and act as a voice of the spirits. The purpose of the shaman is preservation of the community through determining the wishes and prohibitions of the gods and conducting healing by driving out detrimental spirits. In Japan the shaman when acting as an oracle was often accompanied by a *saniwa* who interpreted the words that might otherwise be indecipherable. Other forms of divination included reading cracks in charred deer bone (*rokuboku*) and turtle shells (*kiboku*). Both these forms are extremely old and may

have come from the continent, as did later forms of divination based on five-element theory and yin/yang (in Japanese, *in/yo*). Spirit possession and receiving oracles (*takusen*) were at times part of the role of the king (later the emperor) or his consort. Female shamans were prominent from the latter half of the Yayoi period (300 B.C.—A.D. 300), and at some point young maidens called *miko* were chosen to live close to the shrine and receive oracles, as well as perform sacred rites and dances (*kagura*). The shrine maidens are still a regular part of shrine life, performing and assisting in rites—though they are no longer shamans. Outside the shrine environment shamans remain active to some degree even in present times as spirit mediums (called by various names such as *ogamiya*, *kamisan*, *itako*, *yuta*, *gomiso*, etc.). Divination using food, animals, contests of strength, and other methods is still the focus of many Shinto rituals.

Besides archeological evidence of early shamanism, we have the often-quoted *Wei zhi* (“Wei Chronicles” or “History of the [Chinese Kingdom] Wei”) written between A.D. 280 and 297. It is an important source of information based on a firsthand account by representatives of the Chinese court who visited Japan. The part relevant to shamanism is where the writer, Chen Shou, speaks of the divided kingdoms of the land of Wa, one of which was ruled by a queen named Pimiko (or Himiko, or possibly *himemiko*—meaning “female shaman”). He recorded that she kept a thousand female attendants and “occupied herself with magic and sorcery bewitching the people.” The account reveals that a woman held a very high position (queen or chief priestess) in at least one of the Yayoi-period kingdoms and that she was a shaman. Though Japanese histories mention no such queen, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, both written in the eighth century, record that Jingu Kogo (r. A.D. 201–69), wife of the deceased Emperor Chuai, was a shaman queen who gave birth to Emperor Ojin and conquered the Korean kingdom of Silla with divine assistance. It may be that the shaman queen recorded by the Chinese became a model for Jingu when Japanese accounts were written about five hundred years later. Speculation aside, receiving messages from the *kami* and traveling to other worlds by miraculous means are as much a part of Shinto mythology as Moses parting the Red Sea or speaking to God in the form of a burning bush is a part of the Christian and Jewish tradition.

The “Divine Age” and the Cosmology of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*

The *Kojiki* (712; “Record of Ancient Matters”) and the *Nihon shoki* (720; “Chronicles of Japan”), sometimes collectively referred to as the *kiki*, are as close to the Old Testament or the Greek myths as anything written in Japan. They were compiled within fifteen years of each other and both go over the same territory in relation to the origins of the *kami* and of Japan. Both are based on previous texts and on reports from various regions of the country (called *fudoki*). They were influenced too by the style of ancient Chinese and Korean writing and by the desire of the ruling polity to sanctify and consolidate their rule. The two texts also differ from each other in significant ways. The *Kojiki* lists emperors only up to the reign of Empress Suiko (r. 593–628), while the *Nihon shoki* continues through the reign of Empress Jito (r. 686–97) and offers a more detailed historical account. They also differ in certain details, such as the names of *kami* and how they came to be.

The *Nihon shoki* gives a number of “alternate” readings of the same myth, with some important differences between each. It appears that the *Nihon shoki* was meant for foreign consumption as well and places emphasis on creating the image of an ancient empire and unbroken line of kings.

Both books begin at the beginning of time with “the age of the gods” or “the divine age,” which ends with the crowning of the first earthly “emperor,” Jinmu (later called *tenno*, “heavenly sovereign”). He is said to be a direct descendant of the sun goddess Amaterasu omikami. In fact, the term *tenno* only came into common usage in the eighth century but may have been first applied to Empress Jito in the late seventh century. Until this point, the emperor was referred to by a number of terms such as *kotei* (sovereign), *tenshi* (Son of Heaven), and *okimi* (Great King), among others. *Mikado* was a term for the emperor that was used more at a much later date. Its meaning, “imperial gate,” originally referred to the entrance to the imperial palace. Other titles used for the monarch were *sumera mikoto* and *beika*.

Several things should be noted about the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Neither has been handed down in its original form. Both are later copies, of which more than one version exists. The original texts were ordered to be written by emperors, and they consequently reflect the intentions of the writers—which was primarily to legitimize the rule of the leading clans and firmly establish the emperors as descendants of *kami*, ruling by heavenly mandate. Some of the information can be corroborated from other sources or taken at face value, but much is under constant reevaluation. The results depend on the age in which the documents are interpreted. The first systematic analysis of the *Nihon shoki* took place as early as the thirteenth century, while the *Kojiki* was all but forgotten until the seventeenth-century scholar Motoori Norinaga translated it for Edo-period readers. The rediscovery of the *Kojiki* encouraged the study of other ancient texts and led to a new generation of Shinto scholars. This developed into the *kokugaku* (“National Learning”) movement, which arose out of the efforts of independent scholars to understand the roots of Japanese culture. There was also a growing desire to remove the influence of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. However, their scholarship also paved the way for the cultural chauvinism that defined Japan as unique and superior, as well as the emperor worship and nationalistic overtones taken on by Shinto from the Meiji period onward. In the early twentieth century, the government went so far as to proclaim the myths of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* as irrefutable history.

Below is an outline of some of the central myths of Shinto, as written in the “age of the gods” (*kami-yo*) sections of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Please note that it is a very abbreviated outline that does not take into account variations between the two documents or those of other ancient texts.

Creation of the land (Japan)

The myths begin with heaven (called “the plain of high heaven”) and earth being separated out from some previously existing substance. Three *kami* of creation appear—Ame no minakanushi no mikoto (Heaven August Center Master), Takamimusuhi no mikoto (High August Growth), and Kamimusuhi no mikoto (Divine August Growth). Other *kami* follow these until the appearance of a brother and sister; Izanagi (Male Who Invites) and Izanami (Female Who Invites). At this point, the “drifting” earth is like a sea of brine and unformed. The other deities command Izanagi and Izanami to give form to the land. Standing on the “bridge of high heaven,” they reach down

and stir the brine with a jeweled spear. The brine coagulates around it, and when they withdraw the spear it drips down and forms the island of Onogoro, which becomes part of Oyashima (the “eight islands”; original name of Japan). Thereafter, Izanagi and Izanami descend to the land on the *ame no mibashira* (“pillar of heaven”) and give birth to other *kami*. In the final act of procreation a fire *kami* is born, which causes the death of Izanami.

Comment: The creation of the universe and the role of the *kami* are rather sketchy and vague, but the creation of the islands of Japan is clearly attributed to a male and female *kami*. In the *Kojiki* version, the very first *kami* named is Ame no minakanushi no mikoto. He is one of the three *kami* of creation (*zoka sanshin*) that give form to the male/female “parents,” who are the first to depart from heaven. Distinction is made between heaven above and the “land” below. Izanagi and Izanami reach down to stir the primordial ooze and descend the pillar of heaven to create the islands. The pillar is an important part of Japanese religion and culture: both Ise Jingu and Izumo Taisha—two of Japan’s oldest and most important shrines—contain sacred pillars to which the *kami* descends. Many other *kami* of wind, sea, mountains, and others are born from their coupling. Although we are in the age of the gods, death occurs. But even as Izanagi kills the fire *kami* for causing the death of Izanami, a number of *kami* are born from this act.

Descent to the underworld and rebirth

After Izanami’s death, Izanagi is heartbroken and descends to the netherworld (*yomi*) to bring her back. He reaches the entrance and urges her to come back, because the creation of the world is not yet finished. She agrees, but demands that he wait at the entrance and not look upon her. But he becomes impatient and, after entering, sees her in a state of putrefaction, which embarrasses and enrages her. She chases him and he bars the entrance to *yomi* with a huge boulder. From either side of the rock they exchange angry goodbyes, with the upset Izanami threatening to kill one thousand people a day. Izanagi counters this by vowing to cause the birth of fifteen hundred people a day.

Comment: Here can be seen a tripartite division of heaven, earth, and the land of the dead called *yomi* or *ne no kuni* (“the land of roots”). The story portrays death as horrible and contact with dead spirits as dangerous. (But there is no concept of hell, devil, or evil.) It also intimates the power of life over death (fifteen hundred people a day born versus a thousand a day killed). Though the image of the underworld is vague, two main tenets of Shinto are illustrated: the importance of avoiding pollution (*kegare*) and an affirmative attitude toward life. An association between pollution and women is also expressed, which may be a result of Confucian ideology and continental influence. A cosmology reflecting human concerns (birth, life, death) is being formed.

Purification and malevolent *kami*

After his trip to the netherworld, Izanagi is polluted and defiled. In order to purify himself he bathes in a river, whereupon numerous deities are born from his body. The last three to be born are the goddess of the sun (Amaterasu omikami), the god of the moon (Tsukiyomi no kami), and the god of the sea and wind (Susano-o no mikoto). He gives each their place to rule, but Susano-o rejects

his position and pleads to be with his mother (Izanami). This angers Izanagi, causing him to send his son away to *yomi*. Vowing obedience, Susano-o asks to first visit heaven to make amends with his sister. From their interaction many new *kami* are created, but in the end Susano-o cannot control his exuberant destructiveness, which drives the sun goddess to hide herself in a cave.

Comment: Here is introduced a central theme of Shinto, the importance of purification such as ritual bathing (*misogi*) leading to creativity and renewal. The myth also clearly shows that *kami* can be bad as well as good, and intimates that they have a *nigimitama* (gentle side) and *arami-tama* (rough side). The concept of deities who act destructively illustrates that *kami* who are mistreated or not properly cared for can become malevolent. Such beliefs are behind most Shinto offerings and festivals, and also opened the door to Buddhism and its powerful deities who claimed the ability to pacify the angry *kami* and turn them into benefactors and protectors.

Central symbols of Shinto and the hierarchy of the *kami*

With Amaterasu's disappearance into the Heavenly Rock Cave, the world is plunged into darkness. All the other *kami* get together to try and coax her out. A mirror is made, jewels are hung from a tree, and a rope is tied between poles for the birds to sit on and sing. Then a wild dance is performed in front of the cave, which makes the eight million (*yaoyorozu*) *kami* roar with laughter. When the sun goddess peeks out to see what is going on, she is dazzled by her brilliant reflection in the mirror as the strongest of the *kami* pulls her from the cave, tying a rope across the entrance to bar her from re-entering. Afterwards, Susano-o is banished from heaven and he descends to earth.

Comment: Here is the origin of some of Shinto's most important symbols and traditions. The mirror and the jewel become two of the three sacred regalia (*sanshu no jingi* or *shintai*), which along with a sword are the symbols of the authority of the emperor. The *sakaki* tree, from which the objects were hung, is used in Shinto ritual as a sacred offering to the *kami* and a place for them to descend (*bimorogi*). The bird perch becomes the *torii* that marks the entrance to sacred ground, and the rope becomes the *shimenawa* that also denotes a place as sacred. The dance becomes *kagura*, an important offering to the gods on festive occasions. The sun goddess assumes primary importance in the pantheon of *kami*. The concept of eight million *kami* (the term *yaoyorozu* is used not literally, but to mean an enormous number) reflects the basic Shinto belief in spirits manifesting in all aspects of life. There is also a political angle to the script, since the myths were compiled at a time when Amaterasu was being established as the ancestral *kami* of the emperor's clan. In addition, many of the clans supporting the emperor were linked to *kami* who are present in this episode. One theory considers the myth related to the "death and resurrection" of the sun, believed to occur and celebrated at the winter solstice. By extension, this was related to "reviving" the soul of Amaterasu and later the emperor in a ceremony, still practiced, called the *chinkonsai*.

The earthly *kami* and the "Age of Man"

When Susano-o descends to earth, he appears in the land of Izumo (a rival kingdom of the ruling clan). He begins many adventures that act as a kind of penance for his wrongdoing in heaven. He

rescues a girl (whom he later marries), slays a fearful dragon, and discovers in its tail a magic sword which he sends to Amaterasu in heaven as a gift. He begets children with his wife and finally goes to live with Izanami in the netherworld. New *kami* appear, and new legends are made. His son (or descendant, depending on the text) is Okuninushi no kami, who continues in his father's footsteps. He marries, settles the land, and rules it. However, the time comes when the heavenly *kami* decide that the earth is too disorderly and they must take direct charge. They send emissaries to Okuninushi, who are either defeated or join forces with him. Finally one succeeds in persuading Okuninushi and his sons to surrender the land to the heavenly *kami* in return for being enshrined in a *jinja* in the land of Izumo. Amaterasu entrusts the *sanshu no jingi* to her grandson, Ninigi no mikoto, who then descends to a mountaintop in Kyushu with a number of other heavenly *kami* to begin rule of the land. Apparently it is not that easy, for it takes three generations until his descendant Jinmu battles his way East from Kyushu to establish the country of Yamato and be declared ruler. This, we are told, is the end of the "age of the gods" and the beginning of the age of man.

Comment: Here the concept is defined of heavenly *kami* (*amatsukami*) linked to the ruling Yamato line and their superiority over earthly *kami* (*kunitsukami*) linked to the Izumo line (and by implication, other subjugated clans). Yet again we see that *kami* have both good and bad sides. By the eighth century, when the account was recorded, they have become the very image of men—much like the Greek gods of Mount Olympus. They lust, are greedy and selfish, and exhibit just as much treachery as kindness and self-sacrifice. Most importantly the story presents the establishment of the imperial line and its descent from the heavenly *kami*. The emperor is thus not totally human: he is a living *kami* sent by heaven to govern the earth. (In fact, the mythology is later taken to mean that *all* the people of Japan are descended from *kami*.) Amaterasu gave Jinmu's ancestor, Ninigi no mikoto, the symbols of heavenly authority, which are presented to successive emperors. It is a carefully arranged mythology, designed to legitimate the divine right to rule, while integrating unrelated local mythologies into a singular tradition. The emperor is confirmed as first among equals (since many other clans are also proclaimed descendants of *kami*). In fact, secular power was only sporadically in the hands of the emperor throughout history, alternating among other clans, "retired" emperors, and powerful warriors. Even the secular government that came to power in 1868 continued to use the image of the emperor as a "divine ruler" descended from the *kami* to legitimize its rule until the end of World War II. Though it may be an oversimplification, the emperor's lack of secular power probably helped sustain the continuity of the imperial line, creating the image of a more or less unbroken strand from mythic times down to the present.

The Relation to Shinto of Buddhism, *Shugendo*, Confucianism, Five-Element and Yin/Yang Theory (*Onmyodo*), Daoism, and Christianity

Growth and influence of Buddhism

From ancient to premodern times, China and Korea were the windows through which Japan looked upon the world and reckoned its own position in the cosmos. Buddhism entered through

that window in the sixth century and quickly spread. The influence of Buddhism (in Japanese, *bukkyo*) on the culture and character of Japan has been at least as far-reaching as Shinto. It influenced almost every aspect of life, from the organization of society to the development of its culture. Buddhism provided the impetus to shape the traditional beliefs of the people into an established religion (Shinto), while at the same time those beliefs modified Buddhism. By the eighth century, the capital of Nara was for all intents and purposes a city built and controlled by Buddhists, who numbered the emperor among them. At this time six lineages became established: the Kegon, Hosso, Sanron, Gusha, Ritsu, and Jojitsu sects. When the capital moved to Heiankyo (Kyoto) in 794, it saw the same quick expansion of the religion with two major Buddhist sects: Tendai and Shingon. Already in 749 the retired emperor Shomu had begun a tradition of retired emperors shaving their heads and putting on monk's robes. The government and the clergy (*sangha*)—though often at odds—began collaborating in shaping the country. Relations with the native *kami* cults were not always easy, as competing clans found in Buddhism a way to gain power. Most of the temples, as well as most shrines, were built and staffed by the ruling elite to pray for the protection of their families and strengthen their influence. Clan rivalries almost quashed the religion at the beginning. But acceptance by successive emperors assured overriding support; and as the religion spread to the population at large the imperial court used Buddhism's increasing power to enhance its own. The wisdom of religious leaders such as Kobo Daishi (774–835), who sought coexistence with the *kami* while promoting imported deities, helped preserve the balance between competing views.

As in China and Korea, Buddhism in Japan spread first among the ruling class and only later to the masses. As it did, it absorbed native traditions and adapted to prevailing conditions, wherever it went. Buddhism had a deep philosophy, a tradition of individual practice and scholarship, with an organizing capability that native cults did not. Another attractive aspect of Buddhism was its role in appeasing unruly *kami*. Plagues, earthquakes, and too much or too little rain were all attributed to dissatisfaction of the *kami*. Buddhism was able to advance by claiming to calm and convert the *kami*, turning them into benign protectors of the Buddhist Law (*buppo*). This became the basis for the establishment of temples on shrine grounds (*jinguji*) where Buddhist monks would recite the sutras and transfer the merit thus obtained to *kami* who had need of enlightenment. The atmosphere of reverence and a life-affirming attitude established by native belief welcomed an equally inclusive Buddhist cosmology, which did not demand that people give up their *kami* and worship only Buddha. The two faiths merged beliefs in a process that came to be called *shinbutsu shugo* (Shinto-Buddhist syncretism).

Buddhism had grown in India by incorporating Hindu gods into its own pantheon, transforming and glorifying them in one go. For example, the “four heavenly kings” (*shitenno*) became important as Buddhist “protectors of the nation” in Japan, but were originally Hindu gods (Vaisravana, Dhrtarastra, Virupaksa, and Virudhaka). In 741 Emperor Shomu (r. 724–49), known for building the Great Buddha and Todaiji temple, issued an edict establishing a system of one temple in every province of the country (called *kokubunji*). He ordered that they should contain a seven-story pagoda dedicated to the “golden shining four heavenly kings for protecting the country.” This act was instrumental in strengthening not only Buddhism, but also Shomu's power and prestige. It is also hints at how Buddhism introduced Indian as well as Chinese traditions to Japan. By

the tenth century the idea that *kami* were manifestations of the Buddha and protectors of the Dharma was the mainstream of Japanese Buddhism. The theology was known as *bonji-suijaku* (*kami* as “trace” manifestations of Buddha “essence”). This syncretism created a strong bond between native and imported beliefs. However, it implied the superiority of Buddhism—an idea that became a source of friction and was refuted by later theorists. Great centers of religion combined Buddhist and *kami* belief as they became economic, intellectual, and political powerhouses. Buddhism adopted ancient places of *kami* worship and redefined them as physical manifestations of scripture.

Three additional sects developed between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: Zen, Jodo, and Nichiren. Yet, already by the mid-fifteenth century, a reaction against Buddhist dominance of *kami* cults had begun to find a voice. The desire to define a non-Buddhist Shinto, expounded by the Yoshida clan and others, took hold in some quarters. However, such a form of Shinto was never the predominant trend among ordinary people, or the majority of the ruling clans. Finally the Meiji government of the late nineteenth century, anxious to form a strong secular state, ripped Buddhism and Shinto apart virtually overnight (*shinbutsu bunri*). The government reforms not only stripped Shinto of any Buddhist input, but even attempted to turn the religion into a secular philosophy under state control. Though the end of World War II brought freedom of religion, the schism between Shinto and Buddhism has yet to be healed. However, the legacy of twelve hundred years of syncretism has been in some ways a lasting one. Though the building of shrines on temple grounds, or vice versa, is now exceptional, Shinto and Buddhism play a joint role in the lives of the people. “Born Shinto, die Buddhist” is a relatively recent expression acknowledging that babies are taken to a shrine for blessings while the dead are given a Buddhist funeral. In fact, the distinctions between the two religions are blurred in most people’s minds. Most tend to pray to the *kami* or to *hotoke sama* (Buddha) with little regard for which is which. The tendency is to focus on the benefits that can be derived, as well as the appropriate rituals to follow at certain times in life, rather than whether they are Shinto or Buddhist.



Shugenja

The Japanese religious blend known as *shugendo*

Though less widely known or practiced today than Buddhism or Shinto, *shugendo* was once a major force in Japan. Primarily Buddhist in nature, it is an informal practice that combines the influences and beliefs of Buddhism, Shinto, Daoism, and *onmyodo*. At its core is asceticism involving practice (*shugyo*) on remote mountains, for the purpose of gaining enlightenment and supernatural powers (*genriki*). Its practitioners, called *shugenja*, once provided the healing and spiritual services required by isolated communities. They also organized commercial markets and guided worshippers on pilgrimage. The image of a wandering ascetic seeking mystical power was embodied by the man considered the founder of *shugendo*, En no Gyoja (also called En no Ozunu). He lived in the seventh century, a time when Buddhism was growing in influence but was restricted to the elite. In the early stages it was primarily children of the aristocracy who became monks, and they rarely left their cloistered life inside the temple grounds. But some holy men went into the mountains, far-

ther than anyone had been before, and established temples in isolated places. Japan's native faith regarded mountains as dwelling places of the *kami* and spirits of the dead, therefore off-limits to humans. The Buddhist and *shugenja* concept of spirituality was quite different. The *shugenja* used the hardships of mountain life as spiritual training and ultimately attracted followers to their mountain hermitages.

The *shugenja*, known more commonly as *yamabushi* ("one who lies down in the mountain"), were itinerant, usually unordained monks. They sought spiritual power in the isolation of the mountains and absorbed teachings from other disciplines, particularly from Daoism and the Chinese practice of mountain hermits. The austerities they underwent were for the purpose of traveling to the spirit world, conquering fierce *kami*, and attaining magic powers and the ability to heal. Their struggle for enlightenment is embodied in their most important gods, Fudo Myo-o and Zao Gongen. Zao is a Japanese deity who first appeared on Mount Yoshino, where En no Gyoja was performing a thousand-day ascetic practice. The story recorded in a thirteenth-century work says that the Buddha appeared to him in turn as Shakyamuni, Kannon, and Maitreya. En no Gyoja rejected this, saying that the visage was too gentle for converting the evil world to Buddhism. So the god was transformed into the terrible figure of Zao with his arm raised in anger, his foot poised to strike the ground, his eyes ablaze, and flames shooting up around him. *Shugendo*'s other patron deity is Fudo Myo-o, a deity of the Buddhist-Hindu tradition that also presents a frightening visage. Flames rise up around him, and a double-edged sword in his right hand is poised to cut through ignorance, while a rope in his left hand is used to bind up demons or pull lost souls back from the brink. (Fudo Myo-o is also common to several sects of Buddhism, including Daoist-influenced Zen.) It is indicative of the intensity of *shugendo* that two such fierce figures should be representative of its practice.

The *shugenja* were later forced to affiliate with either the Tendai or the Shingon sect. By the Edo period they had opened several mountains to ascetic practice and established large communities in the foothills. They included the Mount Hiko area of northeastern Kyushu, the Omine and Kumano areas of Nara and Wakayama, Mount Fuji in Shizuoka, Mount Haku between Gifu and Fukui, the Nikko area of Tochigi, and the Dewa Sanzan area of Yamagata. But along with the Meiji separation of Shinto and Buddhism, *shugendo* was banned and its members forced to disperse. Since the end of World War II *shugenja* have again begun to operate, though on a reduced scale. They are active in traditional mountain strongholds such as the Omine-Kumano range in Nara and Wakayama, as well as the Dewa Sanzan mountains of Tohoku. In recent years, *shugendo* retreats have enjoyed some small popularity with urban dwellers looking for an intense spiritual experience. Some of the rituals particular to *shugendo* include the mountain entering ceremony, walking over burning embers, being hung over a cliff to confess one's sins, and blowing on the conch shell (*boragai*).

Confucianism and its impact on religion and governance

Confucianism (in Japanese, *jukyo*) is one of the older influences on Shinto. It is less a religion than a philosophy of life. The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* record that the *Analects of Confucius* was brought to Japan by a Korean scholar named Wang In (in Japanese, Wani) in the third century. The greatest impact was on the ruling elite, who adopted its five tenets on the proper relationships between ruler and vassal; parent and child; husband and wife; elder and younger sibling; and friends. The basic

concept was that of superior caring for inferior, who pledged loyalty in return. It is a philosophy that also covers the relationships of humans to heaven and to themselves. It includes a code of morality that emphasizes truthfulness, intelligence, sincerity, virtuousness, and obedience. The emphasis in Japan on ancestor worship, praying in front of an urn holding the ashes of the deceased, and the idea of heavenly and earthly *kami* are also influences of Confucianism.

Confucius (in Japanese, Koshi; 551–479 B.C.) was a philosopher who claimed to be recording the ideas of wise men of antiquity, rather than originating his own. His teachings strongly influenced Chinese and Korean society, especially in terms of espousing leadership based on merit. But he was not a revolutionary advocating the overthrow of hereditary rulers. Instead, he advocated leadership in accord with the “mandate of heaven” and warned of disastrous consequences for those not exercising virtuous rule. Ultimate power was assigned to a higher authority, which he defined essentially as the inevitable and natural laws of the universe. While used to justify the overthrow of one government by another, or of a poor ruler by a good one, it never implied the overthrow of the government by the people. As an advocate of obedience to parents and lord, his thinking enforced lines of authority and justified clear hierarchy. The Seventeen Article Constitution attributed to the Japanese Prince Shotoku (A.D. 574–622) is a Confucian- and Buddhist-inspired document that opens with a quote from Confucius. Though Shotoku instituted a colored-cap ranking system of promotion based on Confucian principles, the idea of position based on merit never applied to the higher level of nobility. Instead, Japan clung to its hereditary system, rejecting the idea that the emperor should be removed if his rule was not righteous.

Confucianism influenced Shinto in different ways at different times. In pre-medieval times it acted as a philosophical underpinning to *kami* worship, providing instruction on the proper way to live. Such considerations were lacking in *kami* worship—which was primarily oriented toward ritual for protecting the state and the emperor, protecting the crops from damage, and protecting the community from plagues and other forms of disaster. Though the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* contain some limited moral allegory, there is nothing in the way of an ethical doctrine. Because Confucianism had few deities of its own, there was no obstacle to Shinto importing its precepts from the standpoint of belief in *kami*. Conversely, as a systematic and practical philosophy concerned with the reality of the world, Confucianism had little patience with religion. In China some Confucianists developed a strong hatred of Buddhism and were instrumental in its periodic suppression and rejection by the ruling elite. The anti-Buddhist bias found an ally in Shinto during the late Edo period.

At other times in China a unity had been sought between the differing approaches of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. The most prominent example, called Neo-Confucianism, occurred during the Song Dynasty (960–1279). In Japan too, an inclusive atmosphere prevailed for most of the country’s history. But while detractors of Buddhism periodically applied to it the stigma of being “foreign,” a similar charge was only rarely if ever leveled at Confucianism. There was interest in the Neo-Confucian idea of Zhu Xi (1130–1200) that Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism were all versions of the same truth. In the Japanese version (*shinjubutsu sankyo itchi*), Shinto replaced Daoism. The theory originated in the fourteenth century and continued through the early seventeenth. There was, however, a movement against Buddhism among intellectuals, as became more apparent with the growing body of Confucian-Shinto doctrines (Juka Shinto) from the sixteenth century on. Interestingly, Buddhist monks began much of the theorizing. Eventually

Neo-Confucian thought propelled the separation of Buddhism and Shinto (*shinbutsu bunri*) in the Meiji period, leading to the adoption of a strictly delimited State Shinto (Kokka Shinto) as part of a policy of state education and control. The doctrines of Shinto-Confucian scholars such as Fujiwara Seika, Hayashi Razan, Yamazaki Anzai, Yoshikawa Koretari, and Aizawa Seishisai provided the groundwork on which the Meiji government built its policies. Largely devoid of religious sentiment, these ideologies emphasized loyalty to the emperor, service to the state, and reverence for ancestors under the guise of returning to an idealized “ancient way.”

The Japanese style of divination called *onmyodo*

Although it no longer exists in any meaningful form, *onmyodo* (yin/yang divination) was once an important part of Japanese religion and left a lasting mark on Shinto. It also affected myths and superstitions of society as a whole. In essence, *onmyodo* is Japanese divination based primarily on a combination of Chinese five-phase (or five-element) theory and yin/yang. The latter is a cosmology of balance between constantly cycling opposites, embodied in the familiar black and white symbol called the *tai-ji*. The two imported theories were utilized for healing, calendar making, warding off evil, and divination, which involved everything from picking auspicious days to selecting appointees for government positions. Five-phase theory is based on the “elements” of water, fire, wood, earth, and metal. The theory extended to every aspect of the physical world. For example, wood was identified with birth, Jupiter, the east, and so on. Knowledge of the proper use of materials, colors, or sounds could produce the correct alignment of forces and a positive outcome to any endeavor. Feng shui (wind/water) is part of the general system involving astronomy, astrology, and the channeling of qi (energy) to avoid inauspicious directions and bad luck. It remains an influence on Shinto and Japanese thinking to this day. It governs the orientation of buildings and their location in the landscape, ensuring their proper alignment with good qi. Somewhat like the concept of meridians in acupuncture, qi runs through meridians in the earth and the universe.

From at least the early eighth century, *onmyodo* was recognized by the state and brought under its control. The Taiho Code created the Bureau of Yin-Yang (*onmyoryo*) in 701. It was given charge of astrology, calendar making, and turtle shell divination. In the Heian period *onmyodo* was used to identify and control unruly spirits, cast or remove spells, and rectify imbalances that manifested as illness or disaster. In this way practitioners (known as *onmyoji*) increasingly took on the role of magicians and exorcists, although they also remained responsible for the more practical arts of calendar making. Partly due to its complexity, the system was never fully implemented as it was in China, but many Shinto celebrations, such as *setsubun*, have their roots in *onmyodo*.

Daoism

Daoism (“the way”) is, like Confucianism, essentially a way of thinking focused on ethical behavior and personal development. It differs in that it takes a more metaphysical approach and is less concerned with practical application in the sense of organization building. While much of its rhetoric is aimed at shaping the actions of leaders and social harmony, its definitions are elusive and few practical measures are specified. Instead, it focuses on the void, on the invisible, and on non-action. It

sometimes resembles esoteric Buddhism, and its influence can be found in Chan Buddhism, known in Japan as Zen. Through Zen, the influence of Daoism (in Japanese, *dokyo*) was especially strong, particularly on the samurai and on the culture of the tea ceremony, often considered the quintessential expression of Japanese culture. The central work of Daoism (or Taoism) is the *Dao De Jing* (*Tao Te Ching*), though when it was written and by whom is not known with certainty. By tradition, it is attributed to Lao Zi (or Lao Tsu), a sage who lived around the fourth century B.C. The emphasis on compassion, humility, spontaneity, direct experience, and emptiness made it a good match for the Dharma of direct transmission developed in China by the monk known as Bodhidharma. Daoism was never widely adopted in Japan as a system of thought or religion in its own right. However, many of its concepts have found their way into Japanese culture—including Shinto.

Christianity

Introduced in the sixteenth century and suppressed in the mid-seventeenth century, Christianity nevertheless had some impact on Japanese culture. Christianity first came to Japan in the person of Francis Xavier in 1549. By 1614 the number of Christians may have reached as many as three hundred and fifty thousand. The growth owed itself in part to the patronage of the warlord Oda Nobunaga in the 1570s, who was interested in firearms and things European and wanted trade with the Portuguese. However, his successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, cracked down on the religion by ordering missionaries to be expelled in 1587 (though the order was never enforced) and executing twenty-six Japanese and European Christians in 1597. Tokugawa Ieyasu, who took control of the country after his victory at Sekigahara in 1600, was at first tolerant of Christianity, but grew wary of colonial plots by the Iberians. In 1614 the shogunate banned the religion and expelled most foreigners except for the Dutch and Chinese, to whom it gave trade concessions. But fear of the spread of Christianity and of colonization by European powers informed anti-Christian policies that remained in force throughout the Edo period. (To be sure, Christianity had been equally intolerant of Japanese religion at the outset and urged its converts to raze shrines and temples.) One such measure was the *terauke* “temple certification” that compelled Japanese to receive a certificate from a Buddhist temple each year in order to prove they were not Christian. It not only brought the populace closer to Buddhism, but also facilitated control of the society by the Tokugawa shoguns. In the Edo era anti-Christian policy was at times the only point of agreement between Buddhism, Shinto, and Confucianism. However, Christianity continued to exert an influence and fostered interest in the concept of a single creator *kami* in the late Edo period. Thus, many scholars focused attention on the first creator *kami* to emerge in the *Kojiki*—Ame no minakanushi no mikoto.

Christianity was only allowed again in 1873 after the opening of the country by foreign powers. Since the end of World War II, Christianity has been given the same status as any other religion, but it has failed to flourish despite the huge amount of money and personnel invested. Current adherents are thought to make up only a small percentage of the population, though the number of Christian universities and schools in Japan is greater than that of any other religious group. (Crown Princess Masako attended a private Christian school from elementary to senior high school.) Other than education, the most obvious impact has been the large percentage of Japanese who are married in Christian-style wedding ceremonies.

Shinto Today

Present-day Shinto is primarily Shrine Shinto. After the heavy-handed reorganization by the Meiji government, as well as the severe conditions in Japan after the war, the number of shrines went from about two hundred thousand in the late nineteenth century to eighty thousand or so today. Most shrines are relatively small or underfinanced and about two-thirds are without full-time staff.

In December 1945, the Shinto Directive issued by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers severed all government control and support for shrines—other than the lands on which they existed if they were public property. Shrines have become individual religious corporations under a law first enacted in 1951. Most shrines are now regulated under an umbrella organization called the Association of Shinto Shrines (Jinja Honcho; literally, “Jinja Head Agency”), formed in 1946. The organization is involved in setting standards for shrines, licensing priests, printing books and magazines, and filling top positions at major shrines. Membership is voluntary but is said to cover more than ninety percent of all shrines (although a number of prominent shrines are not members). Other than this group, Shinto has no council of leaders deciding how doctrines should be interpreted or how they should be applied to present-day moral or political issues. There are no dictates about what one should or shouldn’t believe, but there are practices aimed at developing the right way to live, which can be described as developing purity of heart, brightness of character, thankfulness, and reverence for the *kami*. The positive or negative influence of the *kami* on daily life is considered the result of our reverence or neglect of them. Importance is placed on the correct ritual acts toward the *kami* and the correct attitude toward life. There are also accepted practices on the proper way to venerate the gods in general, and for venerating specific deities at specific locations. As far as the general public goes, such acts will usually involve the type of simple visitation and prayer described previously. A number of other religious acts are listed a little later on.

Offerings (*beibaku*) from the government are no longer made, as church and state are officially separated, but tradition dictates that the imperial house send offerings to sixteen shrines (*chokusaisha*) on the occasion of certain festivals. Depending on the shrine, this may be performed twice annually, once every six years, or once every ten years. In addition, shrine buildings designated Important Cultural Properties have their renovations regulated and subsidized by the government. Shrines are otherwise financed by donations from worshippers and other enterprises.

The Shinto priesthood

After the reformation of government (*ritsuryo* system) was implemented in the seventh century, priests were appointed by the Council of *Kami* Affairs (*jingikan*). The position, especially of the chief priest (*guji*), was hereditary or later became so. The priestly Senge family at Izumo Taisha, for example, claims descent from Amenohohi no mikoto, who was appointed by Takamimusuhi to attend to the rites for Okuninushi in the mythical “age of the gods.” The current *guji* is considered the eighty-fourth in the line, which consists of the Senge and Kitajima families, both descendants of the original clan. Such priestly clans (*shake*) trace their lineage back hundreds or even thousands of years. Many temples that enshrined *kami* (*miyadera*) were run by shrine monks called *shaso* or *betto*. They differed from ordinary Buddhist monks in that they were allowed to marry and

pass on their positions to their sons. However, during the Meiji period ancestral claims were largely done away with and most positions since that time have been filled by interview of applicants or appointment (though many shrine priests in smaller shrines still inherit their position).

Generally, priests graduate from a one- or two-year course that meets the specifications of the Jinja Honcho, but shorter courses are available and training varies. At present, there are two colleges—Kokugakuin University in Tokyo and Kogakkan University in Ise—as well as a handful of other shrine-based institutions that offer training. There are also one-month programs, and theoretically, one does not need to attend school if one can pass the certification test (but it is difficult). Some major shrines not affiliated with the Jinja Honcho have their own training systems and own accreditation. Once priests are certified, they are free to apply to a shrine of their choice for a position. There is a ranking system for priests based on their qualifications, experience, etc. The general term for a priest is *kannushi* or *shinsboku*, and the positions within a shrine from top down are *guji* (chief priest), *gonguji* (assistant chief priest), *negi* (senior priest), *gonnegi* (junior priest), and then *kannushi*. There are also five accredited ranks: Jokai, Meikai, Seikai, Gon-seikai, and Chokai. For top shrines, the rank of Meikai is mandatory to become chief priest. Many Shinto priests serve only part time and many serve voluntarily. They are not cloistered, do not wear priestly garb outside of official duties, and are free to marry. There are approximately twenty-two thousand licensed priests serving about eighty thousand shrines. This means that about two-thirds of all shrines are unmanned on a full-time basis. There are also certain rites traditionally performed by community members, most of which are related to festivals; however cleaning and daily offerings are also performed by them at unmanned shrines.

There are also a large number of women serving as shrine maidens (*miko*), but no statistics are kept on how many. The number also tends to fluctuate seasonally (with the biggest increase for New Year). *Miko* assist the priest in performing rites, cleaning, preparing food, and selling amulets. Some *miko* also perform sacred dances (*kagura*). There are no special qualifications or licenses to be a *miko* (though some *miko* are also licensed priests). Some training is necessary, but it is usually carried out by priests at the individual shrine. In ancient times, women played an important role not only as priests but as shamans and mediums for oracles from the *kami*. Purity was the utmost consideration, and they were therefore virgins chosen at a very young age. These days the shamanistic aspect has been removed, and the *miko* is often the daughter of a shrine priest or a temporary or part-time worker. They are usually very noticeable around the shrine grounds, with a white kimono top and red pleated skirt or skirt-like pants (*bakama*). Although early forms of religious practice placed emphasis on female shamanism, this role has been generally eschewed and females relegated to a minor position in the shrine. There are female priests, but there are none who are chief priests at any major shrine.

The priesthood maintains an extensive calendar of reverential rites toward the *kami*. They range from the daily to seasonal or yearly, along with rites of passage—such as celebration of births and marriages—and purification ceremonies for worshippers. The daily schedule begins with cleaning the shrine grounds and buildings early in the morning. After that, a ceremony of the daily offering of food and drink for the *kami* is conducted, including reading of the *Obarae no kotoba* (purification prayer). First the area and the participants are purified in a ceremony called *shubatsu*. Offerings are placed on small tables within the *baiden*, on the steps in front of the *hon-*

den, or some other designated place. They will usually consist of a rice wine called *miki*, rice, salt, and water. The food offering, called *shinsen*, is made once in the morning and possibly once in the evening, depending on the shrine. On special feast days *mochi*, fish, seaweed, vegetables, fruit, and confections may also be offered. The offerings are withdrawn in the evening and thanks given for divine protection. Food is a very big part of Shinto ritual and is involved in most celebrations (the emperor, for example, offers food and shares meals with the *kami* as well as symbolically planting, harvesting, and partaking of the first rice crop). During the day a priest will conduct purifications on request and may leave the shrine for ground-breaking and other Shinto ceremonies conducted on site.

In addition to daily rituals for worshippers, a shrine may hold more than one hundred ritual events throughout the year. Some involve worshippers and the general public; some involve priests alone and are held in secret or in the dead of night. Many are unique to their individual shrines, while others have been prescribed ever since Meiji times, when the government sought to standardize proceedings at all shrines. Most of the prewar procedures were reinstituted after World War II under the Jinja Honcho. The priests' attire, posture, speech, and just about every aspect of priestly conduct and shrine ritual are spelled out by regulations called *gyoji sabo*. Even shrines with their own ancient traditions follow most of these standards, as do shrines that do not belong to the Association of Shrines. The standards are given in "Guidelines for a Life of Devotion to the *Kami*," published in 1956, and the "Association of Shinto Shrines Charter," published in 1980.

Priest's garb

A Shinto priest's clothing is basically a stripped-down version of Heian-period court attire.

Basic attire: The garments worn by Shinto priests are of three levels: formal (*seiso*), ritual (*reiso*), and regular use (*joso*). *Seiso* consists of a belted robe called a *ho* in black, red, or light blue, over a type of blousy pants called *sashimuki bakama*. The outfit also includes a *kanmuri* headdress and a fan of paper (*sensu*) or wood (*ogi* or *biogi*) held in the belt. Also referred to as the *ikan* style, it is a type of formal attire worn in the Heian court. *Reiso* garments (also called *saifuku*) are similar to *seiso*, but all in white. *Joso* uses a white kimono-like top called a *bakue* and a colored *bakama* (light blue for lower-class priests, purple for higher classes). The *bakama* can be either a pleated, ankle-length skirt or pants. The style is also the typical garb of *miko*, except that their *bakama* is always vermilion. For ceremonies, a silk patterned jacket called a *kariginu* with a short, stiff collar is worn over everything. Sometimes a *joe*—similar to the *kariginu* but plain white—is worn. The *kariginu* was essentially a Heian nobleman's hunting outfit. With all formal or ritual attire, black-lacquered, wooden clogs called *asagutsu* are worn, while wooden *geta*, raised-platform sandals called *zori*, or simple straw flip-flops (*waraji*) are worn with casual attire or when cleaning. A ritual flat wooden scepter called a *sbaku*, which may have once been a symbol of state, is held vertically in the hand.



The *eboshi* or *tate* (standing) *eboshi* is the black lacquered linen or cotton cap worn as a standard part of a priest's attire. During the Heian period, the *eboshi* was part of adult male dress, but it is now worn only by Shinto priests. Another type of cap, the *kanmuri*, is worn with formal wear. It is usually black, shaped like a little round box with a boss on top, and sporting a stiff tail that arches up from the back of the cap and hangs down over the back.



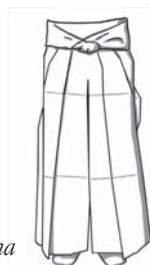
Asagutsu



Eboshi



Kanmuri



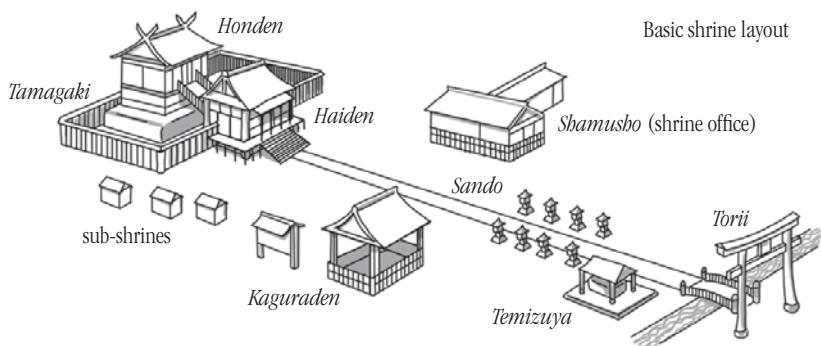
Sasbinuki bakama



Miko

The *jinja* and its environs

The word *jinja* is usually translated as “shrine,” and the Buddhist *tera* is translated as “temple.” The shrine is a place of worship where a particular *kami* or group of *kami* are said to reside or make themselves manifest when called upon. The *jinja* generally consists of the shrine grounds (*keidai*), main hall (*bonden*), worship hall (*baiden*), path (*sando*), symbolic entrance gate (*torii*), and water font and basin (*temizuya*). The typical *jinja* includes a small, enclosed space where resides the *gosshintai*, an object of some sort into which the *kami* descends. It is the most sacred object in the shrine and housed inside the main building (*bonden*). The *bonden* may be joined to a worship hall (*baiden*), where ceremonies are performed, or it may stand alone. The buildings may be either simple, unpainted wooden structures or elaborately detailed and decorated ones. They may be in one of a number of traditional styles or any number of variations. Although shrines are distinct from Buddhist temples, there are architectural styles that incorporate aspects of both. Before the Meiji period, large complexes combining shrines and temples were common,



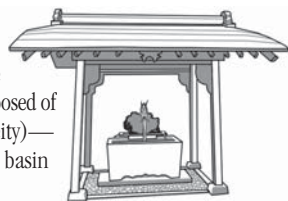
but now they are separate entities. They often stand side by side, and small shrines are sometimes found on temple grounds.

Shrine names come from either the name of the *kami* they enshrine, such as Hachiman or Inari; the place name, such as Ise or Izumo; or, particularly in relation to shrines that worship the same *kami*, both place and *kami* names, such as Tsurugaoka Hachimangu or Iwashimizu Hachimangu. In addition, they have a *shago* (a word that distinguishes it as a shrine). There are six *shago*, of which *jinja* is the most common. Others include *gu* as in Hakozaikigu, *taisha* as in Suwa Taisha, and *daijingu* as in Toyouke Daijingu (the outer shrine of Ise). *Sba* is another reading for the second character used in *jinja* and is generally used in rank designations (such as *taisha*—“first rank,” *chusha*—“second rank,” *shosha*—“third rank,” etc.). *Miya* is another reading of the character for *gu*, and like *sha*, it is usually used to designate a type of shrine, such as “mountain shrine” (*yamamiya*) or “primary shrine of a province” (*ichinomiya*). Finally, *jingu*, as in Ise Jingu and Heian Jingu, is used as a term for shrines related to the imperial house. (It is also used for some of those founded during the Meiji period.) Be that as it may, a *jinja* is easy to spot, as it will always have a *torii* standing in front of it. The following is a list of physical elements that make up the *jinja* and its environs.

Torii: A *torii* marks a place as sacred. It stands in front of a *jinja*, or bordering it, or within the grounds. It is a kind of gate with two vertical round or square pillars. One or two horizontal lintels cross the top of the pillars. The upper lintel extends somewhat past the pillars, while the lower one may or may not be extended. There may also be a smaller vertical support at the center of the lintels. Often, the name of the *jinja* is contained on a plaque that covers this small center support. The origins of the *torii* are obscure, but a type of *torii* is mentioned in the *Kojiki* as a bird perch in the story of the Heavenly Rock Cave. The Chinese characters used for *torii* have this meaning of “bird perch.” There are a number of styles and materials, but whatever the type the *torii* is the clearest indication of the existence of a *jinja*.

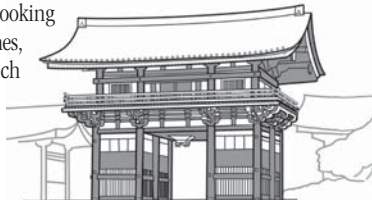
Sando: The path that leads to the main shrine and through the shrine grounds, usually beginning from the first *torii* and ending at the *haiden*.

Temizuya: A water font and basin placed somewhere to the front of the shrine building, used to perform ritual ablution in the form of cleaning the hands and rinsing the mouth. Usually composed of a stone basin, a font—often in the shape of a dragon (a water deity)—dippers (*bishaku*) to extract the water, and a roof covering the basin and immediate area.



Romon: This is a two-story, roofed gate in front of the main shrine that acts as a formal entrance to the area. The style was originally used for Buddhist temples, where it is called a *nijumon* or *niomon*, but it became common at shrines, especially at the larger ones. Though it seems to be two stories in height, it is actually a single-story structure, usually with a shallow balcony surrounding the structure where the second floor would be. It has a hip-and-gable roof covered in cedar bark,

copper, or ceramic tile. The gate can be six to eighteen feet deep and anywhere from six to thirty feet wide (one bay to five bays). Often the central bay is the entrance and the outer bays are enclosed with low walls to form a box. In Buddhist temples, fierce-looking guardian deities (*nio*) stand in the boxes. In Shinto shrines, the lower half of the box acts as a stand for the figures, which are usually seated archers in Heian dress called *zuijin* (such gates are also called *zuijinmon*).



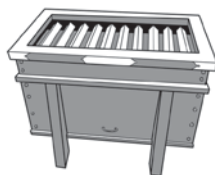
Honden: The primary shrine building is called the *bonden* (main hall or sanctuary), which is where the sacred object of worship (*goshintai*) is housed. It is the most sacred space within the shrine because it is where the *kami* resides or descends. The interior of the *bonden* varies in layout depending on the style, but it always contains an inner sanctuary (*naijin*) that is the *kami* seat (*shinza*), and an outer sanctuary (*gejin*). The *gejin* was used as a place to make offerings in earlier times when there was no worship hall. The *naijin* is never open to entry or viewing other than by the chief priest or on special occasions (such as when a building is to be renewed and the *goshintai* has been removed). The doors to the *gejin* may be left open at some shrines. The *bonden* is usually surrounded by a sacred fence (*tamagaki*), the area within which is considered purified ground and usually covered with white gravel. Historically, *kami* were often worshipped on mountains. As the source of streams, mountains were essential for agriculture and regarded as the home of *kami* and dead ancestors. It was believed that the mountain *kami* descended to the fields below at planting time and returned to the mountain after the harvest. A shrine was created at the base of the mountain to worship them. This village shrine (*satomiya*) usually became the main shrine, and a smaller mountaintop shrine was called the *yamamiya* (mountain shrine), *okumiya* (far shrine), or *motomiya* (original shrine).

Goshintai: The *goshintai* (or just *shintai*: *go* is an honorific) or *mitamashiro* is an object of veneration contained within every *jinja*. It is an object into which the *kami* has descended, or into which it is invited. The *shintai* is contained within the *bonden* and is never seen by anyone other than the chief priest of the shrine (*guji*). In some cases, it has not been seen by anyone for hundreds of years and even the chief priest does not know for sure what it is. It is known from records of enshrinements that the *shintai* can be either man-made or natural, and examples include mirrors, *magatama* (jewels), swords, paintings, stones, and sculptures. Sometimes a mountain is worshipped directly as the dwelling place of the *kami*, in which case there is no *goshintai* and no *bonden* other than the mountain itself (called a *shintazaian*).

Haiden: The hall of worship or oratory, which is often the building that is most prominent when entering the shrine grounds. It stands immediately in front of the *bonden* and is usually larger—thereby obscuring the view. The building is used for ceremonies and worship of the shrine's *kami*. It is also the place where visitors engage in rituals in conjunction with a priest. The *haiden* may be connected to the *bonden* behind it by a covered corridor or offering hall (*beiden*; see below). A later development, probably influenced by the structure of Buddhist temples, the *haiden* is sometimes open-sided and resembles a *kaguraden* (dance stage).

Heiden: A structure for making offerings (*beihaku*), placed between the *bonden* and *baiden*. In some cases, the *beiden* is an independent building, and in others it is only a connecting corridor. For the most part, it is used for the performance of rituals, sometimes of a higher order than those conducted at the *baiden*. Instead of a *beiden*, some shrines have a similar structure called a *noritoden*, literally, a place for reading *norito* (prayers) before the *kami*. The *bonden*, *baiden*, and *beiden* are sometimes spoken of collectively as the *shaden*.

Saisenbako: An offering box with a screened top, into which worshippers toss money. The box stands at the entrance to the *baiden* (hall of worship), or directly in front of the *bonden* if no *baiden* exists. It is the first thing the worshipper attends to before prayer. Donation amounts are not fixed and are usually a few coins, ranging from one to ten dollars (¥100 to ¥1,000).



Waniguchi or suzu: Types of bell attached to a thick rope and hung directly over the offering box. The worshipper shakes the rope to ring the bell after money has been deposited in the offering box. The purpose is to call the attention of the *kami* before offering a prayer. The *waniguchi* style of bell often has a slit along the bottom and so resembles an alligator's mouth (*wani* means alligator). It may have originated at *shugendo* mountain temples.



Waniguchi



Suzu

Other objects, places, and buildings that may be found at a shrine:

Kaguraden: A raised, covered, and open-sided pavilion that is used as a stage for sacred dance (*kagura*), court dance (*bugaku*), and court music (*gagaku*). Also called a *maidono*, *maiden*, or *buden*. The *kaguraden* is usually built in front of but separate from the *baiden*. It is sometimes used for other rituals and performances. Some believe its history preceded and inspired the construction of the *baiden*.



Massba, sessha, betsugu, bokora: Smaller sub-shrines often described as auxiliaries of the main shrine, ranging in size from about three feet square. They are made in many different styles, and there is no limit to their number. The differences between the types are sometimes very slight. The *sessha* is said to have a higher and more defined status than the *massba*, but the distinctions are fuzzy. The *kami* enshrined there are described as having a special relationship to the main *kami*, such as a wife or son. Sometimes they are the original *kami* that occupied the site, such as the family *kami* (*ujigami*) of the landowners, or the “rough spirit” (*aramitama*) of the main *kami*. *Betsugu* (detached shrine) may have originated as a branch of the main shrine built on one of its remote

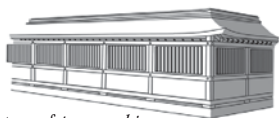
properties. It is usually considered a remote part of the main shrine and usually devoted to the same *kami*. *Hokora* are usually for “minor” *kami*, and these shrines are generally the smallest. *Hokora* is also a term used for small stand-alone shrines found along roadsides and at intersections.

Shamusbo: The shrine administration building, usually also the place where amulets are sold.

Homotsuden: Called a “treasure hall,” this is a storage building (*kura*) for the valuable possessions of a shrine, which generally break down into two types. One is the sacred treasure (*shinpo*), related to the *kami* or used in *kami* ritual. The other consists of precious items such as Noh masks, sculptures, and paintings. Many are put on display either in the treasure houses or in museums at the shrine. An admission fee is usually charged.

Shinsenden: Offerings of food to the *kami*, called *shinsen*, are a daily ritual at shrines, which may have a separate building for food preparation called the *shinsenden*.

Tamagaki and mizugaki: Types of fence employed at shrines. The *tamagaki* is generally a see-through picket fence, sometimes combining vertical and horizontal elements. Stone is sometimes employed, but wood is most common. Such fences surround the *bonden* and are also used around the entire shrine grounds. When more than one fence is used for the *bonden*, the inner fence is usually called a *mizugaki*, and there is usually no open space between the horizontal or vertical elements. Some fences are quite decorative while others are plain. Some also have roofs.



One type of *tamagaki*

Kairo: This is essentially a corridor with a large roof, which acts as a covered walkway. There is no wall along the inner side, where the roof is supported on pillars. It usually begins at the *romon* and encircles the entire inner grounds. The outer side is often solid, punctuated with windows along the upper half. The form originated from Buddhist temples, but it is a common sight at shrines as well.

Shin'yo: Commonly called *mikoshi* or *omikoshi*, this is a portable shrine used during festivals to transport the *kami* from the *bonden* to a temporary resting place (*otabisha*) and back. The *mikoshi* is generally no more than three feet on a side and composed of a base, body, and roof usually topped by a representation of a phoenix or an onion flower. Made of wood, it is usually highly decorated with carvings, lacquer, gold ornaments, and thick braided rope. It is supported on two parallel and two perpendicular wooden beams, which are supported on the shoulders of the celebrants. It can weigh as much as 4,400 pounds (two metric tons).



Shimenawa, shide, and gobei: A *shimenawa* is a thin or thick twisted rope made of straw, and indicates sacredness. It is usually strung around an object or hung directly in front of a space.

Shide are hanging white paper streamers, folded in a sort of zig-zag and attached to the *shimenawa* at intervals. A number of *shide* made of paper or cloth and attached to a stick is called a *gobei*, which is one type of ritual offering (*beibaku*). It is often placed in the *baiden* or in front of the *bonden* and is sometimes used as a *yorisbiro* (a place for the *kami* to descend).



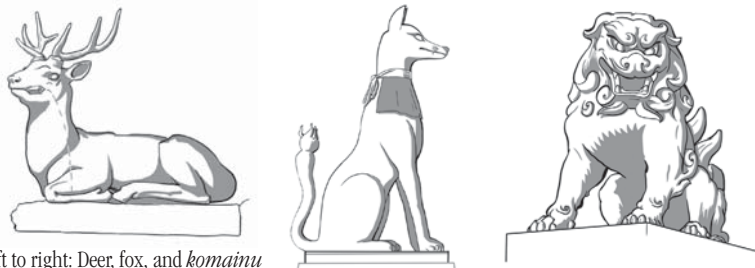
Shinboku: A sacred or divine tree, usually located adjacent to the *bonden*. It may be extremely old and considered a dwelling place of *kami*. The tree is easy to identify, as it has *shimenawa* and *shide* paper streamers hung around it.

Toro: Originally votive lanterns imported from Korea, used for offering fire or light to the Buddha. The custom was for a single lantern to be placed in front of the temple. It quickly spread to shrines and then Japanese gardens. Made of bronze, stone, or wood, the lanterns can be of a hanging or standing type. The most common type is the stone lantern (*ishidoro*). Such lanterns were donated by worshippers as offerings to the *kami*, which is why some large shrines such as Kasuga Taisha in Nara and Toshogu in Nikko have literally thousands. The wooden type shaped like a small shrine is found primarily at Shinto shrines.



Hanging, stone, and Shinto-style lanterns

Komainu, kitsune, deer: “Korean dogs” (*komainu*) are a pair of guardian figures. Despite their name, they originated in China or possibly India, and rather than dogs they represent lions said to ward off evil spirits. Typically one figure has the mouth open and the other has it closed, expressing the Sanskrit sounds *a-un* (alpha and omega). The two guardian kings (*nio*) that stand in front of Buddhist temples serve the same purpose (though *komainu* are also found there). At Kasuga shrines *komainu* are replaced by deer. At Inari shrines, the *komainu* are replaced by foxes (*kitsune*), because of the belief that they guide the mountain *kami* when it descends to the fields. The posture of the foxes (open and closed mouth) and the purpose of warding off evil are the same as the *komainu*, but they may also hold a “key to the rice granary” in the paw (Inari is a *kami* of food, especially rice).



Left to right: Deer, fox, and *komainu*

Evolution of the *Jinja*

Archaeological discoveries from the Jomon period are constantly challenging scholarly opinion about the earliest forms of Japanese culture. (The Jomon period is traditionally 10,000–300 B.C., but recent carbon dating of pottery has pushed the date back to as early as 14,000 B.C.). Humanoid figurines (*dogu*) from this period point to fertility and or death related rituals, while stone circles point to some form of ritual. For now, it is generally agreed that the worship of *kami* and associated practices began in the Yayoi period (traditionally given as 300 B.C. to A.D. 300). Though Japan originally had a hunter-gatherer and fishing culture, during the Yayoi period rice cultivation became widespread, and one of the main forms of *kami* worship was almost certainly bound to protection of the harvest. There is evidence of rituals to call the *kami* to a particular site from this time. Generally, areas were chosen relating to water, mountains, or environs that inspired feelings of awe. Places related to the survival of the crop, protection of shipping, and others were also chosen. An area called a *himorogi* was marked off, perhaps by surrounding it with a rope or covering the ground with white sand or straw mats. The area was considered purified, and within it was placed an object for the *kami* to enter (*yorishiro*), usually a branch from a tree or a stone. The location and consecrated ground were not permanent, but some sites became frequented by worshippers. One such place was Okinoshima, about thirty-five miles off the northern coast of Kyushu on an important shipping route to Korea. Excavations there have yielded objects used as offerings from as early as the fourth century, which show that rituals were carried out in open spaces, on large stones, and in caves.

Wooden construction and rice cultivation developed in tandem, and storehouses for rice were built that became places where the *kami* of the rice grain was venerated. This style of storehouse construction became one of the first styles of shrine construction called *shinmei-zukuri*. Indeed, Japan's most important shrine, Ise Jingu, is constructed in this style. Another prominent style is the *taisha-zukuri*, which most likely developed from the homes of the village chiefs who were charged with performing worship rites. (The homes were called *miya*, a word now used for shrines.) The most famous example of this type is Izumo Taisha. A fourth-century bronze mirror bearing images of four different building types—pit dwelling, ground-level wooden dwelling, raised wooden dwelling, and raised wooden storehouse—provides evidence of the age of these construction styles.

Jinja building characteristics and types

Since earliest times, sacred mountains (*shintaiizan*) and sacred forests (*kannabi*) have served as a direct focus of worship. The chief place of worship of the clans that began consolidating rule of Japan from as early as the fourth century was most likely Mount Miwa in present-day Nara prefecture, before the focus shifted to Ise and shrines in the cities of Nara and Kyoto. To this day, there is no *bonden* at Omiwa Jinja, as Mount Miwa itself is the seat of the *kami*. Most shrines with foundation dates before the sixth century began as sacred sites, with no permanent building structures. It is impossible to say with certainty when buildings began to act as the home of the *kami*, but it is believed that the construction of Buddhist temples from around the sixth century ended the practice of building *kofun* and spurred the building of shrines as well. *Kofun* were mounded graves, some quite large and surrounded by a moat, with an underground chamber where the body

was laid to rest surrounded by tribute. They were erected for clan leaders or other important people but came to be replaced by clan temples (*ujidera*).

Temple-building methods influenced the style of shrine construction, though shrines are generally built on a smaller and more modest scale. A typical temple contains a main hall where prayers are conducted and offerings made in front of an image of the principal Buddha. There are one or two pagodas where relics of the Buddha, valuable scrolls, and other objects are kept; these are from two to five stories tall (*taboto* and *gojunoto*, respectively). The pagoda contains a mammoth “heart pillar” under which the relics are buried. The temple grounds might also feature a bell tower, monk’s quarters, a meditation hall, a two-story gate with guardian figures called a *niomon*, and buildings dedicated to other Buddhas. By contrast, early shrines probably contained only a *bonden* where the *kami* was enshrined. Prayers and offerings were made from the outside. Gradually, larger shrines built *beiden* in which to conduct prayers and offerings, stages for music and dance, two-story gates called *romon*, and a *baiden* for worshippers. Generally, shrines do not contain images of the deities. The only sculpture may be the *zuijin* guardian figures in the *romon* and occasionally *goshintai* (hidden in the *bonden*). There is some history of Shinto sculpture (*shinzo*) found primarily at Hachiman shrines. However, sculpted surfaces on buildings featuring flowers, animals, mythical creatures, and allegorical scenes are often found, as are paintings on interior sliding panels and walls. Common to every building type is wooden construction. Historically there are no temples or shrines of any note made of stone (though during the Edo period, the large number of fires in the sprawling cities encouraged the building of *Kura* style *bonden*, with thick mud walls, surfaced in plaster and resembling fireproof warehouses called *kura*).

Building characteristics

Measurements: The traditional Japanese measurement system (*shakkan-bo*) came to Japan from China. The metric system was adopted in 1924, but the old system is still used in traditional building. Shrines are usually measured in bays (*ken*), with a bay being the distance between two columns. The actual measurement of one bay varies according to age, location, and custom. Excavations of Heian-period Kyoto show a bay having a span of 9.8 feet (from center to center of the pillar), whereas in the Edo period a bay measured about six feet—where it has remained to this day. The extremely large bays of Izumo Taisha measure about eighteen feet, but they are exceptional for shrines. The size of the bay may also vary within the same structure. The traditional Japanese length of measure is the *shaku*, which is 30.3 centimeters or about one foot. It is further divided in ten parts, called *sun*. Generally the standard is six *shaku* to a bay.

Wood construction: Japan is noted for its Hinoki Cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*), which have provided most of the wood for both shrine and temple construction over the centuries. The structures all use post-and-lintel construction with cut and fitted joints. The use of nails or glue is limited. Some shrine types have the main pillars planted directly in the ground. Most shrines since the eighth century have pillars resting on stone bases, as do Buddhist temples. Infill walls may be wooden board or clay and plaster over bamboo lath.

Periodic rebuilding: *Shikinen sengu* means a periodic rebuilding of the shrine. The period

is often fixed at twenty or twenty-one years, but it varies by shrine. The reasons for the rebuilding are ritual renewal to maintain purity, the natural deterioration of wood construction (especially where pillars are planted directly in the ground), and the need to train new carpenters in the ancient building techniques before the older carpenters die off (however, temples did not follow the custom, which seems to lend weight to reasons of ritual purity). The most famous such rebuilding is that of Ise Jingu, the preeminent shrine of Japan. Though many shrines that once underwent this renewal process are currently designated Important Cultural Properties and are only repaired, not rebuilt, Ise Jingu still observes a twenty-year rebuilding cycle. It has been carried out since the seventh century, uninterrupted except for a hundred-year interval between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Some of the 125 structures at Ise are rebuilt at twenty-year intervals, while others are rebuilt every forty years or as need be.

Painted or unpainted: It is widely thought that shrines are made in unfinished wood and temples are painted, but this is incorrect. Both can be found in unfinished or polychromed wood. Where paint is used, a vermilion or cinnabar red generally predominates. Toshogu shrines tend to have the most ornate polychroming. Certain types of shrine building are never painted (and probably never were). *Shinmei-* and *taisha-zukuri* are two such styles. Others, such as Toshogu, Sumiyoshi, and Kasuga, are always painted (please see the descriptions of these styles below).

Roof types: There are several roof types, surfaced in one of a number of materials: straw, *kaya* (miscanthus), cypress bark, cedar or other wood shingle, copper shingle, copper tile, or, at a later date, ceramic tile. (Tile is used primarily in temple construction.) Roofs are always gabled, and one of the most common types is the *irimoya-zukuri* (hip-and-gable style). The other common style is called *nagare-zukuri* and is essentially an asymmetrical gable, with one side extended to cover the stairway on the entrance (front) side. The other primary type is the *yatsumune* roof found on buildings that combine the *bonden* and *haiden* in one (see below).

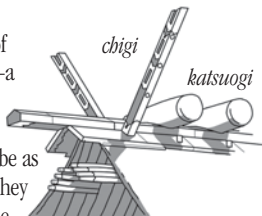
Key features: False A-shaped dormers called *chidoribafu* are a common feature on shrines, especially on the *haiden* from the sixteenth century onward. They are generally featured on the front side, in the center of the roof. Below them is often found a curved-bargeboard roof feature called a *karabafu*. It is usually on the edge of the roof directly over the entrance, or on an extended roof canopy overhanging the stairs (*kobai*). It is also a key feature of elaborate gates and the extensive use of both types give Japanese castles their distinctive appearance. Other key features include pent roofs, verandas, and bracket sets supporting the roof eaves and veranda.



Top: *chidoribafu*; Bottom: *karabafu*

Chigi and katsuogi: These are the most distinctive markings of Shinto shrines, though they only appear on some building types. *Chigi* are forked finials supporting the ridge board and extending past the ridge to form a V shape above the roofline, or sitting on the ridge to form an X shape. They are thought to be the remnants of the roof brace poles that were lashed together with rope in ancient construction styles. Today they are usually symbolic additions that sit on top

of the roof ridge at each end. The direction of the cut at the end of the *chigi* may indicate the presence of a male or female *kami*—a vertical cut indicating a male, and a horizontal cut indicating a female. *Katsuogi* are log-like forms that sit on top of the roof ridge, perpendicular to it; they usually number five or six, but there may be as few as two or as many as twelve. The *katsuogi* (so named because they resemble dried *katsuo* bonito) once served to help weigh down the ridge and hold the straw roof in place. But at least by the fifth century, they also became decorative elements adorning the emperor's palace, according to an entry in the *Kojiki* relating to Emperor Yuryaku (r. 456–79). As early as the sixth century, the right to erect *chigi* and *katsuogi* was extended to include the homes of powerful families. Today both *katsuogi* and *chigi* are used to adorn certain types of shrine buildings, especially those in the *shinmei*, *taisha*, Sumiyoshi, and Kasuga styles.



Emblems: Most shrines sport a crest that is a representation of either the enshrined *kami*, the clan that founded the shrine, or the shrine's status. They are generally round marks with some type of pattern within, such as the hollyhock of the Kamo shrines, the *yatagarasu* three-legged crow of the Kumano shrines, or the chrysanthemum of shrines associated with the imperial court. An emblem common to many shrines is the *mitsu tomo* representing the division of heaven, earth and man.



Building types

While there are a number of building types, they fall into two categories. The first is a generic type not necessarily associated with any single shrine. The second is usually named after the shrine where the style originated. The second category may extend to no more than a handful of shrines in the same geographic location.

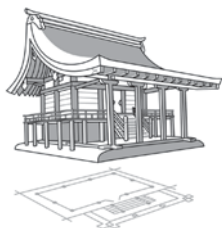
***Shinmei-zukuri*:** A type of *bonden* construction associated with the rice storehouse and dating from the Yayoi period. A decorated bronze mirror from the fourth century depicts a similar style of building. It is a structure raised on stilts, with the floor level several feet above ground. It uses round wooden pillars between which boards are laid horizontally to form the walls. The wood is unpainted but copper or gold-plated hardware is used. There is a gabled roof that extends beyond the walls on all four sides. The roof material is rice straw (*uwa*) or long grass like miscanthus (*kaya*), and it is finished with *katsuogi* and *chigi* that form a V above the roofline. The entrance is in the center on the non-gabled side, under the eaves, reached by a steep wooden ladderlike stair. There are no other doors or windows. On the gabled side, one pillar extends from the center of the roof ridge down to the ground, exterior to the wall. The pillars are buried directly in the ground. At some point, the architecture of the storehouse became the model for this style of shrine. The chief example is Ise Jingu in Mie Prefecture. Originally there was no veranda, but many do now have them, including Ise Jingu.



Taisha-zukuri: A type of *bonden* building that probably derived from the house (*miya*) of the village headman, who was responsible for performing rites for the *kami*. The basic style is considered one of the oldest building types. Wooden boards used for the walls sometimes run vertically, rather than horizontally as in the *shinmei* and *sumiyosbi* styles. It has a symmetrical gable roof with the gable on the front. The building is two bays wide, with the entrance in the front right bay. The left bay has *shitomido* doors that are split horizontally with the upper half hinged at the top and opening upward, while the bottom half is removable. A veranda encircles the building, and stairs as wide as the entrance lead to ground level. Another characteristic of the style is the gabled roof over the stairs, which follows its steep angle. The chief example of the style is Izumo Taisha in Shimane Prefecture.

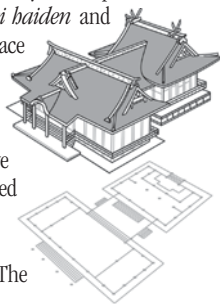


Nagare-zukuri: This is probably the most common style of *bonden* construction, found all around the country. The name means “flowing style,” and it is characterized by an asymmetric, upward-curving, gabled roof. The “flowing” roofline gives the style its name. The entrance is always in the center of the non-gabled side, and the roof there extends well past the wall to cover the veranda. It creates a full-width portico, sometimes with additional square pillars going from ground level up to the extended roof to support it along the eave (especially where the center section has been further extended to cover the stairs). A veranda wraps around three sides. A variation called *ryonagare-zukuri* has an extended roof on both front and back sides.



Irimoya-zukuri: This is a general description of a building style that uses a hip-and-gable roof. The simple gable roof (called *kirizuma-zukuri*) forms an inverted V shape seen from the end. The surface may be flat, slightly concave, or convex. The hip-and-gable adds a lower pent roof to the gable side, forming an A shape seen from the end. The full hip roof style (*yosemune-zukuri*) has four sloping rooflines, meeting at the top at a very short ridgepole. It creates a more or less symmetrical profile and a roof that looks very large compared with the building. The full hip style is more common in temple construction. The hip-and-gable style is common for shrines.

Gongen-zukuri: Also called *ishinoma-* and *yatsumune-zukuri*, this style incorporates the *bonden* and *baiden* under a single complex roof. The *irimoya-zukuri baiden* and *irimoya-* or *nagare-zukuri bonden* are connected by an intermediate space called the *ainoma* or *ishinoma* (reflecting its physical form) or *beiden* (reflecting its use), with the roof ridge of this space running perpendicular to the other roofs so that they form an I or an inverted T shape when viewed from above. (The view depends on the size of the structures relative to each other.) The *baiden* has wings with slightly lower roof heights attached to the left and right sides. A *gongen* is a Shinto *kami* considered to be an avatar or manifestation of the Buddha. The style was named for Nikko Toshogu, where Toshog Daigongen (Tokugawa Ieyasu) is enshrined. The



Buddhist-influenced structure is usually lacquered inside and out. In the case of Toshogu shrines, the style is highly elaborate, with carvings of fantastic animals and metalwork in copper and gold.

The following styles are primarily associated with the shrine from which they originate. Thus a *sumiyosbi-zukuri* style will only be found on Sumiyoshi shrines.

Hachiman-zukuri: A unique style named for the original Usa Jingu Shrine in Kyushu and involving two parallel buildings standing so close to each other that they almost touch along the eaves. A narrow structure connects the buildings and features doors at either end, creating a sort of covered corridor. A large rain gutter runs the length of the roof under the eaves and above the lower roof of the intermediate space. The effect is of one building with a double-gable roof. The roof material is Hinoki Cypress bark, and there are no *chigi* or *katsuogi*. The woodwork is lacquered in vermilion, and the walls are white plaster. There are three doors on the entrance side (the non-gabled side of the front structure) and there may be a step canopy that extends over the stairway. The front structure is called the *baiden*, *geden*, or *gejin* (outer sanctuary), and the rear structure is called the *bonden*, *naiden*, or *naijin* (inner sanctuary). Hachiman shrines often do not have typical *baiden* standing in front of the main building. Instead, they usually have a single-bay *romon* connected to a *kairo* that surrounds the main building. The *romon* is where worshippers pray, and it is the face of the shrine with which most people are familiar.



Kasuga-zukuri: Named for Kasuga Taisha in Nara, this is generally a small one-by-one-bay *bonden*. The bays are of different dimensions so that the width is about six feet while the depth is about eight and a half feet. The structure has a curving gable roof of cypress bark that features *katsuogi* and slender, rather curved *chigi* resembling crossed swords. The entrance is in the center on the gabled (front) side, while a pent roof covers the entrance stairway. The woodwork is lacquered in red with details in black, and the walls are white plaster. The staircase is made of solid square lengths of wood that span the full width of the building, with two square pillars rising from the base of the stair to support the pent roof.



Sumiyosbi-zukuri: This style of *bonden* has a gable roof with the entrance in the center of the gabled side. The structure is two bays wide by four deep. The roofline is flat and has a deep overhang on all four sides. There are *katsuogi* and very tall *chigi*. It somewhat resembles the *shinmei* style but all the wooden members are painted vermilion and the wooden plank walls are painted white. It is thought to derive from the shape of the *yukiden* and *sukiden* structures of the temporary ritual palace (*daijokyu*) built for the enthronement rites of the emperor. The building's interior is divided into front (*gejin*) and rear (*naijin*) sections, with a wall and door parallel to the entrance separating the two.



Torii types

There are a number of different styles of *torii*, many of them named for the shrine where they were originally found. *Torii* materials are generally of wood or stone, but copper, steel, and concrete are also found. Besides the general types, there are a large number of variations. Below is a list of some of the more common and more distinctive types.

Shime torii: Also called a *shimenawa torii*. Two round, unpainted, parallel pillars with a *shimenawa* twisted rope hung across them at the top. Thought to be one of the oldest types and seen only rarely these days.



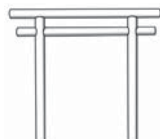
Myojin torii: A graceful and very common style. The pillars are round and lean inward, making them farther apart at the bottom than the top. The upper lintel (*kasagi*) is double layered and turns upward at the ends. The lower lintel (*nuki*) penetrates the pillars, which sit on stone tablets. The *torii* is often painted red, and sometimes the upper part of the *kasagi* is painted black, making it difficult to distinguish from the Inari style.



Shinmei and Ise torii: The *shinmei* and Ise styles are similar, with unpainted, parallel round pillars topped by a *kasagi*. The *nuki* does not penetrate the pillars, which are planted directly in the ground. The Ise style has a *kasagi* that is pentagonal (*shinmei* is round) and the ends have an inward-slanting cut.



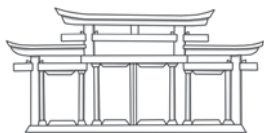
Kashima torii: The pillars are round, unpainted, and parallel, with no base stone. The *kasagi* is also round, and the flat *nuki* penetrates the pillars. Similar to the *shinmei* style, except that the *nuki* penetrates the pillars.



Ryobu torii: A distinct style, also called a *yotsuasbi* (four-legged) *torii*, often seen set directly in water. The round pillars are parallel, but they each have two shorter supporting pillars connected to the main pillar by two *nuki*. The effect is of a *torii* with a short fence attached to the sides. The double-layered *kasagi* is sharply upward-curving at the ends. The upper lintel is often covered by a small gable roof running the length of the *kasagi*. The *nuki* penetrates the pillars, which are thicker from about midway down to the base. The *ryobu torii* is almost always painted in red.



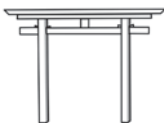
Miwa torii: Found only at Omiwa Jinja in Nara and one or two other shrines. It is a highly distinctive triple *torii*, with a taller central section and two shorter ones attached to either side. The *kasagi* turn upward at the ends, and the *nuki* of the shorter *torii* penetrate the shorter outer pillars only. The unpainted *torii* gives the effect of a three-bay gate.



Sanno torii: Another unusual *torii* with round, inward-leaning pillars. There is a square *shimagi* topped by a *kasagi* that turns upward at the ends. The flat *nuki* penetrates the pillars, which sit on a tall stone base. Above the *kasagi* is a gabled structure and the center support (*gakuzuka*) extends from the *nuki* to the inner peak of the gabled structure. Almost always painted in vermillion. Found at Hie and Hiyoshi shrines.



Sumiyoshi torii: The unusual square stone pillars are inclined and topped by a double-layered *kasagi* that turns upward at the ends. The lower layer of the *kasagi* is square, while the upper is pentagonal. The upper layer extends past the lower, and the end is beveled inward toward the pillar. The flat *nuki* penetrates the square pillars, which are set directly in the ground.



A note on Important Cultural Properties

The national and prefectural governments of Japan are involved in protecting properties and activities deemed an important part of the cultural heritage of the country. To this end a measure called the Law for the Protection of Important Cultural Properties was enacted in 1950, which divides the country's assets into several levels of importance. These include tangible and intangible properties. The law replaced a similar law from the Meiji period. Tangible Cultural Properties primarily include buildings and objects of art and craft, as well as important writings. Support is also given for the continuation of customs and skills called Intangible Cultural Properties, including classical music, dance, performance, ritual, and festivals. In addition, there are categories of Folk Cultural Properties, Cultural Landscapes, and others. The law designates as National Treasures those cultural properties thought to be of a higher order of value. It limits the extent to which property can be altered and makes provisions for repair, custody, and public access. Where necessary, it provides funding and in some cases may authorize the Agency for Cultural Affairs to assign the property to another party if preservation is threatened. Since 1972, the United Nations has fostered a system of worldwide protection of cultural properties, and becoming a World Heritage Site is now a much sought-after designation. In Japan too a number of sites have been so designated. Many National Treasures, Important Cultural Properties, and most World Heritage Sites relating to Shinto are included in this book.

Customs and rites

Today, the customs and rites of Shinto are primarily connected to the shrine, with a few exceptions—such as the rites performed by the emperor inside the imperial palace. This section gives an overview of the interaction among shrine, worshipper, and priest.

Entering the Shrine Grounds: Passing under the first *torii* or through an outer gate is the same as entering sacred space. Since a lot of Shinto worship and ceremonies take place outdoors, the grounds themselves are part of the “house of worship,” so to speak. It is easy to forget this, especially in shrines that attract lots of visitors. Some people bow when entering or leaving the grounds, but an attitude of respect is sufficient.

Washing the Hands and Mouth: Look for the *temizuya* as you walk toward the shrine, and take a moment to rinse your hands and mouth. Dippers are provided, and the prescribed method is as follows:

Take the dipper in your right hand and scoop some water out of the basin. By the side of the basin, pour it over your left hand. Then switch hands and pour some over your right hand. Finally, take the dipper in your right hand again and fill it with water directly from the tap. Pour this into your cupped left hand and take some into your mouth, then spit it out on the drainage area around the basin. Lightly rinse the dipper and return it. This is not intended as actual washing but as a ritual purification. The idea is to remove impurity before entering the presence of the *kami*. Shinto purification generally involves water, salt, fire, or the waving of a wand called an *onusa* over the head of the person or object being purified.

Offering a Prayer: As you approach the *baiden*, you may have to climb a few steps to stand at the entrance. Place a small offering into the offering box and shake the rope and bell hanging from the rafters (if there is one). While still facing the *baiden*, bow twice, then clap your hands twice and hold them together while you offer a silent prayer. Then bow once again and back away one step before turning around to leave. This is the generally accepted way to approach the *baiden*, though many people have their own methods.

Norito Prayers and Purification Rites (*Harae*): *Norito* are formal prayers recited by a priest on behalf of the worshipper. They can be requested at the shrine office, probably for a minimum donation of about ¥3,000. (In such a case it's best not be dressed in jeans, or shorts and T-shirt.) Worshipers accompany the priest and sometimes a *miko* into the *baiden* and sit on a small stool or on the floor while the priest begins the ceremony. The prayer will be tailored to the worshipper: for example a request for blessings for a new business or a safe trip. At some point, the priest will purify the worshipper by waving a wand called an *onusa* over his or her head. A cluster of bells may be shaken over the head as part of the blessing. The custom is to bow the head until this is finished. During the ceremony, the worshipper will be given a sprig of *sakaki* leaves tied with a *shide* paper streamer (*tamagusbi*), which is the offering to the *kami*. The worshipper rises and moves to the table provided, bows, and places the *tamagusbi* on the table with the stem of the leaves facing toward the *kami*. Then from a kneeling position the worshipper bows twice, claps twice, and bows once again. Then a short silent prayer is offered before returning to the original position. An indication is given when the ceremony is finished.

Riyaku: Usually translated as “benefits,” *riyaku* (also called *goriyaku* and *genze riyaku*) is typically thought of in terms of a “menu” of standard things to pray for. In general, there are two major categories of *riyaku*: protecting against or warding off danger (*yakuyoke*), and inducing good fortune or granting wishes (*kaiun*). The menu is identical, regardless of whether prayers are offered at a Shinto shrine or a Buddhist temple. Most shrines will aver that you can pray for anything, and that the *kami* enshrined in that particular place has the power to grant any sincere wish. However, many deities are known for efficacy in one particular area: for example, Onamuchi no mikoto for blessing marriages, and Tenjin for help with entrance exams and so on. Some deities

take on more than one specialty. The listings for each individual shrine in this book give some idea what to pray for, but in the case of shrines that prefer to mention every benefit, only three or four have been included. There are a number of guidebooks in Japanese that list the particular efficacy of individual shrines and temples, and some people will visit with the purpose of praying for a specific result. Below is a list of some typical benefits.

gokaku kigan: success in passing entrance exams

kotsu anzen: safety on the roadways

kanai anzen: well-being of the family (safety in the home)

kaijo anzen: safety at sea

kaiun: calling good fortune

anzan kigan: safe childbirth

shobai hanjo: business prosperity

enmusubi: finding a good love and marriage match

engiri: for cutting a bond such as with a partner, or ending an addiction

kenko jyoju: good health

yakuyoke: protection from danger, especially in the “years of danger or calamity” (*yaku-doshi*). This is prescribed as the ages of 25, 42, and 61 for men and the ages of 19, 33, and 37 for women. (The traditional system of age counting begins at conception, not birth.) The year before any of these years (*maeyaku*) and the year after them (*atoyaku*) are also considered needful of special protection.

Hatsumode: The New Year’s shrine or temple visit, known as *hatsumode*, is at once a personal and a communal ritual. It is also a national celebration as much as a religious one. The holiday continues until about 3 January, and for many it is an opportunity to visit a large shrine like Meiji Jingu in Tokyo. At midnight on New Year’s Eve millions of people wait to enter the shrine. It is the only day in the year when the trains run all night long. During the holiday period a large area for offerings may be set up in front of the *baiden*. It is one event in which most of the population participates, another being Obon, the Buddhist festival for the dead ancestors in August.

Setsubun: One of the most widely celebrated Shinto holidays, which was once the day before the season changed and thus celebrated four times a year. The first seasonal division was also celebrated as the New Year and this became the basis for today’s holiday. In the old lunar calendar, the New Year fell in February when *setsubun* is still celebrated every year on the 3rd of the month. Ceremonies to “drive out the demons” (*tsuina*), including chasing away figures dressed in demon masks, and bean-scattering (*mame-maki*) to expel evil spirits are conducted. The phrase “*oni wa soto*” (demons out) “*fuku wa uchi*” (good luck in) is repeated while tossing the beans.

Miyamairi: Also called *batsu miyamairi*, this is the practice of bringing a newborn child to the shrine one month after birth, to be “introduced” to the *kami* and to ask for divine protection. It is done by appointment, thirty-two days after birth for girls, thirty-one or thirty-three days for boys. The priest first does a purification ceremony, after which everyone offers *tamagushi* to the *kami*.

Shichigosan: The name of this event means “7-5-3,” which are auspicious numbers in Japan. The event is to offer prayers for the growth of the child during the formative years. On November 15 boys of either three or five years of age and girls of either three or seven years of age dress up in kimono or some formal attire and are brought to the shrine to receive the blessings of the *kami*. Children receive long, thin, red and white candy in a bag with turtle and crane illustrations. It is called “thousand-year” candy (*chitose ame*). The crane and the turtle both symbolize longevity, and the combination of red and white is often used as a celebratory color theme in Japan.

Shinzen kekkon: The general term for a wedding ceremony is *kekkonshiki*. In Shinto the term *shinzen kekkon* is used. The ceremony was established very late in Japanese history in response to Christian weddings. It began in the Meiji period, but did not spread to the general public until much later. As in other countries, the legal marriage is civil and only requires the couple to sign and submit a marriage document to the local town hall. For the Shinto ceremony, the man is generally attired in a formal kimono, usually of black or gray, and the woman wears a white kimono called *shiromuku*. She also wears one of two types of special headdress, either a *wataboshi* (which looks like a hood) or a *tsunokakushi* (literally, “hide the horns”). Like most Shinto ceremonies, the wedding involves purification of the couple, offering of food and *miki* (sake) to the *kami*, special *norito* being read by the priest, and drinking of the *miki* by the couple. It is done in a very specific manner, with the man first taking three sips of *miki*, the woman doing the same, then the man repeating once more (called *san san kudo*). The procedure is repeated with three different cups, though the male-female order is reversed on the second round. Afterward the couple read marriage vows and exchange rings (a Western custom). Both families make a pledge to assist the marriage and also drink some *miki*. The legal age for marriage in Japan is eighteen for males and sixteen for females, but those under the age of twenty (the age of adulthood) need parental consent.

Jichinsai: This is a ground-purification rite held before the construction of any type of building in Japan. The rite is held at the construction site after the ground is cleared and leveled, and before any foundation work or digging takes place. The purpose of the rite is to appease the *kami* for disturbing the land as well as to pray for the safety of the workers and the success of the project. On one part of the land a square space is marked off with four stalks of bamboo at the corners joined by a *shimenawa*. The ground inside the square may be covered with a straw mat. An evergreen branch with paper *shide* is attached to a stand and placed in the center, acting as a place for the *kami* to enter during the service. People attending the ceremony usually sit in folding chairs or stand in front of this area. The priest reads a *norito*, and then waves a purification wand over the land and over the heads of the participants. The focus then shifts to a small mound of earth with a tuft of grass sticking out, which is prepared in advance. Participants use a symbolic scythe to cut the grass, a symbolic hoe to dig the earth, and a symbolic pick to chop the earth. *Tamagushi* is then offered and *miki* is drunk before the ceremony closes. (Another ceremony called the *jotosai* takes place during construction when the ridgepole has been raised.)

Offerings, amulets, and divination

Purchasing amulets or talismans of different kinds is a standard part of shrine visits and constitutes a form of belief in the efficacy of the *kami*. They are purchased at the shrine office. Some are taken home, while others are left behind at the shrine. A brief explanation of the main types follows.

Ema: Wooden plaques with painted images, given as offerings to the *kami* or as personal wishes and prayers. The practice of offering images of a white horse (and other white animals) to the *kami* dates back to at least the Nara period. In time, small figures of horses and then painted images on wood were offered as well. Though originally the images were of horses, other animals and objects were depicted from an early date. Today, shrines have different images and various shapes of *ema* for sale. The worshipper buys the plaque and writes his or her wish on the back, then the plaque is hung in a designated area.



Omikuji: Paper fortunes used for a type of divination or fortunetelling. The sealed papers are purchased at shrines for a nominal sum. When opened, they reveal the fortune, which can be anything from “great blessing” (*daikichi*) to “great curse or misfortune” (*daikyo*). If a poor fortune is received, the custom is to tie up the *omikuji* to a tree or one of the rows of string provided for this purpose. The idea is that the misfortune is left behind. On the other hand, if the fortune is good it is brought home with the person.

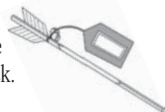


Ofuda (Mamorifuda, Gofu): A tablet of wood or paper bearing the name of the enshrined deity of the *jinja*. It is considered a symbol of the *kami* that brings benefits to the owner and should be renewed yearly. Not to be confused with *senjafuda* (thousand shrine emblem), which looks similar to an *ofuda* but with the name of an individual printed on it within a black frame. The *senjafuda* is pasted on the gates of shrines and temples by worshippers to commemorate their visit. The custom dates to the Heian period, when they were handwritten.

Omamori: Literally, “protector.” These are amulets for good luck or wish fulfillment, but especially for warding off danger. The most common form is a small, embroidered fabric satchel, on which is written the name of the shrine or form of protection. It is attached to a string and commonly tied to the strap of a handbag, backpack, and so on. *Omamori* are often given as gifts for the protection of children and loved ones.



Hamaya: A “demon-breaking arrow” sold at New Year’s. The decorative wooden arrow is sold in a variety of sizes and is said to drive away bad luck.



Engimono: There are two main meanings to this word. The oldest meaning refers to a story of the shrine’s history. In this use, it is often preceded by the name of the shrine, such as *Kitano tenjin engi* or *Sumiyosbi engi*. In a later definition it came to signify an omen, from which it took on the meaning of a good luck charm. It is currently used as a general term for the amulets sold at shrines.

Kamidana: Literally, “god shelf,” this is a household Shinto altar. It is usually purchased not at a shrine but in a specialty shop. It is a place within the home where the *ofuda* is placed and food offerings made for the protection of the home and well-being of the family. It may be a simple shelf or a small wooden *jinja* with a shelf attached.



Shrine objects

This is a brief list of various objects you will see used around the shrine.

Onusa/Haraegushi: A wand used in purification ceremonies (*barae*). It is sometimes a branch of the *sakaki* tree, but is usually a hexagonal wooden rod with linen or paper *shide* streamers attached. The streamers may be made of flax or other fabrics, or paper. It is waved left, right, left over the object or person being purified.



Suzu: Also called *kagura suzu*, this is a cluster of bells attached to a short stick, which is held in the hand and shaken over the head of a worshipper as part of a blessing. Also used in sacred dance (*kagura*).

An: A small table used in ceremonies to hold offerings (*beibaku*). Various types of *an* have specific purposes, but they are all small and lightweight, with four to sixteen spindly legs.



Sanbo and osbiki: A square tray with beveled corners, usually made of unfinished Hinoki cypress. The tray is attached to a similarly shaped stand that forms its base. The tray is the *osbiki* and the base is the *sanbo*. They were originally separate but are now usually joined. Used to hold offerings placed before the *kami*.

Ento and salt: *Ento* is a solution of rock salt in water used for purification rituals. Often *sakaki* branches will be dipped in it to spray over the area or people to be purified. Salt is generally used as an offering to the *kami* or for purification. Visitors to a funeral will be given some to shake on their shoulders after returning home in order to remove impurity (*kegare*). Sumo wrestlers throw salt around the ring before bouts, to purify the ground.

Miki: Rice wine used in Shinto ceremonies. *Miki* refers especially to rice wine offered to the *kami*, or as part of a number of Shinto ceremonies such as weddings. Although rice wine is usually called saké, when ritually purified and used in Shinto rituals it is called *miki* and it is an important part of the food offerings (*shinsen*). Stacked barrels of saké in colorful wrappings are often found at the entrance to Shinto shrines.

Chinowa: A large ring made of grass, set up at the entrance to a shrine on special festival days. Worshippers pass through the ring to avoid misfortune in the coming year. The practice is probably based on an ancient tale of how a good Samaritan was rewarded by the *kami* with a ring of grass to wear to ward off plague.



Katasbiro: An object, often in the shape of a human figure, made of straw, paper, etc., and used to remove impurity. The object may be rubbed on the body, or worshippers may blow on it to remove and transfer their pollution. The object is then discarded in some ritual fashion, such as floating it down a river. This kind of “scapegoat” is also found in festivals whereby the impurities of a community are removed onto an individual who is then symbolically run out of town.

Sakaki: A broadleaf evergreen (Japanese cleyera) common to Japan. Mentioned in the *Kojiki* as the tree on which beads, a mirror, and other objects were hung in front of the cave where Amaterasu Omikami hid herself. As a result it has been used since ancient times as a place for the *kami* to descend, as a border for sacred space, as an offering to the *kami* (*tamagushi*), and as a purification wand.

Tamagushi: A sprig of *sakaki* with *shide* paper streamers attached. It is used as an offering to the *kami* at most rituals where purification is conducted. It may be offered by both priest and worshippers. The sprig is placed on the *an* with the stem facing toward the *kami*.



World Heritage Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range

The Kii Peninsula is in south central Japan. It is where pilgrimage began and where it has always been at its most mystical. Ever since retired emperors started making pilgrimage from the capital of Kyoto to the southernmost reaches of the peninsula in the tenth century, the area has been known for its natural beauty and religious fervor. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee recognized not only the individual shrines and temples, but the routes connecting these sites as well. The designated routes include the birthplace of Shingon Buddhism on Mount Koya; the birthplace of *shugendo* on Mount Omine; a pilgrimage connection to Ise Jingu; the three principle shrines of Kumano (Kumano Sanzan); and a splendid combination of ancient forests, high, rugged mountains, spectacular ocean views, and the tallest waterfall in Japan. The area stretching from the southern part of Nara prefecture to the southern tip of the Kii Peninsula is the place that defines the mountain ascetic (*yamabushi*). Mountain asceticism and pilgrimage flourished here for over a thousand years. Below is a list of the principal routes, together with some of the shrines and temples associated with them.

The Imperial Route (Kiiji): This runs from Kyoto in the north to Tanabe in the south along the west coast of the Kii Peninsula. It then leads around the southern tip of the peninsula, called the Ohechi route, or over the mountains to the three shrines of Kumano (Nakahechi route).

The Yoshino Mountainous Area: The area is accessed by Kintetsu Railway Yoshino Station and then by ropeway into the Yoshino Mountains. The mountains are famous for the three *Senbon* areas filled with cherry trees that blossom in April, along with Kinpusen-ji, Yoshimizu Jinja, Omi-nesen-ji, Kinpu Jinja, Yoshimizu Jinja, Yoshino Mikumari Jinja, and other shrines and temples.

Nakahechi: The Nakahechi is the oldest route and was used by pilgrims from Kyoto who started from Tanabe to cross the peninsula from west to east. The route loops from Kumano Hongu Taisha to Shingu and Nachi before returning along the same road to Tanabe.

Ohechi: The Ohechi route is 74.5 miles long from Tanabe to Nachi Katsuura along the coast. It is longer than the Nakahechi and has spectacular views of the sea.

Kohechi: At forty-five miles, this is the shortest route between Kumano and Mount Koya, the headquarters of the Shingon sect of Buddhism. It is also one of the toughest, with three mountain passes over three thousand two hundred feet.

Koyasan Choishimichi: This connects the main temple of Mount Koya, Kongobuji, with its sub-temple Jison-in at the base of the mountain. The guardian *kami* of the mountain is at nearby Niukanshofu Jinja.

Iseji: The route from Ise Jingu on the northeastern coast of the Kii Peninsula to Kumano Sanzan in the south. It also has a spectacular ocean/mountain landscape and more than nineteen miles of stone path leading through the forest.

Shinto pilgrimage

Shinto has a tradition of pilgrimage that focuses on a single site (unlike Buddhist pilgrimage, which takes in multiple sites). Kumano and Ise are the most famous cases (though Kumano is actually three individual shrines and Ise is two). There is also the practice of *hyakudo mairi*, defined as one hundred trips to the same shrine. The term can also refer to one hundred trips in the same day, or one hundred trips between the shrine and a marker within the grounds. The form of worship can still be observed today, and some shrines have a stone marker equipped with a counting device for this purpose. Another form of Shinto pilgrimage is that which takes place within larger Inari shrines, such as Fushimi Inari Taisha in Kyoto. Here the pilgrim is invited to visit numerous smaller shrines on the grounds, typically set on a small mountain. The pilgrimage may take anywhere from several hours to a full day, depending on one's pace. Another practice is observed over the New Year holiday, when many people make informal rounds of a small number of local shrines and temples. One example is the *shibifukujin meguri* mentioned in the section "Types of *Kami*."



Counter for
hyakudo mairi

What Is a *Matsuri*? The Role of the Festival in Worship and Community Culture

Although *matsuri* is a general term used to mean “festival,” it most often refers to a Shinto festival. (There are also many Buddhist and secular festivals, some of which appear in this book.) *Matsuri* are such an important aspect of shrine ritual that Shinto is sometimes described as a religion of rites and festivals. The famous quote of a priest named Hirai is telling. The American mythologist Joseph Campbell related the supposed conversation between an American sociologist, on a tour of Shinto shrines, and the Shinto priest. After the tour, the sociologist remarked, “I’ve seen quite a few rites . . . I don’t get your theology.” The priest thought for a second and said, “We have no theology. We dance.” Over the centuries, *matsuri* have become part of popular culture and moved beyond their original religious roots. Like religious festivals elsewhere in the world, the origins are often unknown to the average person and the spiritual aspect becomes secondary to that of fun and spectacle. In Japan, too, some large *matsuri* are major tourist attractions drawing tens of thousands of visitors. Much of Shinto ritual is focused on agricultural rites, and this is true of most festivals as well. Considering that today only about 2.5 percent of the population still works the land, the original significance is lost to most participants. Yet *matsuri* have become an important source of economic activity and a vital force for community cohesion. The number of people involved nationally numbers in the millions. In recent times difficulties in staffing *matsuri* in smaller towns as well as larger cities have caused them to be cancelled or changed from annual to biennial events. Others have been classified as Important Intangible Cultural Properties by the national and prefectural governments, helping to ensure their continuation.

Getting involved in a festival

The typical way to be involved in a *matsuri* is to just show up. Participation on this level puts one on a par with most of the people visiting the festival. Watching the processions of floats, the rituals and performances, or just strolling around and absorbing the atmosphere constitute a good way to experience the people and the culture at their joyful best. Depending on the scale of the *matsuri* there may be games for kids, arcade games for teens and adults, and goods for sale. Most of the stalls will be selling all types of food, including *yakisoba* (fried noodles), *okonomiyaki* (a kind of pancake-omelet), *yakitori* (roasted meat on a stick), *jagabata* (baked potato with butter), chocolate-covered bananas, *karaage* (deep-fried chicken), ramen (noodles), cotton candy, alcohol, soft drinks, and these days even a number of ethnic foods.

Festivals also require the active participation of a large number of people for carrying the *mikoshi*, pulling or pushing *dasbi*, playing music, setting up and running stalls, parading, dancing, or running around semi-naked in *fundoshi* (loincloths)! Preparations may start a year in advance, with regular meetings throughout the year. It can involve anything from making new *mikoshi* and floats to rehearsing performances. For minor roles, preparations may begin a month or so in advance with organizing food for participants or setting up tents, and end the day after the festival with taking everything down and cleaning up.

Generally speaking, most people take their roles in *matsuri* very seriously. The main activities

may be exciting and fast paced, or slow and deliberate with a form essentially unchanged for a thousand years. Some *matsuri* begin in the wee hours of the morning, and some may go on all night. Some involve heading into the ocean in winter, while others involve running around with lit torches or walking over hot embers. There are festivals which include sluicing down a muddy slope on a huge log or banging *mikoshi* against each other to see which one is toppled first. If you're getting the idea that *matsuri* can be a bit wild and dangerous, you're right. A number of people are killed or injured in festivals every year. The basic idea is to take the participants out of the everyday world and propel them into a kind of frenzy, before returning them in a spiritually cleansed and reinvigorated form. Of course, the vast majority of festivals do not involve life-threatening activities. And even with the wilder ones, there are a good many mundane and obligatory activities that go along with them. The range of *matsuri* is almost as extensive as the number of *kami* they extol, but there are several predominant types, which are described below.

Types of Festivals

Mikoshi: One of the principal forms of *matsuri* involves carrying the *shin'yo*, more popularly called a *mikoshi*. As described earlier, it is a small shrine to which the spirit of the *kami* (*tamashii*) is temporarily transferred for the duration of the festival. The portable shrine is carried on the shoulders of the celebrants as they half-walk, half-dance through the streets. The purpose is to celebrate the *kami* and for the *kami* to show its presence in the community it protects. Sometimes there will be a person standing on top of the *mikoshi*, urging the others on or helping to syncopate their chants. A chant such as "*Wasshoi, wasshoi*," repeated in a call-and-response fashion between the man on top and the group below, has no particular meaning but is a unifying sound raised from the voices of many to create a powerful singularity.

The origin of the *mikoshi* is obscure, but speculation relates it to the Nara period several years prior to the completion of the great bronze Buddha of Todaiji in 752. The blessing of the *kami* Hachiman was sought for the project. The emperor ordered a royal palanquin (*ren'yo*) to be sent to Usa Jingu in Kyushu, to bear the *kami* in honor to Nara. Its divided spirit was enshrined in the newly built Tamukeyama Hachimangu. Popularization did not occur until much later, but how it began is not clear. From about the tenth century, fighting monks of Mount Hiei called *sobei* would often descend on Kyoto to make demands of the government, carrying and violently shaking a *mikoshi* from Hie Taisha, to display the anger of the *kami*. Also from the ninth century, which was a period of frequent plagues, a belief that "vengeful spirits" (*goryo*) were responsible became widespread. The angry spirits belonged to exiled or murdered members of the ruling class, who were thought to bear a grudge for their treatment and exact revenge on the capital in the form of plagues and natural disasters. *Goryo-e* ceremonies were conducted at temporarily erected shrines to placate them and induce them to move on. Food offerings and other festivities including dance and music were conducted from this time.

Today's *matsuri* begins with preparation of the *mikoshi*. During the year they are disassembled and any necessary repairs are made. They are stored away wherever there is space, since without the presence of the *kami* the *mikoshi* is no more than a decorated box. The day or night prior to the festival, the *mikoshi* is brought by bearers to the shrine and a ceremony is held to purify it, together with the bearers. A prayer will also be said for the success of the *matsuri*. On the morning of the

event, the bearers again assemble at the shrine and the rite for transferring the spirit of the *kami* to the *mikoshi* is performed. Bearers are usually dressed in *happi*, a loose-fitting, robe-like short coat made of cotton. It is worn over short white pants or a loincloth (for men) called a *fundoshi*. The *happi* is emblazoned with the *kamon* (emblem) of each group and worn with *tabi*, a traditional foot garb that is a cross between a sock and a shoe. When the transfer is complete, the bearers hoist the *mikoshi* on their shoulders and quietly bring it out of the shrine. Then they begin to rhythmically jostle the *mikoshi* and chant as they carry it into the streets. The *matsuri* basically involves carrying the *mikoshi* in this fashion through the streets of the community, until it is rested at a place designated for it (*otabiso*). Then it is taken back to the shrine where the *kami* is

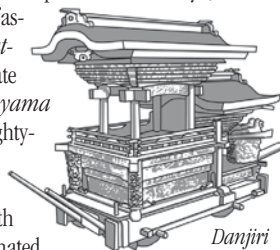
returned and the *mikoshi* put away for another year. Along the route, it may make brief stops in front of the homes or offices of donors, where it is boisterously jostled. A *kannushi* may also purify the home of the donor. *Mikoshi* from other shrines may be met along the way or at the *otabiso*, or brought together for a celebration before returning to their respective shrines. During this time, crowds lining the streets cheer on the bearers or give them refreshments and food. Many in the crowd may be dressed in casual cotton kimono called *yukata*, and some will visit the shrine themselves that day.



Dashi

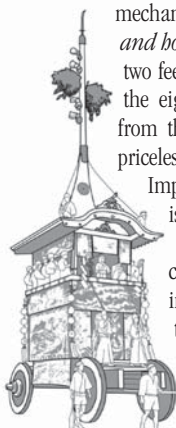
Dashi: Another typical form of *matsuri* involves a cart (*dashi*), usually on large wooden wheels, which is pulled and pushed through the streets. In most cases the carts will contain musicians and performers, who are pulled slowly along as they play traditional music. The carts are often very large, with as many as fifty people inside and another fifty or so pulling them. They go by different names in various parts of the country (such as *danjiri*, *yama* and *boko*). Many are unique, historic, or simply fascinating. A type of cart called a *yatai* used in the Takayama *matsuri* contains a number of men hidden from view who manipulate

mechanical puppets that appear from the top. The *yama* and *boko* of the Gion Matsuri in Kyoto are up to eighty-two feet tall. Some of them were built as early as the eighteenth century (incorporating materials from the fifteenth century). They are covered with priceless tapestries and decorations that are designated



Danjiri

Important Cultural Properties. The Danjiri Matsuri of Kishiwada City near Osaka is a wild event, in which thirty-five four-ton *danjiri* carts are pulled through the streets at a breakneck pace by teams of five hundred or more. The extensively carved, thirteen-foot-tall *danjiri* are loaded with as many as twenty people playing flutes and drums or urging on the team. As the *danjiri* whip around corners, they often go crashing into buildings, telephone poles, and anything else in their way, sending team members tumbling and scrambling for dear life.



Hoko

Fire: Many Shinto festivals involve huge bonfires or crowds of men rushing down a mountain with huge lighted torches—such as the Nachi Fire

Festival of Kumano or the Kurama Fire Festival of Yuki Jinja—looking from a distance like a fiery dragon racing through the night. Another rite, which may be held during some *matsuri*, is the fire-walking ceremony (*hiwatari*). It is an ancient *shugendo* rite where worshippers, led by priests, walk over burning embers as an act of purification and devotion. Those attending may be invited to join, giving anyone the chance to experience this ancient tradition. A common fire festival, which occurs right after New Year, is the celebration of *kosbogatsu* (Little New Year), when a *dondoyaki* bonfire is made from discarded seasonal decorations. Fire festivals (*himatsuri*) also take place which are unrelated to Shinto. Some of the most famous of these are Buddhist, such as the Daimonji Okuribi of Kyoto, where huge characters with meanings such as “miraculous” or “great” are lit on the slopes of mountains surrounding the city (one of the fires portrays a *torii*). The Shuni-e festival represents another type, where monks run around the temple, brushing it with lighted torches to clean and purify the buildings as part of the festival.

Water: *Matsuri* involving water are numerous but can usually be placed into one of several categories. The first involves people being sprayed with water as they carry *mikoshi* through the street. Buckets are distributed to the crowds lining the street, and water is scooped and tossed as an act of purification. Another common type involves the *mikoshi* bearers transporting the *mikoshi* into a river, lake, or ocean where it is hoisted and jostled above the heads of the half-submerged bearers. A third type involves loading the *mikoshi* on ships and sailing around a harbor, or from one island to another. One less common type takes place at so-called “naked festivals,” where large crowds of (almost) naked men are pummeled with water as they attempt to reach some goal. Often held in the dead of winter and sometimes in conjunction with “scapegoating,” the festivals are a rite of purification and exorcism as well as a celebration of male virility.

Music and Dance: Many *matsuri* are centered on music and dance, performed by anyone from common people to Living National Treasures (*ningen kokubo*). Performances are primarily of a celebratory nature, but in other cases like ancient court music (*gagaku*), they can also be solemn and mysterious. Many of the *matsuri* involve huge processions of people in colorful costumes, performing dances that range from the fast and exuberant to the elegant and stately. Another common type takes place on floats, as described previously. A third type is *bugaku* and *kagura*, which involves music and dance as offerings to the *kami* and is usually held at the *kaguraden* or *buden* on the shrine grounds. The *kagura* dances are performed by *miko* as well as performers trained in the traditional arts. Ancient court music played on the original instruments is usually part of the performances. Some festivals with performance are Buddhist in origin and center on Obon, the festival of the dead in mid-August. These dances are meant to greet the dead souls who return at this time of the year, and to see them off again, peacefully. The largest of them, such as the Awa Odori Festival of Tokushima, involve huge numbers of dancers in groups called *ren*, and a crowd that numbers upwards of eighty thousand over a five-day period.

Traditional Arts and Performance: Besides the performances mentioned above, a number of other traditional arts and performances are found at *matsuri*. One common type is *yabusame*, a dazzling display of horseback archery by performers in full samurai regalia. Another type is the

rice-planting festival (*otauke*), which is accompanied by traditional song and dance. In addition, there are hundreds of obscure and exquisite folk traditions, like the Ogi Festival of Kurokawa in Yamagata Prefecture, where Kurokawa Noh has been performed by guilds of community members since about the sixteenth century. Noh, *kyogen*, *bunraku*, kabuki, sumo, and other traditional arts and sports are performed in honor of the gods in festivals throughout the year. Many such festivals are in danger of disappearing as the elderly fail to find successors, or as entire villages die out. Some are protected as Intangible Cultural Properties but nevertheless teeter on the edge of extinction. Both shrines and temples, besides being religious institutions, play an important role in trying to preserve traditional customs and culture.

Festivals of Light: Some of the more delightful *matsuri* are those where light plays an important role. Large carts, like those mentioned above, are often illuminated as festivals continue into the night. For example, the *danjiri* of the Isono Jinja Sairei in Saijo City, Shikoku, are festooned with lanterns. It is a marvelous sight when all of the sixteen-foot-tall *danjiri* are brought together with the large number of *mikoshi* (for a combined total of eighty pieces and groups of supporters). At the Mantoro Lantern Festival at Kasuga Taisha in Nara, three thousand standing and hanging lanterns are lit. The Isshiki Giant Lantern Festival of Aichi Prefecture is a display of paper lanterns that are twenty feet tall and thirteen feet in diameter, each painted with fabulous designs. The Mitama Matsuri of Yasukuni Jinja in Tokyo involves 30,000 small paper lanterns with the names of the enshrined war dead written on them, creating a massive corridor of light. But nothing compares with the lights of the Nebuta Festival of Aomori. Here mammoth floats are made of colored paper over wire and wood frames shaped to resemble demons, gods and historical figures. Some floats are as large as sixteen feet tall and fifty feet long, and each is filled with up to eight hundred fluorescent lights.

The Guide

The guide begins with three cities, Tokyo, Kyoto, and Nara. From there it is organized in sections based on traditional large-area divisions of Japan, moving from north to south. Each section begins with a generalized map of the city or area, with numbers to indicate the relative location of each shrine. Areas are listed as follows:

Tokyo: This includes shrines in the central wards of the city.

Kyoto: This includes shrines in the city and part of the prefecture within easy reach of the city.

Nara: This includes shrines in the city and part of the prefecture within easy reach.

Kanto: This includes shrines in Kanagawa, Chiba, Ibaraki, Saitama, Nagano, and Tochigi.

Tokai: This includes shrines in Mie and Shizuoka.

Chugoku and Kinki: This includes shrines in Shimane, Hiroshima, Okayama, Wakayama, Osaka, Kyoto (northern parts), and Shiga.

Kyushu and Shikoku: This includes shrines in Japan's third and fourth-largest islands.

Organization of each shrine entry

SHRINE NAME: The proper name of the shrine, and in some cases the popular name as well.

DATE FOUNDED: In most cases according to shrine tradition. Present building dates are usually included.

ADDRESS: Given with Japanese pronunciations (for example, *-shi* means “city”). Useful when speaking to taxi drivers.

TEL/INFORMATION: Generally speaking, only for Japanese speakers. Other information includes opening and closing times, entrance fees, tourist associations where English help is available, and the availability of English-language pamphlets.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Lists only the name(s) of the principal *kami* enshrined.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Specific shrines and deities are often known for their power to grant prayers for such things as safe childbirth, success in passing school entrance exams, or protection from misfortune. Of course, no shrine is limited to just one prayer, and all provide purification and other rites as requested.

BEST TIME TO GO: This is generally in terms of the natural beauty, such as cherry blossoms or fall color.

IMPORTANT PHYSICAL FEATURES: Focuses on descriptions of the buildings, their history, natural features of the shrine grounds, or specific objects or treasures of the shrine.

IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL FEATURES: Highlights the enshrined *kami*, their history, and their relation to other shrines.

DESCRIPTION: This varies depending on the shrine. Sometimes there is a walk-through of the shrine grounds, but there may be information about other important places in the area, a discussion about important shrine festivals, or additional information that might help further appreciation of the shrine and its environs.

FESTIVALS: A brief summary of one or two of the shrine’s many festivals that might appeal to the general public.



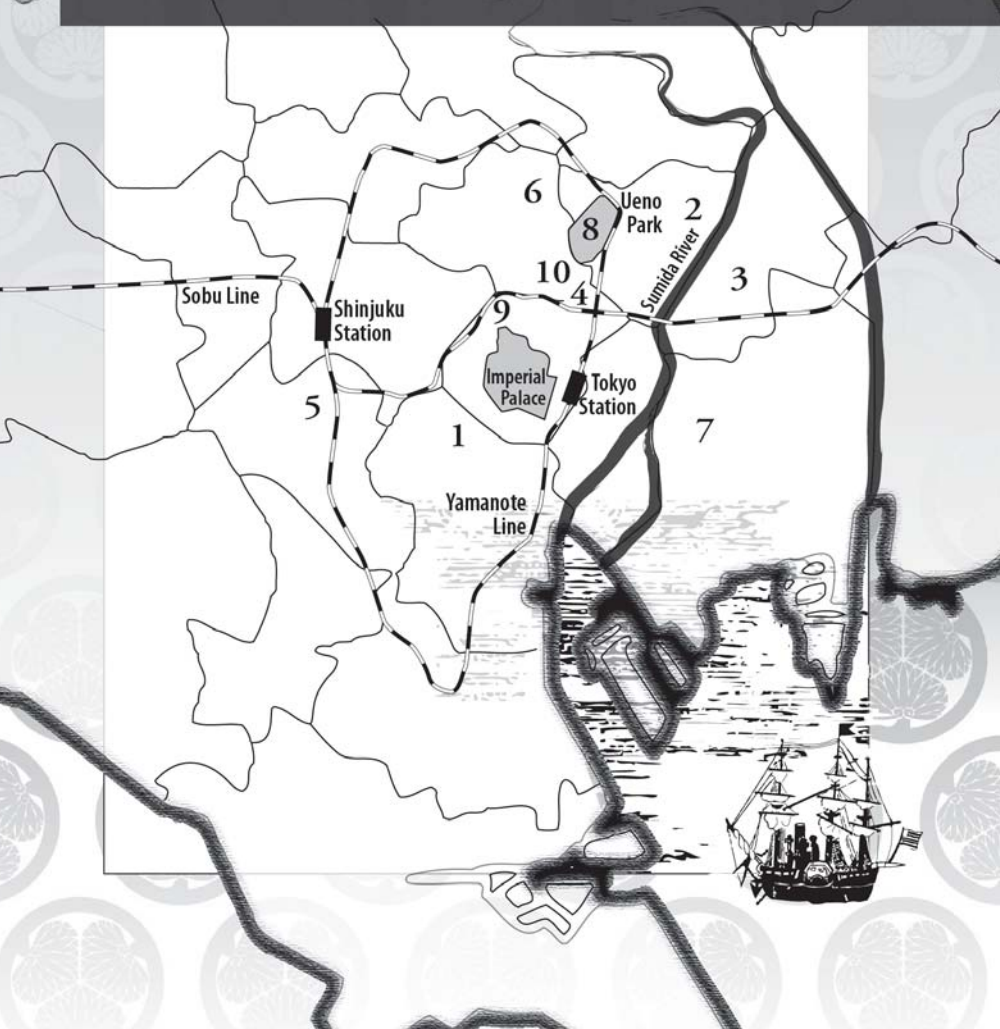
A large crowd of people is gathered for a festival in Tokyo. In the foreground, many men are wearing blue headbands and are pushing or pulling a large, ornate float. The float has a black roof with gold ornaments and a pink and white striped body. In the background, there is a large green tree and a traditional Japanese building with a tiled roof. A black banner with the word "TOKYO" in white capital letters is overlaid on the right side of the image.

TOKYO

- 1 Akasaka Hikawa Jinja
- 2 Asakusa Jinja
- 3 Kameido Tenjinsha
- 4 Kanda Jinja
- 5 Meiji Jingu
- 6 Nezu Jinja
- 7 Tomioka Hachimangu

TOKYO

- 8 Ueno Toshogu
- 9 Yasukuni Jinja
- 10 Yushima Tenmangu



Akasaka Hikawa Jinja

MAP 1

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 951, according to shrine tradition. The current buildings date from 1730.

ADDRESS: 6-10-12 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3583-1935

HOW TO GET THERE: Nanboku Subway Line to Roppongi-itchome Station, then about 10 minutes by foot. Or the Chiyoda Subway Line to Akasaka Station, and then about 10 minutes by foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Susano-o no mikoto, Kushinadahime no mikoto, and Onamuji no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection against danger, find love and marriage, and the well-being of the family.

BEST TIMES TO GO: The grounds contain cherry trees that bloom near the end of April and ginkgo and maples which turn yellow and red in the fall. Also, the third weekend in September in odd-numbered years, for the Hikawa Matsuri.

Important physical features: The shrine was established in 951 during the reign of Emperor Murakami (r. 946–67). The present shrine was built at the behest of Tokugawa Yoshimune (1684–1751), the eighth Tokugawa shogun, when he had it moved here from nearby Akasaka Mitsuke. It is a small, modestly appointed, *gongen-zukuri* structure (with the *haiden*, *beiden* and *bonden* connected under one roof), none of the usual carving, and a limited use of gold. This is said to be due to the attitude of frugality that was a hallmark of Yoshimune's administra-



Decorated ceiling of the *haiden* of Akasaka Hikawa Jinja

tion. The *bonden* is in *nagare-zukuri* style, and the *haiden* is *trimoya-zukuri*. The latter has a small step canopy in front with a *kara-bafu* supported on two pillars. The roof is covered in copper tiles called *dobuki-ita*, which imitate ceramic tiles and were a favorite of the Tokugawa; they are used extensively at shrines such as Nikko Toshogu. A veranda encircles the *haiden*, and all the exterior wood is painted in vermilion, except for the doors and infill panels above the tie rods of the *haiden*, both of which are in black lacquer. There is also a pent roof for rain protection, supported on decorative metal poles, that encircles the *haiden*. It was probably added in the early twentieth century. The interior of the *haiden* and *beiden* is decorated between the unpainted wooden pillars and above the tie beams with paintings on gold leaf. The floor is entirely covered in *tatami* matting and the floor of the *beiden* is level with that of the *haiden*. The ceiling is coffered and decorated with paintings of flora and fauna that were created in 1929. The steps to the *bonden*, visible in the interior, are painted in red lacquer. Among the many trees on the

grounds is a four-hundred-year-old ginkgo tree (*ginkgo biloba*).

Important spiritual features: The *kami* enshrined at Hikawa Jinja are a husband, wife, and child group that are central to one of the main Shinto myths, relating to the “age of the gods” and the creation of Japan. (The story of these *kami* can be read elsewhere in this book, such as the entry for Izumo Taisha and the introduction). Akasaka is the name of the area in Tokyo where the shrine is located. Hikawa means “cold” or “frozen river” and is thought to originate from the Hikawa River in the Izumo region on the Japan Sea coast. People from that area spread farther north along the Japan Sea as well as southward into the Kanto Plain, settling in the area known as Musashi (present-day Saitama, Tokyo, and parts of Kanagawa). During the reign of Emperor Koshō (r. 475–393 B.C.) the *kuni no miyatsuko* or governor of Musashi was appointed from a member of the Izumo clan. The *Kojiki* notes that his ancestor was the grandson of Susano-o, Takehira tori no mikoto. It is speculated that he brought the divided spirit of Susano-o from Kizuki Taisha (now called Izumo Taisha) on the Hikawa to Musashi, and enshrined it at Omiya Hikawa Jinja in Saitama. This is the first case of Susano-o being worshipped outside Izumo. Omiya Hikawa Jinja claims a foundation date of 473 B.C. and is the place from which the spirit of these *kami* was divided to 261 Hikawa shrines, 162 of them in Saitama. The remaining shrines are located mostly in the Kanto area, and a large number of them cluster along the Arakawa River, which forms much of the present-day border between Tokyo and Saitama. Akasaka Hikawa Jinja too is a *bunsha* (branch shrine) of Hikawa Jinja in Omiya and enshrines the same three *kami*.

Description: Like Hie Jinja, its famous neighbor slightly to the north, Akasaka Hikawa Jinja is nestled on a small wooded hill in the midst of the concrete and steel of Tokyo. It is close to the Roppongi district, which has seen a flood of urban redevelopment since the year 2000. Akasaka Hikawa is designated an Important Cultural Property and is one of the few shrines in Tokyo to have survived from the eighteenth century. This includes the main shrine buildings, a simple one-bay, unpainted entrance gate, and a *neribei* wall of earth and ceramic tiles that encircles the inner compound. It looks much as it did in a painting from the Edo period. While the shrine has stood on this location since the eighteenth century, its history is older. For example, shrine tradition relates that in 1066 a major drought occurred in the Kanto area and that the *kami* was successfully prayed to for rain. The shrine is also home to the Hikawa Matsuri, a popular event since the time the shrine was rebuilt in its present location.

Festivals: Hikawa Matsuri, third week in September in odd-numbered years. The Jinkosai is the main event, with a procession of fifteen *mikoshi* and two restored Edo-period floats called *dasbi*. These floats are similar to those in other well-known festivals in the Kanto area such as the Kawagoe, Sawada, and Ome Matsuri. The floats are about twenty-six feet high in two or three stages. The bottom level holds a number of musicians inside, the second level is basically a box covered with tapestries, and the third level has a mannequin of a historical or mythological figure. The mannequin can be lowered inside the second level when the float moves through an overpass. The shrine once possessed thirteen such floats but most were destroyed or sold off when this Edo-type festival was discontinued in the modern

era. But parts of the old *dashi* were stored in warehouses around the neighborhood, and in 2005, the shrine set up an NPO to begin restoring them. Thus far two have been restored and displayed with a third one displayed for the first time in 2011. The shrine is aiming for the restoration of four floats and six mannequins, which can be interchanged. This type of *dashi* festival was very popular in Eastern Japan from the Edo period on and was widely imitated.

Asakusa Jinja

MAP 2

DATE FOUNDED: The foundation date is unclear but sometime in the fourteenth century. Current buildings were rebuilt at the behest of Tokugawa Iemitsu in 1649.

ADDRESS: 2-3-1 Asakusa, Taito-ku, Tokyo 111-0032

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3844-1575. A small pamphlet in Japanese with some English explanation is available at the shrine for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Ginza Subway Line to the terminal station, Asakusa. Then 3 minutes on foot to the Kaminarimon gate, which leads to both Asakusa Jinja and Sensoji Temple.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Hinokuma Takenari no mikoto, Hinokuma Hamanari no mikoto, and Hajino Matsuchi no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: The well-being of the family, prosperity in business.

BEST TIME TO GO: During the Sanja Matsuri on the third weekend in May or New Year's Eve.



Asakusa Jinja *haiden* showing the *watari* and *heiden* behind

Important physical features:

Asakusa Jinja is a rare case in Tokyo. It is a shrine built in 1649 that survived the Great Meireki Fire of 1657, the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, and the destruction of Tokyo during World War II. That is more than can be said for its larger neighbor, Sensoji, which, though less than fifty feet away, has been destroyed and rebuilt a number of times, most recently in 1958.

Asakusa Jinja is built in a variation on *gongen-zukuri*, as were most of the shrines built under the sponsorship of the Tokugawa. *Gongen-zukuri* is a Buddhist-influenced style that begins here with a three-bay *nagare-zukuri bonden* attached to a *beiden* that connects it to the seven-bay-wide *haiden*. The entire structure is normally covered in a continuous roof, creating an "I" shape when seen from above. However, at Asakusa Jinja, the *bonden* and *beiden* are attached by a continuous copper-covered roof. The *haiden* is then attached to this group by a short, open-sided space called the *watari*, also with a copper roof. The roof of the *beiden* is *irimoya-zukuri* style and covered in ceramic tiles, with an extended section on the front that forms a canopy over



Nakamise-dori and the Hozomon of Sensoji

the stairs. The roof is conspicuously lacking the *chidoribafu* false dormer, typical of shrines from this period. Like most *gongen-zukuri* shrines, it is completely polychromed inside and out, with the exterior predominantly red. The *baiden* has a veranda all around, and the back wall is fitted with doors that open to create a pavilion-type structure. The *baiden* is separated by sliding doors into three separate rooms with tatami-mat floors. The predominant color here too is red, but the infill walls above the tie beams (*nuki*) have a base color of orange-yellow and are richly painted with phoenixes, dragons, and other mythical creatures. The exterior of the *beiden*, clearly visible from the *baiden*, is of the same color scheme, as is the interior. The back wall of the *beiden* is actually the front of the *bonden*. Black lacquered stairs lead to three black doors where the *kami* are enshrined. The shrine also sports the three-hollyhock emblem (*kamon*) of the Tokugawa, along with the emblem of Asakusa Jinja composed of three fishing nets drying on poles.

As with many shrines located in the middle of ultra-urban Tokyo, this one is somewhat lacking in greenery. But the atmosphere is nonetheless dynamic, thanks to the shrine's

close proximity to Sensoji Temple, also known as Asakusa Kannon. It is the one tourist destination that is a must. The casual visitor may easily be forgiven if he or she thinks the shrine and temple are one and the same as there is no wall or fence separating them. The entrance to Sensoji begins at the much-photographed Kaminarimon ("Thunder Gate") with its guardian gods of thunder and wind (*raijin* and *fujin*) and its huge red paper lantern (thirteen feet tall and eleven feet diameter). The gate marks the entrance to Nakamise-dori, a straight and narrow street lined with souvenir shops that leads to the second big gate, the massive two-story Hozomon ("Treasure House Gate"). Five bays wide by three bays deep, it also houses huge *nio* guardian figures and an almost equally large red lantern, flanked by two smaller ones. Both gates were originally built at the behest of Taira no Kinmasa in 942. The Hozomon was rebuilt in 1964 using fire-resistant materials over a steel frame. Sensoji's sacred Lotus Sutra from the eleventh century and other scrolls from the fourteenth century are locked away in the upper floor.

Directly beyond the gate is the main hall of the temple, with its five-story pagoda off to the left. All of this has been reproduced in the modern age after the devastation of the war. Only Asakusa Jinja, located in the northeast corner of the compound, has survived intact. Actually, there are two more little miraculous survivors on this site. One is the Nitenmon, a small gate that lies at the eastern entrance to the compound, to the right of the shrine and temple. It dates from 1618, and though it is very close to the *torii* of the shrine, it belongs to the temple. It is a modest three-bay, single-story gate painted in red, with guardian figures of Zochoten and Jikokuten in the outer bays. Originally it contained figures that were moved here from Tsurugaoka Hachimangu in the Meiji period.

However, those figures were destroyed during the war. The current figures come from the gravesite of Tokugawa Ietsuna at Kaneji in Ueno. The second survivor is a six-hundred-year-old ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*). Located to the right of Nakamise-dori just past the Hozomon gate, it also somehow managed to survive the firebombing of Tokyo. The charred surface bears testimony to the effects of the war, and from out of the injured tree a new one has grown. It is a small reminder of nature's will to survive despite the most destructive tendencies of mankind.

Important spiritual features: Asakusa Jinja is a rare case of ordinary people being enshrined as *kami*, in this instance two fisherman brothers and a landowner. Sensoji tradition relates how the Hinokuma brothers, Takenari and Hamanari, were fishing one day in the nearby Sumida River, when they caught a tiny bronze statue of the Kannon Bosatsu ("goddess of mercy") in their net. They threw it back into the river numerous times, only to catch it again and again. Finally they decided to build a small hut for the image. The village headman, one Hajino Matsuchi, realized its importance and enshrined it in his home, where he welcomed villagers to worship. The events are thought to have happened in 628, and a temple that is considered the origin of present-day Sensoji (said to be Tokyo's oldest temple) was built by the monk Shokai in 645. Shokai had a revelation that the tiny sculpture of Kannon should be a "hidden image" (*hibutsu*) never to be exposed to human eyes, and it has since been kept in a chamber in the inner sanctum. The statue, which is displayed once a year on 13 December, is a wooden copy attributed to Ennin (794–864), the third head of the Tendai Buddhist sect.

Sometime in the late Kamakura period,

the three men responsible for finding and first worshipping the Kannon of Sensoji were themselves enshrined in the adjacent Asakusa Jinja. A monk who was a descendant of Hajino enshrined the three and the monks of Sensoji maintained the shrine. The descendants of Hajino, the Yano family, are still priests of the shrine, the current *guji* being the sixty-second generation. The monk enshrined three sculptural likenesses of the men and it is believed that these are still the *goshintai* of the shrine. The three are also known as Sansha, or Sanja Gongen (a *gongen* is an avatar, in other words a *kami* which functions as a manifestation of a Buddha). Asakusa Jinja was in fact formerly known as Sanja Gongen Jinja, which is the source of the name Sanja Matsuri, one of Tokyo's biggest festivals. The story of a Kannon figure being caught in a net or washing up on shore is not uncommon in Japan. Similar stories are part of the founding legends of many a temple. Real events of this type may sometimes have occurred, especially from the Nara period, on when sculptures in wood and bronze proliferated. That a small figure might be washed away in one place and turn up in another is easy enough to imagine; it is also easy to imagine how this might lead to the founding of a temple. The important thing here is the enshrinement of these men as *kami*, for it is a rare occurrence for common fishermen. Ancestors are considered *kami* by their own descendants, but the status is rarely recognized beyond the family concerned unless they are from noble or powerful clans such as the Tokugawa. However, the three men enshrined here are seen as the patron saints not only of Sensoji, but of the entire Asakusa area as well.

Description: The name Asakusa (literally, "shallow grass") comes from a description of the grass that flour-



Carrying a *mikoshi* at Asakusa Jinja's Sanja Matsuri

ished in the swampy area around the temple. Though Tokyo Bay once extended as far as this spot, creating a delta with the Sumida River, silt slowly filled in and pushed the mouth of the bay southward, and landfill did the rest. Today Asakusa lies far from the ever-receding bay, but it is still a stone's throw from the Sumida River. It is a typical old Tokyo town that manages to keep some of its charm and attract visitors by simply remaining what it has always been, a temple town (*monzen-machi*). But development has not entirely spared it. Just across the Sumida River, new buildings sprang up in the building spree of the late 1980s, and this is now the site of the new Tokyo Tower (officially called "Tokyo Sky Tree"). The 2,080-foot-tall steel behemoth is now visible, for better or worse, from virtually anywhere in this part of the city.

Asakusa is not only known for its *monzen-machi*, but as the home of the Sumidagawa Hanabi Taikai fireworks extravaganza. Its origins lie with Tokugawa Yoshimune, who arranged for the fireworks in 1733 as an offering to the deities to drive away death after the famine of the previous year. It has been a landmark Tokyo event since 1810. While massive fireworks events are now common, this is still the one to beat. Fireworks were a popular form of entertainment in Edo-period Japan and the event retains certain traditional aspects. For example, many men and women, young and old, wear traditional cotton summer kimono

called *yukata* to fireworks events. Drinking and eating "picnic style" while sitting under a warm summer sky exploding with sounds and lights is classic *edokko* ("native sons and daughters of Edo") entertainment.

Festival: Sanja Matsuri, closest Friday through Sunday to 18 May. Not to be missed, the festival is one of the events that define Tokyo as a city. The Sanja Matsuri attracts up to 1,500,000 visitors to the area over three days. Begun around 1312, it was originally a joint festival with Sensoji called the Funa Matsuri or Asakusa Matsuri. The first day features a large parade with people in costume, including the famous heron-hooded dancers. On day two about one hundred other *mikoshi* from forty-four different neighborhoods are paraded around town. The festival features the three *mikoshi* of Asakusa Jinja on the third day. It is Asakusa's defining moment, when mammoth buildings pale before the human sea that washes up against them. About 150,000 sweating, singing, dancing, and drunken participants support the activities over the three days. A large percentage of the *mikoshi* groups are staffed by *yakuza*. The tattooed gangsters are in some ways the heart and soul of the festival. Given the efforts to sanitize what has for centuries been a wild outpouring of unbridled emotion, one fears for the future of such festivals and for the *shitamachi* ("low-city") character of places like Tokyo's beloved Asakusa.

Kameido Tenjinsha

MAP 3

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 1662. Current buildings from 1961.

ADDRESS: 3-6-1 Kameido, Koto-ku, Tokyo 136-0071

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3681-0010

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Sobu Line to Kinshicho or Kameido Station, then 15 minutes by foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: The deified spirit of Sugawara no Michizane, known as Tenman okami or Tenjin sama, and Amenohohi no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Success in passing entrance exams and in anything else related to education; matters related to the arts in general and the literary arts in particular.

BEST TIMES TO GO: In February for the plum blossoms, and in late April to early May for the wisteria.

Important physical features:

Kameido Tenjinsha lies some distance east of the Sumida River off Kuramae-dori, the same street that continues across the river and runs past Kanda Jinja. Like most major thoroughfares, it has become lined with tall, ugly buildings. Kameido Tenjinsha is a bit of a relief from the blight that engulfs the modern city and takes us back to the charming *ukiyo-e* prints of Edo-era Tokyo scenes. Kameido has managed to retain several of the features of that time gone by, albeit in somewhat altered form, although the building is a postwar reproduction in reinforced concrete. It shows the Buddhist influence that characterizes Tenjin shrines. But it is not the *gongen-zukuri* style



The *haiden* of Kameido Tenmangu

of Kitano Tenmangu in Kyoto, with its classic late-Momoyama-period features. Nor is it the more Buddhist style of Dazaifu Tenmangu in Kyushu, with its single-roofed structure containing the *bonden* and *haiden* combined. Kameido is rather a modern interpretation, featuring a separate *bonden* with a *nagare-zukuri*-style roof. The *irimoya-zukuri* roof of the *haiden* sports a *karabafu*, and a deep step canopy has a *chidoribafu* supported on two square pillars. All the roofs are surfaced in copper plate, and there are no *chigi* or *katsuogi* on the *bonden*. We know from *ukiyo-e* prints and old photographs of the late 1800s that the shrine once had a towering, two-story *romon* gate. Called the *keimon*, it had a massive, almost square *irimoya* roof with *karabafu* set into all four sides and a *chidoribafu* on the front and back equal in height to the gable roof, such that the ridge lines formed a “+” when seen from above. Sadly, it fell victim to the war, and all we have left are the images.

Yet, the most notable physical features of Kameido Tenjinsha have always been what lies in front of it: its pond, its *taikobasbi* (“drum bridges”), and the wisteria that hangs from trellises along the edge of the water. The *shinji*



The pond, wisteria, and *taikobashi* of Kameido today (left) and in days gone by (right)

ike pond of today is edged in rough stone, with the long end traversed by three bridges leading from the tall red *torii* at the entrance to the shrine. The bridges are composed of two red *taikobashi* at either end with a *hirabashi* (flat bridge) in the center. This is in imitation of the bridges at Dazaifu, where it is said that the three sections represent the past (the steepest curve), present (the flat section), and future (a shorter climb). However, where Kameido differs from other Tenjin shrines is that all around the pond and along most parts of the bridges are wooden trellises supporting the shrine's signature *fuji* (wisteria). Generally it is the plum tree, beloved of Michizane, that covers the grounds of his shrines. Wisteria is famously in evidence at Kasuga Taisha in Nara as a symbol of the Fujiwara clan, whose family name is written with the characters for “wisteria field.” To be sure, there are plum trees here as well, but it is these three features—the drum bridges, the pond, and the wisteria hanging from the trellises—that have physically defined Kameido Tenjinsha since it was built in the seventeenth century. The scenery has inspired artists through the ages, from Edo to World War II—including *ukiyo-e* artists such as the world-famous Hiroshige and Hokusai as well as the lesser-known Ogata Gekko and Toyohara Chikanobu. Their work served in turn to increase the shrine's renown.

The form of the shrine we see today is not what it once was. In Edo times, the second drum bridge brought worshippers directly to the front of the magnificent *romon*, rather than the front of the shrine as it does today. The first drum bridge was of unpainted wood, and the curve was steeper than the red-painted, concrete bridge of today—completing a perfect circle with its reflection in the pond. The bridge had no steps as nowadays, but only wooden “stops,” and women and children were warned to be careful (a narrow, flat bridge was provided alongside). A number of *ukiyo-e* from the period satirize worshippers slipping and falling from the bridge at Kameido. The pond was larger, and the center section of the bridge sat on a curvilinear island, artfully shaped and landscaped. There were no bridges providing access from the left and right sides as there are today. Most *ukiyo-e* prints of the shrine depict the bridges surrounded by a larger body of water like a lake, but photos from the late 1800s clearly show a pond. Nevertheless, though hemmed in and harried by the relentless growth of the city on all sides, something of the charm of old Edo might still be recalled under the wisteria of Kameido Tenjinsha.

Important spiritual features: As with all Tenjin shrines, Kameido enshrines the deified spirit of the tenth-century scholar

Sugawara no Michizane, who died in exile in Dazaifu. (For the spiritual significance of Tenjin, please see the entries for Dazaifu Tenmangu in Kyushu and Kitano Tenmangu in Kyoto.) In addition, Kameido enshrines Amenohohi, the ancestral *kami* of the priests of Izumo and the Sugawara clan. The Sugawara claimed descent through the Haji clan, of whom they were a branch family created in 781. The *Kojiki* records that Amenohohi was sent to clear the way for the descent of Ninigi to take control of the world from Okuninushi. Instead, Amenohohi came under Okuninushi's sway, following whose enshrinement he was assigned by Amaterasu to perform rites for at Izumo Taisha.

The Haji were a clan of potters whose ancestor Nomi no Sukune was a descendant of Amenohohi and is credited with creating *baniwa* clay figures. According to the *Nihon shoki*, during the reign of Emperor Suinin (r. 29 B.C.—A.D. 70) the practice of burying alive the retainers of a member of the imperial family who had died was still carried out (whether the practice actually existed has not been confirmed). When the empress died, Suinin asked if the custom should be followed, but Nomi no Sukune proposed instead the idea of burying figures made of clay—which the emperor accepted. For this he was given the title of Haji no omi and placed in charge of burials for the emperors. (Incidentally, Nomi no Sukune is also considered to be the first sumo wrestler as another story has Emperor Suinin ordering him to fight with Taima no Kehaya. Apparently the match was no-holds-barred and Nomi no Sukune kicked his opponent, mortally wounding him.)

Description: It is recorded that a priest from Dazaifu, Sugawara Otori no Nobusuke, carved an image of Tenjin from the wood of the *tobiume*, the famous plum tree that miraculously flew to

Dazaifu from Kyoto when Michizane died. Otori received an oracle from Tenjin to create twenty-five shrines where he could be worshipped (the twenty-fifth is the day of Michizane's death). As a result, Otori is mentioned in relation to shrines such as Osaka Domyoji Tenmangu, and Morioka Tenmangu among others. It is unclear how many carvings he made, but he carried one such image to Edo's Honjo district (part of present-day Koto-ku) in 1661. The shogunate of Tokugawa Ietsuna, anxious to rebuild Edo after the Great Meireki Fire of 1657, donated the land to make the shrine in 1662. Whether at Otori's request or just fortuitous timing is not known, but the image was enshrined as the *goshintai* of the newly built shrine and is said to be there still. It was the one thing saved despite the subsequent destruction of earthquakes and war.

In the past, shrines and temples were a useful means of increasing the prosperity of an area. Worshippers would find themselves catered to by newly established teahouses and merchants selling food and other sundry goods. Kameido was no exception. The buildings and the layout were modeled on Dazaifu Tenmangu, where Michizane is buried, and the shrine is considered a *bunsba* (a place with a *kami* divided from another shrine) of Dazaifu. The land on which the shrine stands was once an island, shaped like a turtle, but became connected to the mainland where Kamemura (literally, "turtle village") was settled. The name was later mixed with that of a nearby *kame ido* ("turtle well"), and the area eventually came to be known as Kameido. People once brought turtles—a symbol of longevity—to fill the pond. The shrine's name was originally Anrakuji Tenmangu, but changed to Kameido Jinja before settling on Kameido Tenjinsha in 1936.

The worship of Michizane began as a *kami* cult of *goryo* "vengeful spirits" and was

as much Buddhist as Shinto until the Meiji period. Both religions were (and are) equally steeped in the enjoyment of nature, and in that respect the shrine is a delight to all. Whether or not the wisteria are in bloom, the undulating sea of rich green that greets you when you cross the first drum bridge is equally attractive. The shrine seems to float above it in the distance, inviting the visitor to move from past problems to future prospects in one smooth crossing.

Festivals: Fuji Matsuri (Wisteria Festival), fourth week in April to the end of the first weekend in May. This is the time when the wisteria blooms and the shrine is at its most beautiful. Lighting is provided for nighttime viewing, and the tea ceremony is conducted for a fee of ¥500.

Uso Kae Shinji (Liar Festival), 24–25 January. The spoken word *uso* in Japanese can mean either “bullfinch” or “untruth” (although the written forms of these two words are different). The tradition here is to buy a wooden bullfinch (*usodori*) at the shrine and tell all your problems to it. Since the bird is an *usodori* (literally, “liar bird”), it “lies” by turning the negative into positive, thus bringing good luck for the year. The *usodori* is returned the following year and burned on the shrine grounds. The festival is connected with the story of how Michizane was falsely accused of planning to place his son-in-law on the throne.

The old *roman* of Kamedo Tenjinsha



Kanda Jinja (Kanda Myojin)

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 730 by Makanda Omi, when it was located in present-day Otemachi. Moved to its present site in 1616. The current building dates from 1934.

ADDRESS: 2-16-2 Soto-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0021

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3254-0753.
Admission to the museum is ¥300.

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Chuo or Sobu Line to Ochanomizu Station, then 5 minutes by foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Onamuchi no mikoto (also identified as Daikoku sama), Sukunahikona no mikoto (identified as Ebisu), and Taira no Masakado.

PRAYERS OFFERED: To find love and marriage, prosperity in business, the well-being of the family, and winning at sports or gambling.

BEST TIME TO GO: During the Kanda Matsuri, held near the middle of May every odd-numbered year.

Important physical features: Kanda Myojin is the older and better-known name of the shrine that is properly called Kanda Jinja. It sits in an old section of Tokyo, just north of Ochanomizu and the Kanda River. As elsewhere in Tokyo, the structures here are rather new. There are three great disasters to consider when speaking about the age of buildings in Tokyo: the Great Meireki Fire of 1657 that consumed most of the city, the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 that caused similar devastation, and the firebombing of 1945 that burned Tokyo to bits. Though the

MAP 4



The *haiden* of Kanda Jinja

atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are rightfully commemorated as a warning to future generations about the insanity of war, the estimates of dead from the Tokyo bombings are as high or higher than the death toll in either atomic bombing. It is also estimated that sixteen square miles of the densely populated city were destroyed. Any building that survived is considered to be a small miracle, and a few of the shrines in this book fit that category, as does—to some degree—Kanda Myojin.

The shrine was forced to move from Otemachi to its current location in 1616 when Edo Castle needed the land to expand its grounds. In 1934 it became the first shrine in Japan built of steel-reinforced concrete, and thus managed to survive World War II. Apparently great care was taken to create the impression of a wooden structure. The architects credited with the design—Oe Shintaro (1879–1935), Sato Koichi (1878–1941), and Ito Chuta (1867–1954)—are important names in architecture from the period. Ito is particularly noteworthy as an architect and a teacher, and for his contribution to shrine and temple architecture. Though he was not the principal architect here, (he was about sixty-seven when the shrine was

completed), he was influential in the outcome. It was one of those key transitional figures of the Meiji period who were educated in Japanese and Western architecture and working in both idioms. He produced many Western-style and hybrid buildings, but he was also an advocate of *nihon shumi* (“Japanese taste”). He also designed a number of the shrines built outside of Japan in the country’s colonial period.

Kanda Myojin has a classic Japanese form that relies on an underpinning of Western engineering. The building has an *irimoya* gabled-roof *baiden* and *bonden*, with a connecting structure that marks it as *gongen-zukuri* style. The overall appearance is typical of Edo-period shrines, with *dobuki-ita* copper-tile roofing, a large *chidoribafu* on the front of the *baiden*, and a full-length step canopy with a *karabafu* at its center. The *baiden* is seven bays wide, but the center bay is twice the span of the others. The exterior is entirely painted in vermilion with gold details. Though not heavily decorated, it reflects the Edo-period vintage of the building that was destroyed in the Great Kanto Earthquake. The floor in the front part of the *baiden* is also concrete, which means that people enter with their shoes on, a rarity among Shinto shrines, which generally employ wood or tatami floor surfaces. In this case, the tatami is reserved for the rear two-thirds of the *baiden*, which is raised five steps above the lower level. The front of the space is made to look like the exterior of the *baiden*, with stairs and a veranda leading to the higher level and the *bonden* behind it. The ceiling and all of the woodwork are painted in vermilion lacquer: the slightly arched coffered ceiling is said to be an influence of church architecture.

The front of the *bonden* is in gold, and the doors are usually left open. In the spirit of renewal that is an important aspect of Shinto, the *bonden* sports recently added electroni-



The *romon* of Kanda Jinja

cally controlled doors. A roofed fence extends from the side of the *baiden* and wraps around back to contain the *bonden* within. This is typical of most shrines, but a twist is added here by the addition of a building in the left rear corner that interrupts the fence. The red-painted, three-story structure with an *irimoya-zukuri* roof is the shrine's museum, exhibiting precious objects and displays related to the Kanda Matsuri. Also on display are forty or fifty of the shrine's collection of one thousand *ukiyo-e* prints. An underground passage links the former shrine office (now a wedding hall) to the *baiden* and was once used by *miko* and priests to enter and exit undisturbed.

The entrance to the small shrine grounds sports a copper *myōjin torii* and a two-story *romon* that was added in 1975 to replace one that was destroyed in the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. It is made of Japanese cypress with a copper-tile *irimoya* roof, similar to the main building. Colored primarily in red, it has paintings of the protective *shishin*, which guard the four compass directions (dragon, tiger, phoenix, and turtle). There are also gold and blue *shishibana* (lion-shaped nosings). The gate's main motifs are the butterfly and "tethered horse," both of which were symbols

of Taira no Masakado, who died in 940 and is enshrined here. The front outer bays of this *romon* have *zuijin* archer-guardian sculptures, while the back sides of the bays have tethered horse sculptures.

Important spiritual features: Of the three *kami* enshrined at Kanda Jinja, two represent the Izumo lineage descended from Susano-o no mikoto, the errant brother of Amaterasu. Onamuchi no mikoto is generally considered an alternative name for Okuninushi no mikoto, who was a "land-creating *kami*." (If, however, they were two different figures, they were probably agricultural *kami* of the Izumo region that were incorporated into the legends about the creation of the country.) The other *kami* enshrined here of Izumo lineage is Sukunahikona (literally, "small prince, renowned deity"), who helped Onamuchi with the formation of the land and was the child of Kamimusuhi (one of the three *kami* of creation).

The two enshrined *kami* became associated with the folklore figures of the *schibifukujin* (seven gods of good fortune). The Chinese characters for Okuni ("great land") can also be read as Daikoku, which is how the identification of Okuninushi and Daikoku arose. The origin of the latter is in India, where he was depicted as black and multi-armed. In China he was considered a guardian of the kitchen, and he was introduced to Japan through the Tendai sect of Buddhism as Daikokuten (Daikoku can also be read as 'big black'). The Japanese attributes of Daikoku sama and Daikokuten are basically the same, but one is associated with Shinto and one with Buddhism (dropping "ten" and adding "sama" is an additional way in which the Shinto *kami* is distinguished from the Buddhist one). Sukunahikona, on the other hand, is identified here with Ebisu (though this is

somewhat rare). Ebisu is a native Japanese *kami* who is associated with fishing communities and an abundant catch. He is usually depicted carrying a sea bream in one hand and a fishing rod in the other. He and Daikoku are often shown together, and Ebisu is considered to be Daikoku's son. They evolved to be deities of the marketplace and of prosperity, especially among the townsmen of Osaka and Edo, and during the fifteenth century they became part of the popular *schibifukujin*.

The other *kami* enshrined at Kanda is the deified spirit of Taira no Masakado, who rebelled against the Heian court of Emperor Suzaku in 939. Having taken control of the Kanto area, he proclaimed himself *shinno* ("new emperor"). A force was sent to suppress the rebellion, but even before it could arrive Masakado was killed by his own cousin, Taira no Sadamori, whose father Masakado had killed earlier. The rebel leader's severed head was brought back to Kyoto but somehow found its way to the fishing village of Shibasaki (the present-day Otemachi area of Tokyo, where the original Kanda shrine was located). There it was buried, and a stone was set up above it sometime around 940; it currently occupies a spot facing the imperial palace. Masakado became something of a folk hero and was enshrined at Kanda around 1309 after a series of plagues was attributed to his angry spirit. In 1874, in order to have Emperor Meiji visit the shrine, the Ministry of Religion ordered the removal of Taira no Masakado. There was a movement to have Kanda included in the so-called "Ten [Guardian] Shrines of Tokyo" (Tokyo Jissha), but they felt it would be inappropriate for the emperor to honor the spirit of a rebel and enemy of the imperial court. Under pressure, the priests moved the deity to Masakado Jinja, a small shrine on the grounds of Kanda Myojin, and a more acceptable replacement, Sukunahikona, was invited



A *mikashi* of the Kanda Matsuri

in from Oarai Isosaki Jinja in Ibaraki. The deity is considered a *kami* of medicine and healing and was traditionally paired with Onamuchi as a conqueror of disease and settler of the country. At Oarai Isosaki, which is located close to the Pacific Ocean, he is also worshipped as a deity of saké brewing and fishing (making the identification with Ebisu clearer). But old traditions die hard—the much-loved rebel, Taira no Masakado, was re-enshrined in the *bonden* of Kanda Myojin in 1984.

Description: The shrine was founded by Makanda Omi, a descendant of the hereditary clan of priests (*jingi shizoku*) of Izumo, and the shrine maintains that it is named after him. However, there is another tradition that Kanda (literally "god's land") refers to the area's position as a one-time possession of Ise Jingu. Either way the area's history is older than that of Tokyo but it came to be very much associated with the *edokko*, the Tokyoites whose families go back several generations in the city. Kanda is known for its colorful *shitamachi* ("low-city") flavor.



The Confucian “cathedral” of Yushima Seido

Shitamachi was generally defined as the area northeast to southeast of Edo Castle (where today’s imperial palace is located), up to the Sumida River, plus Sumida and Koto wards on the other side of the river. As Edo developed from a group of small fishing villages into the country’s capital in the seventeenth century, it became divided between merchants and craftsmen in *shitamachi* and feudal lords and priests in the “high city” to the west of the castle. By the end of the Meiji period Kanda had the largest fruit and vegetable market, as well as the largest population of any part of the city. It was a hangout for students, with three major universities on its western side and the famous secondhand-book district that began in late Meiji. It was a bustling town of energetic merchants, hauling and hawking their wares, and the exuberant optimism of students immersing themselves in all the pleasures the area had to offer. Edo is long gone but the same exuberance emerges every other year in May, with the celebratory outpouring of the Kanda Matsuri. It is this raffish urban atmosphere that has shaped the character of the shrine and its worship. No wonder that two of the most jolly and mercantile-oriented of the good-luck *shichifukujin*, Daikoku and Ebisu, are at the

heart of the townsman’s worship. The “bad boy” Masakado, who thumbed his nose at the “Kyoto establishment,” likewise reflects something of the independent, proud, and clannish nature of the people of the low city.

As a side note, the *torii* that marks the entrance to Kanda Myojin stands across the street from Yushima Seido, which contains one of only Confucian “cathedrals” or “temples” in Japan, called the Taiseiden. Neo-Confucian scholar Hayashi Razan (1583–1657) established it in 1630 in Ueno as Senseiden. Razan taught the Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi (1130–1200), who believed in a combination of the best of the teachings of Confucius, the Buddha, and Lao Tzu (author of the *Tao Tê Ching*). But not everyone shared his view, and Confucianism with a strongly anti-Buddhist flavor won the day in China. The conflict was also played out in Japan, where Confucianism was sometimes used as a foil against Buddhism, as well as Shinto. However, in the late Edo and early Meiji periods, it provided a philosophical underpinning for Shinto as a non-religious support system of imperial rule. (In his later years, Razan himself argued for a combined Shinto and Confucianism, devoid of Buddhism.) Senseiden was moved

to its present site in 1690 and established as a place of higher education—the first in Edo—called Shoheizaka Gakumonjo. Tsukuba, Ochanomizu, and Tokyo universities are all said to have begun here. The buildings were destroyed in the Great Kanto Earthquake and rebuilt in 1934 in concrete, to a design based on the destroyed buildings by Ito Chuta. It is painted in black inside and out, and sports a gabled roof decorated with mythical Chinese creatures such as the fish-like *kiginto* and tiger-like *kiryusbi*, said to ward off evil spirits. The grounds of Yushima Seido are home to the largest bronze statue of Confucius in the world, which stands fifteen feet tall and weighs one and a half tons. It is a popular destination for students praying for help with entrance exams. These days it is run by a non-profit group called Shibunkai and courses are given in Confucianism and other subjects. The grounds are open every day and the inside is open to visitors on Saturdays and Sundays. A short festival to mark the death of Confucius is held for members of the Seido and interested parties every year around the end of April. It is a short ritual presided over by a descendant of the Tokugawa clan and assisted by priests from Kanda Myojin.

Festival: Kanda Matsuri, one week in mid-May. Though held every year, the festival is only conducted on a large scale every other year (odd-numbered years), alternating with the Sanno Matsuri of Hie Jinja. From the early seventeenth century, both these shrines were part of the great Tenka Matsuri (“shogun’s festival”). The climax features a massive parade of over 200 *mikoshi* portable shrines and several *dasbi* floats. In the Edo period, Sanno, Fukagawa Hachimangu, and Kanda were called the “big three festivals of Tokyo.”

Meiji Jingu

MAP 5

DATE FOUNDED: 1 November 1920. The current buildings are from 1958.

ADDRESS: 1-1 Yoyogi Kamizono-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-8557

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3379-5511. A leaflet in English titled “Magokoro” is available for free. A pamphlet titled “Meiji Jingu” is available for ¥100. A book on the *shiseikan* training hall in English and Japanese is available for about ¥1,800. Closing time of the shrine grounds varies by month with the latest time (6:30 P.M.) in June and the earliest (4 P.M.) in December.

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Yamanote Line to Harajuku Station or the Chiyoda Subway Line to Meiji-Jingumae Station, then 1 minute by foot to the first *torii*.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Emperor Meiji and his consort Empress Shoken.

PRAYERS OFFERED: The well-being of the family, protection from danger, safety on the roadways, prosperity in business, success in passing entrance examinations, and others.

BEST TIMES TO GO: The garden at Meiji Jingu is full of interesting and rare plants as well as waterfowl like the mandarin duck. It is especially nice in June, when over 1,500 irises of 150 varieties are in bloom, or during the autumn foliage in early December. A contribution of ¥500 is asked for entrance to the garden. Also, New Year’s Eve is of interest because it draws the largest crowd of people for *hatsumode* (first shrine visit of the year) of any shrine in Japan.



The *gehaiden* of Meiji Jingu

Important physical features: Meiji Jingu stands near the center of Tokyo on approximately 173 acres of forested land. The grounds contain of over 245 species of trees, which number about 170,000 in all. The trees were donated by citizens and carefully chosen to create a natural-looking forest that would prosper in the heart of the city. One of the main trees (said to number 22,000) is the *inu tsuge*, a member of the holly family used on the periphery of the grounds and elsewhere. This is because by the Taisho period (1912–26) Tokyo was already becoming polluted and the holly is pollution-tolerant. A photograph from 1920 shows the second *torii*, the largest *myojin*-style wooden *torii* in Japan, as the tallest object in the area by far. Today, however, the forest has eclipsed the forty-foot *torii*.

The site was originally *daimyo* land expropriated by the government and turned into a park named Yoyogi Imperial Garden. Emperor Meiji ordered the inclusion of an iris garden, a flower beloved of the empress, which still exists together with a pond and teahouse that preceded the shrine. The pond is fed by a well that was drilled by a famous general who invaded Korea at the head of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's army, Kato Kiyomasa (1562–1611). The water still flows freely and tastes sweet (but it

is not tested currently and not recommended to drink). The park became part of Meiji Jingu in 1920, and was later renamed Meiji Jingu Gyoen.

The main structures of the shrine are from 1958, the original having been destroyed in World War II. Ito Chuta, who coined the word *kenchiku*—used ever since to mean “architecture”—designed the original. (He is also credited with the design for Heian Jingu in Kyoto and the Jodo-sect temple Tsukiji Honganji in Tokyo, among others.) The *bonden* of Meiji Jingu is built in a *nagare-zukuri* style, with *chigi* and seven *katsuogi*. It is three bays deep, and the floor level rises in several steps from front to back. The doors of the *bonden* are opened two days each month. A *noritoden* (prayer hall), a feature similar to the *beiden* of a *gongen-zukuri* building, connects to the front of the *bonden*. The *noritoden* is an elevated platform four steps above the *naibaiden* that seamlessly connects to the ten-step staircase of the *bonden*. The total height from ground level to the floor of the *bonden* is about ten feet. There is no door on the *noritoden*, therefore the platform and stairs are always visible.

The shrine has both *naibaiden* and *gebaiden* (inner and outer worship halls), with the inner hall connected by the *noritoden* to the *bonden*. The *naibaiden* sports a roof with a false dormer gable (*chidoribafu*) on the front side, with a *karabafu* step canopy that extends only slightly from the edge of the eave. The *naibaiden* is more like an open portico with no walls other than where it attaches to the *noritoden*. A *kaire* extends from both sides of the *naibaiden*, connecting with the *gebaiden* and forming a courtyard between the two. The *gebaiden* is five bays wide and is also open-sided, but it does have doors between its pillars which are closed at night. This outer hall is the most plainly visible and the

structure that most people associate with Meiji Jingu, especially since photography is prohibited beyond this point. Inside it is also where the offering box sits and from where most visitors pray. It has a large *irimoya* roof clad in copper, as are the roofs of the other structures. In front of the main buildings is a courtyard surrounded by another *kairo*, connected to a three-bay *romon* that remains from the original Taisho-period building. All the structures are made in unfinished Hinoki Cypress.

Apart from the shrine and garden are a treasure museum and the *sbiseikan*, a training center for *budo*, or Japanese martial arts. These include *kyudo* (archery), *kendo* (sword fighting), *aikido*, and *judo*. The shrine holds training seminars for groups of foreign students who have been introduced or recommended by a Japanese association. The facilities are located in the so-called inner precinct of the grounds. There is also an outer precinct located about 20 minutes away on foot, which was built around the same time as the original shrine to house sports facilities and contains Jingu Baseball Stadium. Of the structures on the outer precinct two are of particular note. One is the Meiji Memorial Picture Gallery designed by Kobayashi Masatsugu, a monumental building in reinforced concrete and granite in the style of the Viennese Secession. It stands at the end of a magnificent ginkgo tree-lined avenue that is a Tokyo landmark. The other is the Meiji Kinenkan, built in 1881 and moved to the present site in 1918. It is a single-story wooden structure, famous as the site of the drafting of the Meiji Constitution.

Important spiritual features: The *kami* worshiped here are the deified spirits of Emperor Meiji (r. 1867–1912), who was the 122nd emperor by the traditional count that begins with Emperor Jinmu, and Empress Sho-

ken (1849–1914). They were the first imperial family of the modern age. The emperor was the longest-reigning monarch since the sixteenth emperor, Nintoku (r. 313–99), and his reign since 1167, not to be overshadowed by one or more warlords. He was the first to be extensively photographed and the first under whom the name of the era was never changed throughout his rule (compare this with his father, Komei [r. 1831–67], for example, under whom there were no fewer than seven era names). He and the new government also established the precedent that emperors rule until they pass away. He was not unlike previous emperors, in that he governed primarily over ceremonial matters rather than affairs of state, but his name is given to the Japanese Constitution which stood, in principle, until America forced the enactment of a new one in 1947.

Description: Dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken, the shrine represents one of the most important periods of Japanese history, as much as the individuals enshrined there. The Meiji era was a turning point in the development of modern-day Japan. Between Emperor Meiji's ascendency to the throne in 1867 at the age of fourteen (sixteen in the old Japanese system of dating) and his death in 1912, the country moved from an isolated enclave of feudalism to a world-class power. In the process, Japan defeated both the Chinese and the Russians in the first wars on foreign soil since the late sixteenth century. The era began when the 250-year-old Tokugawa *bakufu*, or shogunate, was overthrown. The Meiji Restoration of 1868 "restored" the emperor in some measure to the center of government, although it was in reality controlled by a combination of court nobles, ex-feudal lords, and the military. A peerage was created and the country orga-



An aerial view of the inner precinct of Meiji Jingu

nized along Western lines. Feudal domains were turned into prefectures, *daimyo* into governors, and the central government into a parliamentary monarchy with the first public election of representatives. But real power resided in the Council of State made up of members of the peerage and later replaced by a prime minister and cabinet. The name of the city now occupied by the emperor was changed from Edo to Tokyo, meaning “eastern capital.”

With the forced entry into Japan by America in 1854, treaties outlining trade and other rights of foreigners were imposed first on the Shogunate, and then on the new government. Japan greatly resented these “unequal treaties,” which were finally changed in the early twentieth century after Japan proved itself a

major military power. However, in the mid-nineteenth century the country was too technologically backward, its leadership too divided, and its military forces too weak to “drive out the barbarians” as the Meiji Emperor’s father, Komei, had ordered. Some saw the need to gain knowledge from the West and feared that without industrial and military might, Western powers would carve off pieces of Japan as they had China. Many resented the new ways, and yet the government saw no choice but to rush ahead with modernization at full tilt.

It was against this backdrop that the Shinto-based populism of Hirata Atsutane and the “Japan for the Japanese” nationalism of Aizawa Seishisai, which had been a growing part of the landscape of the late Tokugawa period, began

to strongly influence government policy on religion. Advocates of a “pure” Shinto (which was in large measure Confucianism with a Shinto name) used devotion to the emperor to carry out a policy of purging the native faith of the “foreign” religion of Buddhism and outlawing the combinatorial religion of *shugendo*. The “old” Shinto of sects and shrines was recast into a new State Shinto with government-approved teaching and ritual. Anti-foreign sentiment was subsumed into the rhetoric of the so-called “ancient way” (*kodo*) that equated “Japanese spirit” with “the ancestors” and with absolute fealty to the emperor. From the beginning of the restoration, the government made efforts to satisfy radical sentiments with a series of measures to forcibly separate shrines from temples. The result was the *shinbutsu bunri* (separation of Shinto and Buddhism). It led to an uncontrolled *haibutsu kishaku* (“destroy the Buddha, eliminate the Sakyamuni”), a zealous destruction of temples and seizing of Buddhist lands, in some parts of the country. Shrine/temple complexes, an important part of Japanese spiritual expression, were dismantled. Meiji-period policies radically altered the religious landscape and set the stage for an aggressive indoctrination of the public in the cult of emperor worship.

There were several important steps in fostering absolute loyalty to the emperor. One was the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890. The school system was begun in 1872 by imitating Western-style education, but the government considered the teaching of ethics as primary. To this end the essence of the rescript was instruction about how schools should teach a combination of traditional and Confucian-style morality, whereby the primary aim of public education, from elementary to secondary school, was to cultivate virtue and filial piety, especially as it pertained to loyalty to the emperor. The schools were used to promote the

divinity of the emperor and the people’s devotion to him as the embodiment of the nation. Simply put, not to revere the emperor was not to be Japanese. Though it was significantly different from Edo-period feudalism, the philosophy eventually evolved into teaching the myths of the *Kojiki* as actual, irrefutable history.

Another important step in the emperor-centered ideology was in modifying and promoting the Shinto rituals of the imperial palace. These became the basis of a new State Shinto imbued with *kokutai* (“national essence”) ideology. This ideology viewed the myths of the origins of the emperor and Japan as descending from the gods, as actual history. “National evangelists” were sent to shrines to promote the ideology, and a new shrine hierarchy was created that had Ise Jingu at its top. Below it were “government shrines” (*kansha*) and “civic shrines” (*minsha*). The former included top-ranked imperial shrines (*kanpeitaisha*) and national shrines (*kokubeisha*). Civic shrines were categorized as prefectural, district, village, and unranked. Categories were related to such things as the degree of financial support and its source (national or local government), the ranking of priests, shrine administration, etc. Government financial aid, however, was not only limited but inconsistent, and it in no way compensated for the confiscation of most of a shrine’s income-generating landholdings. Traditional support systems, such as confraternities and Buddhist temples, no longer operated, and financial support became an increasing problem. Smaller shrines were compelled by government policy to merge with larger ones, eliminating around 80,000 shrines between the late nineteenth century and 1929. But not everything was dictated from above. In 1889 a movement called the Organization of Like-minded Priests began to pressure the government to improve their situation. It resulted in better conditions for some,

but opened the door to greater control by the government in shrine affairs. In fact, government support and ranking as a national shrine was much sought after by many.

The Meiji era had begun with the democratic ideals of the Charter Oath (five articles of democratic intent considered the first constitution), but real and imagined threats from the outside led to increasing militarism and nationalism. Victorious wars against China and Russia brought about greater devotion to the government and the emperor. For example, while the Japanese death toll against China was minimal, against Russia it amounted to roughly 80,000 dead. This caused a national surge of prayer and patriotism in which the shrines played a central role. Shrines for the war dead (*shokonsba*), such as Yasukuni Jinja, were places where grief and pride mingled with reverence for the *kami*, the emperor, and the state. It served to fuel the growing power of the military, which would ultimately lead to its dominance of the government.

Emperor Meiji passed away in 1912 and an outpouring of sympathy resulted in the creation of the magnificent shrine in his name. He never lived to see the worst outcomes of the doctrines that led to the “Imperial Way”—that Japan was the center of the world with a divine being (the emperor) at its head, that Japan was the land of the *kami* and superior to all others, and that Japan had a divine mission to bring all the nations of the world under one roof (*bakko ichiu*). In 1911 the Tokko special police were created to investigate and quell political dissent, while a series of “public security” laws suppressed any voice that tried to oppose *kokutai* policies. In 1932 the prime minister was assassinated by a group of young Army officers, and the government began a slide into turmoil as the pressure to end Japan’s experiment in democracy moved toward a calamitous end.

All of this is now history. As the worshipper bows his head at the Meiji Jingu of today, he or she is more likely to be aware of how tall the trees are and how clean the air smells. No wonder this beautiful shrine is a favorite place for weddings and Shinto seasonal festivals. With its huge scale, lovely forested grounds, and tall stately *torii*, it makes a deep impression of reverence, which is particularly evident on New Year’s Eve. The wide gravel-covered *sando* is a sight to behold, as the crush of over a million people slowly, almost silently, shuffle toward the front of the *baiden*. It normally takes about ten minutes from the first *torii* to the shrine, but on this occasion it takes several hours (not counting the waiting time before the gates are open) in the midnight frost. They do it for the chance to clap, bow, and toss some coins in the first (and perhaps the only) act of faith in the New Year. Over the three-day holiday, more than three million will have visited the shrine to meet their obligations to the *kami*. It is an act of cultural and religious harmony that is repeated at shrines and temples throughout the country, and which involves one hundred million people before it is through.

Festivals: Hatsumode (New Year’s), 31 December to 3 January. One of the biggest events in Japan, with more than three million visitors over a three-day period. For all that it is a rather quiet and orderly celebration, reflecting its underlying spiritual nature.

Autumn Grand Festival, 1 to 3 November (including the anniversary of the enshrinement on the 1st, and the birthday of Emperor Meiji on the 3rd). Performances of Hogaku and Sankyoku (traditional dance and music) on the 1st, Noh and Kyogen on the 2nd, horseback archery, (*yabusame*) and various martial arts on the 3rd.

Nezu Jinja

MAP 6

DATE FOUNDED: Founded by Yamato Tak-eru, legendary son of Emperor Keiko (r. A.D. 71–130), according to shrine tradition. The current buildings are from 1706.

ADDRESS: 1-28-9 Nezu, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0031

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3822-0753. The shrine asks that all inquiries kindly be made in Japanese, as there are no English-speaking staff. Open 5 A.M. to 6 P.M. in the summer, and 6 A.M. to 5 P.M. in the winter. Grounds outside the gate open 24 hours.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Chiyoda Subway Line to Nezu Station, then 5 minutes by foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Susano-o no mikoto, Oyamakui no mikoto, Homudawake no mikoto (also known as Emperor Ojin).

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection from danger and the well-being of the family.

BEST TIME TO GO: From the beginning of April to the beginning of May for the three thousand blooming azaleas.

Important physical features: One of the rare cases of a Tokyo shrine that has survived the 1923 earthquake and World War II, Nezu Jinja comes to us largely intact from its 1706 rebuilding. Though not much is known about its early years, it was considered the *ujigami* (guardian spirit) of Tokugawa Ieyasu's great-great-grandson, Ienobu. Ota Dokan (1432–86) is believed to have rebuilt the shrine in its original location in Sendagi (one train stop to the north). Dokan also built Edo Castle and is credited with rebuilding a number of Tokyo shrines. The shrine was



The *haiden* of Nezu Jinja

moved to Nezu and rebuilt during the Edo period and continued as the tutelary shrine of shogun Ienobu (r. 1709–12). While still a baby, he was picked to be the next shogun by his uncle and predecessor, Tsunayoshi (r. 1680–1709), who rebuilt Nezu Jinja in his honor. The shrine was damaged during the war, but restored between 1950 and 1962.

Nezu Jinja is a beautiful and classic Edo-period shrine, still in its original form, making it a rarity in Tokyo. It is not as elaborately polychromed or as heavily laden in gold as a Toshogu shrine, although it does have its share of those features as well as some beautiful carvings. It has a *karamon* gate, but not in the elaborate style with *karabafu* on all four sides that was preferred by the Tokugawa. The gate here has a simple gabled roof with *karabafu* on the gable side only. However, the metalwork is nicely detailed, and the bracket sets supporting the roof are polychromed. The gate is attached to a covered diagonal lattice fence (*sukashibei* or *sukibei*) that surrounds the main building, one of only two such fences still existing in Tokyo. Again, compared to the

fence around Ueno Toshogu, it is carefully but modestly detailed.

The main building is *gongen-zukuri* style with the parallel *bonden* and *baiden* attached by a perpendicular *beiden*. It shares some of the characteristics of Ueno Toshogu, located just half a mile to the southeast. The scale is almost identical, and the roof is covered in *dobukita* copper tiles that mimic the appearance of a ceramic tile roof. The width of the *bonden* roof and that of the intermediate *beiden* are almost the same (however, at Ueno the roof of the *beiden* connects seamlessly, whereas at Nezu a height difference makes for a more complex roof structure). The front of the seven-bay-wide *baiden* sports top-hinged *shitomido* on the outer bays and folding doors (*tesaki karado*) on the three entrance bays. Bracket complexes support the encircling veranda of the *bonden*. The exterior is primarily in red lacquer but the doors and all the area under the veranda are painted in black. The roof of the *baiden* has a *chidoribafu* and a *karabafu* in the stair canopy that extends slightly beyond the eaves. It is supported on four pillars that project past the entrance stairs. The floor of the interior is all at the same level (as opposed to the floor of the *beiden* being one step lower as in many buildings of this type) and covered in *tatami* mats. The stairs of the *bonden* are in black lacquer, as are the doors, which are decorated with gold filigree.

About sixty feet in front of the entrance gate and *sukibei* stands a two-story, three-bay *romon*, with *zuijin* guardian figures in the right and left bays. Interestingly, it has no *kairo* attached to its sides, which leaves it feeling a bit removed from its usual purpose as a gate. An Edo-period painting of the shrine grounds shows that such a *kairo* never existed. It is thought that the famous *daimyo* of the Mito domain, Tokugawa Mitsukuni



The *romon* of Nezu Jinja with the azalea in bloom.

(1628–1701), posed for one of the *zuijin* figures, but they may have been created after his death. Mitsukuni was well known as the man who was responsible for assembling scholars who compiled the *Dai Nihonshi* (“Great History of Japan”), a massive work of 397 scrolls completed after his death. His life story became a fictionalized work that turned into the long-running television series called *Mito Komon*. Between the *sukibei* and the *romon* to the right stands an unpainted *kaguraden* from the Taisho period (1912–26). All the buildings other than the *kaguraden* are designated Important Cultural Properties.

Important spiritual features: Nezu Jinja enshrines Susano-o no mikoto, the creative but violent brother of Amaterasu, who was sent out of heaven for his unruly behavior and turned over a new leaf by taming the land and making amends. An important *kami* of the Izumo tradition, he is thought to be an agricultural deity whose worship may have entered Shinto through Korean immi-

grants. The next *kami* enshrined here, Oyamakui (“great mountain-peg”), is considered a descendant of Susano-o and is one of the principal *kami* of Hiyoshi Taisha on Mount Hiei near eastern Kyoto. The *Kojiki* records that Oyamakui dwells also in Matsuo Taisha in western Kyoto. The Hata clan of Korean immigrants founded that shrine and the *kami* is often associated with saké brewing. Although the original connection of the *kami* may be with Korea, it is likely the connection with Nezu Jinja is through the Tendai sect of Buddhism with which the shrine was associated through a temple controlled by Kaneiji in nearby Ueno. The once close association with Buddhism can also be seen in the use of the swastika (Jap. *manji*) to decorate the gate and shrine buildings. The Hindu symbol of good fortune and well-being is extensively used here and is prominently displayed on the shrine’s *mikoshi*. It is equally surprising that the three-hollyhock *kamon* of the Tokugawa is nowhere to be found.

The third *kami* enshrined here is Homudawake no mikoto, also known as Emperor Ojin, the legendary fifteenth emperor of Japan. From as early as the eighth century, Emperor Ojin came to be identified with Hachiman, the *kami* of Usa Jingu in Kyushu. Ojin was not enshrined here when the shrine was founded and it is not clear when this *kami* was added. However the *kami* was also enshrined on Mount Hiei in Shoshinshi Jinja until the Meiji era, while Oyamakui is enshrined in Hiei’s Higashi Hongu. In other words, the history of the shrine seems closely related to the *shin-butsu shugo* practiced by the Tendai sect. Such an association would certainly be appropriate for a shrine that was considered a protector of Ienobu. After all, Tendai prelate Tenkai enshrined the first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu, as the *kami* Tosho Daigongen.

Description: Nezu Jinja is a lovely shrine perhaps best known for its grounds, terraced and covered in azalea bushes. Walking in from the main entrance and under the red *myojin torii* puts you on the short *sando*, which turns left and right before leading to a small bridge. You immediately notice the *tamamono* (round-cut bushes) to your left. Several entrances lead to the terrace and bring you into the midst of the bushes. Just past the bridge a small waterfall adds the sound of gurgling water. Following the stream and road past the left side of the *romon*, you come to another path which leads to a stone *torii*. From here, an ascent through a tunnel of red *torii* brings you to Otome Inari Jinja. This lovely spot contains a platform perched on the terraced hill, overlooking the stream and Nezu Jinja below. (Otome Inari was located on these grounds before Nezu Jinja was moved here.) The azaleas that cover the terrace create a lovely vista of color come April. Needless to say, the thousands of others who descend on the shrine during the short blooming season think so too, so if you don’t like crowds go very early or rather late. The terraced landscaping, carefully manicured bushes, and brilliant colors amid walkways that meander through the compact space take your mind far away from the bustling city outside the gate.

Festival: Tsutsuji Matsuri (Azalea Festival), early April to early May. About 3000 bushes in 50 varieties cover over 1 1/2 acres, all of which are in bloom during this seasonal event. *Koto* and other performances are given on the weekends. The azalea terrace is open from 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. during this festival. Stands offer *amazaké* (a sweet fermented drink) and various foods. The festival attracts lots of visitors, so shutterbugs should go early. Admission is ¥200.

Tomioka Hachimangu

MAP 7

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 1627. The current buildings are from 1956.

ADDRESS: 1-20-3 Tomioka, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0047

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3642-1315

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Tozai or Oedo subway lines to Monzen-nakacho Station, then 3 minutes by foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Hachiman, identified as Emperor Ojin and eight other *kami*, including Jingu Kogo and Emperor Nintoku.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Well-being of the family, protection against danger, good fortune, safe childbirth, and to find love and marriage.

BEST TIME TO GO: A flea market is held on the grounds on the 15th and 28th of each month. An antiques market is held the first, second, fourth, and fifth Sunday of each month.

Important physical features: The area east of the Sumida River where Tomioka Hachimangu stands is called Fukagawa. It once stretched almost to Ryogoku in the north and right down to Tokyo Bay in the south. In the early twentieth century it was the most watery of the city's neighborhoods, claiming 140-odd bridges. Some of the land occupied by the shrine was turned into a park in 1873, making it one of the oldest in the country. At that time, the eight *kami* mentioned above were moved from demolished sub-shrines (*sessha* and *massha*) into the *bonden*.

The shrine itself follows the *bachiman-zukuri* style set by Usa Jingu and Iwashimizu Hachimangu, but with a number of differences.



The *haiden* of Tomioka Hachimangu

It has a two-tiered structure over the center section of the *haiden*, resembling the *romon* typical of Hachiman shrines. However, this is a full-size *haiden*, unlike the *romon* and *kairo* usually found at Hachiman shrines. The *haiden* also has a deep stair canopy with a *karahafu* and a *chidoribafu*. Behind the structure and attached to it is the more typical *bachiman-zukuri* with two buildings sitting parallel to each other and the edges of the eaves almost touching. But the present buildings are of reinforced concrete, erected after the war, a characteristic that is unfortunately common for Tokyo. The interior is entirely finished in unpainted wood except for its large round concrete columns and thick tie beams, both in white. Toward the back of the *haiden* the floor is elevated and accessed by three separate staircases. This section is considered the *heiden* and is actually inside the first of the parallel structures. Behind it, the floor level is further elevated; this section is the *noritoden*, the intermediate space between the front and rear parallel structures, which would normally be lower than the front structure. Finally is the rear structure—normally the *naijin*—here divided into a *gejin* and *naijin*. The shrine

looks somewhat different from an Edo-period illustration, which shows it built on an elevated dais and without a *baiden*.

One of the important properties of the shrine is its *mikosbi*, which is a massive 4.5 tons. Called the *ichinomiyu*, it is studded with diamonds and rubies and encrusted in gold, platinum, and silver. Needless to say, it is practically impossible to lift and far too precious (valued at a billion yen) to carry through the streets. It is not the one used in the yearly festival (although it was once paraded for the major festival held every three years). It is housed in its own building on the left of the *sando* as you enter the grounds, just past the *torii*, where it can be viewed daily through the glass front of the building. The *mikosbi* used for the festival is a more modest two tons and has only a few diamonds in the phoenix that crowns its roof. Between the building housing the *mikosbi* and the *torii* stands a monument to Ino Tadataka (1745–1818), a cartographer who lived in the Fukagawa area and at the age of fifty-six set out to map all of Japan, producing the most accurate survey that had ever been done to date.

Important spiritual features: Tomioka Hachimangu is considered the premier Hachiman shrine in Tokyo. (For details on the *kami*, please see the entries on Usa Jingu in Kyushu, Iwashimizu Hachimangu in Kyoto, and Tsurugaoka Hachimangu in the Kanto-Tohoku section.) A descendant of the priestly family of Dazaifu Tenmangu in Kyushu founded the shrine at the same time as a Shingon sect temple called Eitaiji. Both occupied the same grounds. Eitaiji became famous as a place for *degaicho*, the display from other temples of normally hidden Buddhist sculptures. It was known especially for displaying the statue of Naritasan Shinshoji's Fudo Myo-o. The temple was destroyed in 1898.

Description: The first *torii* of Tomioka Hachimangu stands slightly back from Eitai-dori, the main artery running east–west through this part of the city known as Koto-ku. The street connects to Eitaibashi, one of the oldest bridges crossing the Sumida River, linking the area to the Nihonbashi district on the opposite side. The Fukagawa section of Koto-ku, where the shrine is located, is one of those old *shitamachi* (“low city”) places that have been the living, working, and playing grounds of the lower classes from which the neighborhood derived much of its character. It had the largest number of shrines and temples east of the river. Fukagawa also contained the Susaki licensed quarter that was opened by order of the Meiji government in 1888 to replace the licensed quarter in Nezu that was close to the Imperial University and therefore deemed too much of a temptation for the nation's future leaders.

Tomioka Hachimangu is considered the birthplace of modern sumo. Bouts were held here from 1684, when the *bakufu* lifted a ban that had been in place from 1648. The ban had been imposed due to the increasing violence and deaths associated with the two major types of sumo: *tsuji-zumo* and *kanjin-zumo*. The former was a “streetcorner” form of sumo in which former samurai fought for money. The latter was fought at shrines and temples to raise money, which went to both the host institution and the fighter. The lifting of the ban was due to the hard work and repeated proposals of Ikazuchi Gondayu, a *ronin* (masterless samurai) who convinced the shogunate to let him hold an eight-day *kanjin-zumo* match at Tomioka Hachimangu. He succeeded by creating innovations designed to curtail the violence and deepen the linkage with Shinto. Many of the modern rules, fixtures, and ceremonies of sumo began here, including the *dohyo* arena



Dousing the *mikoshi* with water during the Hachiman Matsuri

and the set of acceptable *kimarite* winning techniques. For example, it is recorded that the first *yokozuna* “license” was given to the wrestler Tanikaze in 1789 and that he performed the first *yokozuna dohyo-iri* (ring-entering ceremony) at Tomioka Hachimangu sometime after that. These bouts moved in 1791 to Ekoin, a mortuary temple that was founded by the shogunate as a burial site for 108,000 unidentified victims of the Great Meireiki Fire in Ryogoku. After that they moved to different locations until they finally found a home in 1985 in the new Ryogoku Kokugikan on the east bank of the Sumida River, where they are held today. Bouts continued at Tomioka until 1801, and the shrine has continued its close connection to the sport. There is a twenty-ton stone monument engraved with the names of forty-five *yokozuna*, up through Wakanohana (retired 1962). An additional stone to the right includes newer *yokozuna*, and one to the left stands ready to receive future engravings. The area continues to host a large number of sumo stables.

There are a number of interesting places in the vicinity of the shrine that might be worth visiting. The first of these, the temple Naritasan Shinshoji Fukagawa Fudodo, stands just next door. The shrine grounds once extended this far and contained Eitaiji temple (mentioned above), but this was removed during the Meiji period. The current temple, known as

Fukagawa Fudodo, is thought to be the oldest wooden building in Koto-ku. It was originally located in Chiba and built in 1862. It was transported and reassembled here after the war. It is a Shingon sect temple dedicated to Fudo Myo-o. Today the temple is famous as a place to pray for safety on the roadways and for its Goma fire ritual.

The next place worth visiting is the Fukagawa Enmado, a temple located about fifteen minutes north of the shrine established in 1629. It is known for its large, garishly painted Enma, ruler of the underworld and judge of sinful souls. He was originally a Hindu god, transmitted to Japan through Buddhism. Sitting red-faced and angry, he creates a frightening effect in the middle of the two-story Enmado. But the temple has a more placid and modern face as well, which is evident inside a second building used for funeral services. Here a Buddha sits calmly on an illuminated lotus, surrounded by mirrors that reflect its image all around—creating the sense of calm repose that awaits the good soul that has passed the terrible judgment of King Enma.

The Kiyosumi Teien garden, farther north of the Enmado, is a lovely and well-maintained garden, formerly part of the residence of the wealthy merchant Kinokuniya Bunzaemon (1669–1734). He began his career by importing *mikan* oranges from his native Wakayama

on a large scale and selling them in Edo. He then began an advertising campaign featuring a song about the *mikanbune* ("orange boats"), which he popularized by hiring geisha of the Yoshiwara pleasure district to sing. He maneuvered to get contracts to supply lumber to the shogunate and so made his fortune. He was a flashy self-promoter, spending lavishly to pamper government officials. Yet this same Edo-period millionaire donated the huge *mikoshi* to Tomioka Hachimangu. Though the original was destroyed during the 1923 earthquake, the present one is a faithful reproduction. Bunzaemon was eventually impoverished after his contacts retired and the contracts dried up. He shaved his head and lived out a quiet life close to the shrine he patronized. The property was purchased in 1878 by Iwasaki Yataro, the founder of Mitsubishi, and was used to entertain guests including such notables as Lord Kitchener. The grounds once contained a Tudor-style building designed by Josiah Conder, the British architect who constructed many important buildings and trained Japanese architects in the Meiji period. The garden is open from 9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. (except some holidays). Admission is ¥150.

Festivals: Fukagawa Hachiman Matsuri, three or four days around 15 August (major festival held once every three years, i.e., 2014, 2017, etc.). Also called the Mizukake Matsuri ("water-throwing festival"). Onlookers are invited to douse the twenty-five thousand participants with buckets of water as they pass by. One of the largest festivals in Tokyo, with 54 *mikoshi* and 300,000 visitors in the major festival year. In the Edo period it was called one of the big three festivals of Tokyo, along with the Sanno, and Kanda festivals, but now with the Sanja Festival necessarily included, "big four" is more appropriate these days.

Ueno Toshogu

MAP 8

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 1627, at the behest of Todo Takatora (1556–1630). Moved to the present site and rebuilt in 1651.

ADDRESS: 9-88 Ueno Koen, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0007 (inside Ueno Park)

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3822-3455. A small pamphlet in English is available. Open from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Admission to the grounds is free, but there is a ¥200 charge to enter the shrine.

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Yamanote or Keihin Tohoku Line to Ueno Station. Best to leave the station from the Ueno Park Exit, enter Ueno Park, and follow the signs. Also accessible by the Hibiya and Ginza subway lines. Take the Shinobazu Exit.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Tokugawa Ieyasu as Toshog Daigongen

PRAYERS OFFERED: The well-being of the family and safety on the roadways.

BEST TIMES TO GO: When the cherry trees are in bloom in early April. Also from mid-April to mid-May to view the 250 varieties of peony, or January to February for winter varieties. Admission to the peony garden is ¥600 for adults.



The *haiden* of Ueno Toshogu



The pagoda of Kaneiji, next to Ueno Toshogu

Important physical features: The *sando* of Ueno Toshogu starts as one of the streets emanating from the mall south of the Grand Fountain of Ueno Park, just to the left of the statue of Prince Komatsu on a horse. More accurately, it begins at the large black granite *ryobu*-style *torii* from 1633 that stands a short distance from the statue. The stone lantern from 1632 to the front left of the *torii* is twenty-three feet tall and considered one of the three largest stone lanterns of Japan, alongside those in Atsuta Jingu in Nagoya and Nanzenji in Kyoto. It is called the *oisbidoro* or *obakedoro* (the latter meaning “ghost” or “monster” lantern). A little farther down the *sando* you pass through a modest *karamon* gate that defines the middle area of the shrine grounds. Shortly afterwards you pass the pagoda on the right, and soon you are standing in front of the shrine itself. Along the way are 48 copper and over 200 stone lanterns, donated by *daimyo* going back to the seventeenth century.

The current structures were totally rebuilt

in 1651 on the order of third shogun Iemitsu, and partly rebuilt many times since. Ueno Toshogu is in the *gongen-zukuri* style, with the *bonden* and *baiden* connected by an intermediate space usually called an *ishinoma* or *beiden*. In these early-Edo versions, the *bonden* and *beiden* are often of the same size—in this case each three bays square. When combined with the seven-bay-wide *baiden*, it forms an inverted “T” shape when seen from above. The roofs of the *bonden* and *baiden* are both *irimoya-zukuri* style, and the *bonden* has two *chigi* and *katsuogi*, lying well in from the edge of the rafter. The roof of the *baiden* has a false dormer (*chidoribafu*) and the step canopy has a curved bargeboard (*karabafu*). It has a copper tile (*dobuki-ita*) roof that is strongly suggestive of Chinese-style *bongawara* tiles and a favorite of Toshogu shrine construction.

As with all shrines and mausoleums dedicated to the Tokugawa, the building is heavily carved, polychromed, and gilded. The ceilings of the *baiden* and *beiden* are primarily done in black lacquer, with extensive carving. The columns are of gold, and the *beiden* contains a black lacquered altar in the form of a staircase, with the gold doors of the *bonden* exposed above. The floor of the *beiden* is several steps lower than the *baiden*, as is typical of *gongen-zukuri* shrines. Though not nearly as luxurious as Nikko, many of the design elements are the same, as were many of the artisans who worked on that shrine. The *karamon* entrance gate is decorated with dragons carved by Hidari Jingoro, who did some of the important carving at Nikko. As with all his work, stories abound of how the sculpture was so real that it came to life. Here the dragons are said to go down to Shinobazu Pond at night for a drink. A red *sukashi-bei* fence—over six hundred feet long and one of only two of its kind in Tokyo—surrounds the shrine. The Tokugawa favored

the type of curvilinear, highly ornamented *zenshu* construction exemplified by their mausoleums. The same aesthetic is evident in most of the two hundred or so Toshogu shrines around the country (though individual shrines may contain some unique features that escape notice because they are on the interior).

The *baiden* was set up for viewing by the general public (for an entrance fee of ¥200), with showcases that exhibit shrine treasures. However the building was undergoing renovation as this book went to press, so it is not clear how viewing of the interior will be accommodated when it is reopened. The shrine is undergoing extensive refurbishing and is completely hidden from view and closed to visitors until New Year's Eve, 2013.

Important spiritual features: The first shogun, Ieyasu, made three wishes when he died: that his remains be interred at Mount Kuno (Kunozan Toshogu) in his native Okazaki (present-day Aichi Prefecture), that his funeral be held at Zojoji temple, and that one year after his passing he be enshrined north of Edo as the tutelary deity of Japan (*yashima no chinju*) in order to protect the nation for all time to come. His wishes were respected by the second shogun, his son Hidetada, who built a small shrine at Nikko dedicated to the spirit of his father. Ieyasu was given the posthumous title *Daigongen* ("great avatar") by Tenkai in 1616 and that of *Tosho* ("light of the east") by the emperor in 1617. Ieyasu's grandson Iemitsu was instrumental in establishing the title of *Tosho Daigongen*. He ordered Tenkai to create the *Tosho* *Engi* in 1636, and then had several other authors, along with Tenkai (at the age of 104), revise and expand it in 1640 as the *Tosho Daigongen Engi*. The first version details the religious indoctrination of Ieyasu into the Sanno Shinto

heritage of Mount Hiei while he was living as a retired shogun in Sunpu Castle. A modified version was developed just for Ieyasu's deification and called Sanno Ichijitsu Shinto. Historians believe it was done, in part, so that Tendai could gain the upper hand over Yoshida Shinto by having Ieyasu deified in the Tendai tradition. This is why Ieyasu received the title of Daigongen. A *gongen* is defined as a Buddha who has taken the form of a Shinto *kami* in order to save humans, and the appellation *dai* means "great."

The second version of the *engi* is an illustrated, popularized, and expanded "history," documenting the life of Ieyasu and the rise to power of the Tokugawa. Part of its purpose was to cement the position of the clan by lending a spiritual justification to their rule. The worship of ancestors as protective *kami* was always a basic aspect of Japanese belief systems, whatever the institutional framework. It was perhaps simple math to multiply the veneration of the ancestor by the power he or she wielded in life (and by the continued power wielded by descendants). So it was that great power and great veneration led to great protection—as 250 years of Pax Tokugawa perhaps gave witness!

Description: The history of Ueno Toshogu is closely linked with the history of the park. Ueno Park was originally the site of the Edo residences of three *daimyo*. After Ieyasu's death in 1616, Tenkai, an influential monk of the Tendai sect, wanted to build a guardian temple for Edo that would emulate the head temple Enryakuji on Mount Hiei. It had to be located northeast of Edo Castle, and he hit upon Ueno Hill as the perfect place. He prevailed upon the second Tokugawa shogun, Hidetada, who appropriated the land from the *daimyo* and gave it to Tenkai in 1622. Tenkai was a confidant and supporter of the

first three Tokugawa shoguns and was given the responsibility of deifying Tokugawa Ieyasu at Nikko. He spent most of his later years in Kawagoe, north of Tokyo, where he was abbot of Kita-in. In Ueno he founded the temple Toei-zan Kaneiji in 1625, taking its name from the Kan'ei era (1624–44). It was meant to be the main Tendai temple in the east and Tenkai had the office of *monzeki* instituted at Rinnoji in Nikko to strengthen the sect's position near the de facto capital. The *monzeki* is a monk who is an imperial prince, and this *monzeki* divided his time between Nikko and Kaneiji. The first building was the chief abbot's residence, called the *bonbo*. From this point, other *daimyo* began to contribute buildings to the grounds of Kaneiji, which included the area around today's Ueno Station and contained some thirty or more structures at its peak.

Among those involved was Todo Takatora (1556–1630), who is considered the greatest castle builder of his day and one of the *daimyo* whose land was used for Kaneiji. After changing allegiances at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, he became a loyal retainer of Tokugawa Ieyasu. In 1627, he enshrined Ieyasu in his former estate on the present site. Both Zojoji in the Shiba section of Tokyo, a main temple of the Jodo "Pure Land" sect established in 1393, and Kaneiji became the family temples of the Tokugawa. The second shogun Hidetada's mausoleum was constructed at Zojoji. However, the third shogun, Iemitsu, wished to have his own funeral held at Kaneiji and his remains interred near Ieyasu at Nikko. It was an exception to the tradition of burying Tokugawa shoguns at either Zojoji or Kaneiji. Of fifteen Tokugawa shoguns, six are buried in Ueno and six in Shiba, while the last shogun is buried in Tokyo's Yanaka Cemetery.

During the Boshin War (1868–69) between those trying to restore the emperor and those

opposed, holdouts of the Tokugawa forces fought a last-ditch battle on the temple grounds of Kaneiji, with the result that most of the buildings were destroyed. The new government expropriated the land from the temple and in 1873 turned it into the first public park in Japan, Ueno Park. Although the battle destroyed most of Kaneiji, the park has acted as a firebreak, preserving the remaining buildings from subsequent disasters. Of the buildings that have survived, Toshogu is the one that most concerns us here, but several others are also important. First is the five-story, 120-foot-tall pagoda of Kaneiji that stands just to the right of Toshogu's *sando* but is fenced off from it and now resides inside the neighboring Ueno Zoo. It is one of only two five-story pagodas from the Edo period still surviving in Tokyo. (The other is at Honmonji Temple in Ikegami, built in 1608.) No longer part of a religious institution, it became the property of the city in 1958. It was originally built in 1631 at the behest of Doi Toshikatsu, the first to hold the post of *tairo* ("great elder") to the Tokugawa. The pagoda burned down but he had it rebuilt in 1639 by the father-and-son master builders Kora Munehiro and Munehisa. Munehiro had been rewarded for his magnificent work on the Taitokuin mausoleum, built for second shogun Hidetada at Zojoji, by being put in charge of the construction of Nikko Toshogu.

Another important building inside the park is the Kiyomizu Kannon-do, a hall built by Tenkai in 1631, reconstructed in 1633, and moved to its present location in 1694. It was meant to emulate the feeling of Kiyomizudera in Kyoto and built to house a seated Senju Kannon sculpture donated by that temple. It is built with the type of *kakezukuri* ("hanging-construction") for which the original temple is so famous. The *kannon-do* is a classic five-by-four-bay building, painted in red with

shitomido doors, a wide veranda, and a tiled hip-and-gable roof. It now sits on a small hill south of Ueno Toshogu, with its veranda facing directly toward the nearby Bentendo temple that stands on an island in Shinobazu Pond. Tenkai designed the pond, island, and temple to replicate the shrine to Benzaiten on Chikubushima in Lake Biwa. It is the larger of Tokyo's two famous sites of Benzaiten worship, the other one being in Inokashira Park near Kichijoji train station. The pond has gone through many changes over the years. The bridge connecting to the island was built in 1907, and the pond is currently divided into three sections, with the southernmost section filled with lotus that blossom from July to August. The present temple, rebuilt after being destroyed in World War II, consists of a small three-bay *bondo* with the octagonal *bentendo* hall towering over it. To reach it from Ueno Toshogu you descend a wooded embankment and cross a road that separates the pond from the park. Tenkai also planted the cherry trees for which Ueno Park is so famous, to reflect the atmosphere of Higashiyama in Kyoto.

Festivals: Botan Matsuri (Peony Festival), mid-April to mid-May. In the peony garden on the grounds of the shrine, 3,200 *botan* (peony) plants blossom at this time of the year. Or if you don't mind the cold, from the beginning of January to mid-February you can view forty varieties of winter-blooming peony. Admission to the garden is ¥600.

Ueno Toshogu Taisai (Grand Festival), 17 April. A *mikoshi* is carried through Ueno Park. Street vendors set up stalls offering food and drink. Late March to early April is also the season for cherry blossom viewing, and Ueno Park, including Toshogu, is one of the best places for it (though 17 April is past the peak).

Yasukuni Jinja

MAP 9

DATE FOUNDED: 1869 at the behest of Emperor Meiji (r. 1867–1912). Originally founded as Tokyo Shokonsha and renamed Yasukuni in 1879.

ADDRESS: 3-1-1 Kudankita, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8246

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3261-8326. Open 6 A.M. Closing time varies seasonally between 5 and 7 P.M.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Tozai, Hanzomon, or Shinjuku subway lines to Kudanshita Station, then 5 minutes by foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Over 2,466,000 *hashira no shinrei (kami)* in the form of all those who died in military service or participated in war efforts, those civilians killed in defense of the country, and foreigners killed fighting for Japan or as forced laborers from the mid-nineteenth century until 1951. Does not include forces of the Tokugawa shogunate or any forces deemed to have fought against the emperor.

PRAYERS OFFERED: The repose of those who have died in war, and prayers for peace.

BEST TIMES TO GO: In early April when the shrine's six hundred cherry trees are in bloom.

Important physical features: Established by Emperor Meiji in 1869, Yasukuni Jinja occupies about twenty-five acres of land in the Kudanshita district of Tokyo. It sits just north of the moat around the imperial palace, and the entrance is directly across the street from the famous Tokyo performance space, the Budokan. The first *torii* is a massive eighty-two-foot-tall steel structure built in 1974. It was



The third *torii* and the *haiden* of Yasukuni Jinja

once the tallest in Japan but is now third, after Kumano and Omiwa. There are three *torii* on the *sando* and one at a side entrance, all in the *shinmei* style. The long *sando* lined with ginkgo and cherry trees takes you straight to the second *torii* and to the *shinmon* (“sacred gate”), which was built in 1934 of unfinished Japanese cypress. It sports two gold-plated chrysanthemum crests of the imperial house, each five feet in diameter. The single-story gate, topped by a large gabled roof with *chigi*, marks the entrance to the grounds proper. It establishes the mix of ancient and modern structures that fill the grounds of this unique shrine.

After passing through the *shinmon*, you come to the third *torii* and the *haiden* built in 1901. The *haiden* has an *irimoya* gabled roof with a large step canopy containing a *karabafu* over the center section. The roof is covered in copper tiles that create the image of a ceramic-tiled roof. A *kairo* extends from the right and left sides and turns toward the *bonden* to form an enclosed inner courtyard. The *kairo* leads to the left and right sides of the large *bonden*, connected to it by a short staircase. The unusual configuration leaves the back half of the *bonden* outside the *kairo*. Behind the *bonden* the grounds are heavily planted and obscure any

view of the back of the shrine. There is another wall surrounding the entire grounds.

When the shrine was first created, only the *bonden* existed. Constructed in 1872, it is vaguely reminiscent of the *shinmei-zukuri* of Atsuta Jingu in Nagoya (though this building is older). There is a gabled, copper-shingled roof decorated with *chigi* and *katsuogi*, but unlike Atsuta it also has a step canopy and sliding doors around the entire front half. There are pent roofs on the left and right sides, and it is encircled by a veranda. The designer was Ito Heizaemon (1829–1913), master builder from a long line of carpenters from Nagoya. He was also responsible for the Founder's Hall (*goeido*) of Higashi Honganji in Kyoto, when it was rebuilt in 1895.

The unique structures of Yasukuni do not end here, for directly behind the *bonden* is a building called the *reijibo boanden*, a repository for the symbolic “registry of divinities.” Built in 1972 of fire- and quake-resistant concrete, it contains all the names of the enshrined souls, handwritten on special paper. The building is smaller than the main shrine and built in a style that appears to be a cross between a *bonden* and a treasure house. The exterior is all white and sits surrounded on three sides by trees. At the back of the shrine grounds to the right, outside the fence around the *bonden*, is a pond with a waterfall and small islands surrounded by cherry trees. Adjacent to it is a sumo ring where tournaments to honor the *kami* are held during the shrine's Spring Festival.

Of the many other structures on the grounds, three more are worth mentioning. Two of them are small wooden shrines set close to the outside of the *kairo* on the left side (when facing the *haiden*). The first is dedicated to the imperial loyalists who died in the early days of the attempt to overthrow the Tokugawa *bakufu*. It was established in Kyoto as a *shokonsha*

("spirit-inviting shrine") before the founding of Tokyo Shokonsha (Yasukuni Jinja). It was moved here in 1931 and has since been referred to as the *motomiya* ("original shrine"). When the Satsuma and Choshu clans spearheaded the drive to return the country to direct rule by the emperor, they set up shrines across the country to honor their fallen comrades. This is the origin of shrines to the "war dead." Next to the *motomiya* is a similarly styled shrine called the Chinreisha, dedicated in 1965 by the long-time *guji* of Yasukuni, Tsukuba Fujimaro. One part of this shrine is dedicated to Japanese who fought against the imperial forces in the late nineteenth century. The other is dedicated to the war dead of other nations who fought in World War II, including Americans, Koreans, and Chinese.

Finally, one of the strangest and most controversial buildings ever seen on the grounds of a Shinto shrine has to be the Yushukan, a war museum featuring the fighting paraphernalia of different centuries but focusing on World War II. It contains, among other things, several vintage fighter planes, a full-scale model of a *kaiten* "suicide torpedo," and a locomotive used in the Burma-Siam (Thailand) Railway. The railroad was built by prisoners of war and forced labor at a cost of thirteen thousand prisoner deaths (estimated) and as many as one hundred thousand civilian deaths. A bridge built over the Mae Klong River as part of the railroad became the model for the book *Bridge over the River Kwai* (1954). The museum, built in 1881, was closed from 1945 until the controversial *guji* Matsudaira Nagayoshi reopened it in 1985.

Important spiritual features: Yasukuni Jinja is the primary shrine dedicated to the souls of Japanese soldiers and anyone deemed to have fought to protect the emperor

since the beginning of efforts to restore the emperor in the late Edo period. In 1869 the young emperor formally moved to Tokyo and established Tokyo Shokonsha to honor those who died in the Boshin War (1868–69). It was the last in a series of struggles that had begun with the arrival of Commodore Perry's "black ships" in 1853. The war involved the forces of the last shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, against the combined Restoration forces comprising the Choshu domain of western Honshu, the Satsuma domain of Kyushu, and the Tosa domain of Shikoku. The Battle of Toba-Fushimi in January 1868 marked the beginning, and the end came in June 1869 with the defeat of the Tokugawa forces, who had retreated to Hokkaido and formed the short-lived Republic of Ezo. Tokyo Shokonsha originally enshrined 3,588 soldiers who had fought and died on the side of the imperial forces. Some members of the *sonno joi* ("revere the emperor, expel the barbarians") movement who died before the war were also included. With the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, those who had died in battles in foreign countries after 1869 began to be enshrined as well.

Yasukuni gives the figure of over 2,466,000 *kami* as being enshrined, but there is only one "seat" (*za*). Normally, a shrine has one seat for each *kami* enshrined in the *bonden*. The shrine believes that all the spirits are merged into one and cannot be separated, and uses the term *hashira no shinrei* or *eirei* (heroic spirits) rather than *kami* to describe the enshrined. The ceremony to enshrine these souls is called *gosbi* (apotheosis) and involves elevating and merging the spirit of the deceased with all the other souls. Of the total number enshrined, over two million are from World War II alone, nearly fifty thousand of whom are foreigners (mostly Koreans and Chinese) who either voluntarily supported or were pressed into the war

effort. Most of the World War II enshrinements came after the hostilities had ended, when the eligibility was expanded to include everyone in the armed forces and any civilian deemed to have died in defense of the country. Such enshrinements are carried out without the consent of the families of the dead.

When Yasukuni Jinja was founded, it was put under the jurisdiction of the military, while the Ministry of Home Affairs controlled all other shrines. After the war, it was placed for a time under the Ministry of Health and Welfare. (It became an independent religious corporation under a law first enacted in 1951.) The shrine was classified as a *bekkakusha* ("special shrine") along with twenty-six others, when shrine rankings were revised in the early Meiji period. Interestingly, all the other shrines were established to enshrine "national heroes" such as Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu (Nikko Toshogu was included in the group). From 1868 until 1939, more than one hundred *shokonsha* shrines were built to honor the war dead. In that year, one shrine was designated for each prefecture and referred to as a *gokoku jinja* ("nation-protecting shrine") by the government. Since the end of World War II they have enshrined military dead from more recent conflicts (non-combat) and civilians who have died in public service. (Yasukuni only enshrines those who died up to and including the time of World War II.) Like at Yasukuni, it is sometimes done against the will of the family. Since the end of the war, Japan's constitution has renounced the right to wage war (Article 9), and the Japanese military is referred to as the Self-Defense Forces. Only since 1992 has Japan begun to send forces overseas in supportive non-combat and peacekeeping roles.

Unlike other shrines, relatives of the enshrined and otherwise related parties can enter the *bonden* after first registering in the

shrine office. Those wishing to worship will be ushered in by a priest who will first perform a purification and then twenty-minute ceremony in memory of the deceased.

Description: Internationally and at home, Yasukuni Jinja has become Japan's most controversial religious institution. The situation is well known, but it is not widely understood. A number of problems have been raised, the most visible and familiar manifestation of which is the yearly trip made by some prime ministers and cabinet members to worship the war dead, in violation of court orders and the constitution's provisions on separation of church and state. It would be a purely domestic matter if not for the fact that among the nearly 2.5 million souls honored at the shrine are fourteen men convicted of Class-A war crimes. They were enshrined in 1978—thirty-three years after the end of the war. It is seen by some as condoning the acts of these men in the war, and by extension Japan's wartime aggression itself. War crime trials were an innovation of World War II, and some in Japan argue that it was simply a matter of the victors taking revenge on the vanquished. Ever since the enshrinement of the fourteen men, Yasukuni has been urged to remove them, but it refuses to do so on the grounds that there is only one "god seat" and that the souls have all merged, making separation impossible. But there seems to be no general agreement on such a belief.

It also became clear in July 2006 that Emperor Showa (also known as Hirohito) had been against the enshrinement of these Class-A criminals, which was conducted in his name. This came to light when notes from a diary kept by Tomita Tomohiko, grand steward of the imperial household during the latter years of the emperor's reign, were published. In addi-

tion, Emperor Showa stopped making visits after 1975, although he had visited the shrine twenty times during the war and eight times after the war's end. It now seems clear that his objection to the enshrinement was the reason why, and confirmation came with the release of fragments of the diary of Emperor Showa's chamberlain, Urabe Ryogo, in 2007. Emperor Akihito, who succeeded Emperor Showa in 1989, has also refrained from visiting the shrine, though he has not made his reasons known. It is a significant gesture, since the enshrined of Yasukuni are said to have died for the emperor. As the dead enshrined here are no longer considered single-family ancestral deities, but are elevated to the status of national deity, loss of the emperor's visit has been painful to many. It was the only shrine in the nation where the emperor paid respect to commoners. Since 2007 it has also come to light that, despite government denials, the Ministry of Health and Welfare had been instrumental in pushing for the enshrinement of these fourteen men from 1958. The shrine actually resisted through its chief priest, Tsukuba Fujimaro, until 1977. However, as soon as a new chief priest, former Imperial Navy officer Matsudaira Nagayoshi, took office in 1978, the fourteen were quickly enshrined. It is only since he died in 2005 that important information relating to the enshrinement has been revealed.

Another major problem at Yasukuni, which gets less attention in the West, is that about 50,000 Chinese and Koreans have been enshrined against the will of their relatives and their country. Some people have tried to have the names of the dead removed from the shrine, which maintains that the conquered peoples were Japanese at the time they died and therefore should be enshrined. Even less well known is that Yasukuni has also enshrined Japanese against the wishes of family members.



The Mitama Matsuri

After repeated challenges by foreigners and Japanese alike, the courts have so far upheld the shrine's right to include these souls.

In June 2009, seventy-one-year-old Kyogoku Takaharu was appointed chief priest of Yasukuni Jinja. His predecessor, Nanbu Toshiaki, was appointed at the age of sixty-nine and died after less than six years in office. Interestingly, since 1978 none of the appointed chief priests had any prior experience. Matsudaira was ex-navy; Nanbu was an executive at Dentsu, Japan's largest advertising company; and Kyogoku was in the shipping business. What these men have in common is "pedigree"; they are all from old Japanese families that were once *daimyo*.

Festivals: Mitama Matsuri, 13–16 July. Perhaps the most impressive of the shrine's many festivals. About 30,000 lanterns with the names of the dead and other inscriptions line the *sando* and fill the area around the shrine with the warm glow of light. It coincides with the Tanabata Festival, which makes this a lively rather than somber event, visited by upward of 300,000 people.

Yushima Tenmangu (Yushima Tenjin)

MAP 10

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 458, according to shrine tradition. Current buildings from 1995.

ADDRESS: 3-30-1 Yushima, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113-0034

TEL/INFORMATION: 03-3836-0753. Open daily from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. A pamphlet with a brief explanation in English is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Chiyoda subway line to Yushima Station, then about 3 minutes by foot. Or take the JR Yamanote line to Okachimachi Station then about 10 minutes by foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Ame no Tajikarao no mikoto and Sugawara no Michizane, also known as Tenjin sama.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Success in passing entrance exams, success in the entertainment business, and good fortune.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Mid-February to mid-March when the plum blossoms are in bloom, or during the Chrysanthemum Festival in November.

Important physical features: Yushima Tenmangu was completely reconstructed in 1995 from 250-year-old Japanese cypress, preserving a traditional style of shrine architecture. It was no mean feat—not because of the need to bring the logs from the Kiso region of Nagano Prefecture but because of the need to pass newer Tokyo fire codes, which do not permit the construction of wooden buildings in this part of the city. The shrine finally received a green light after a specialized sprinkler system was developed that douses the entire exte-



The *haiden* of Yushima Tenmangu

rior with water in case of a fire. One previous incarnation of the *bonden* was built in a style called *kura-zukuri*, which is a type of construction usually used for storehouses (*kura*) and employs a timber frame with thick mud walls surfaced in plaster to make a fireproof structure. The *kura* style was apparently not uncommon for shrines in fire-prone Edo.

The current building is quite charming and somewhat reminiscent of Kitano Tenmangu in Kyoto, with its *irimoya* roof, large stair canopy, and *karabafu* roof, which extends beyond it. It is a *gongen-zukuri* structure with a *beiden* connecting the *haiden* to the *bonden*. The *bonden* is a three-by-three-bay structure with an *irimoya-zukuri* roof, *chigi*, and five *katsuogi*. The entire roof complex is covered in copper tiles, and the unpainted wooden exterior is detailed with gold and polychromed carvings, especially in the *kaerumata* (frog-leg struts). The interior is also of unfinished wood, with practically none of the lacquerwork associated with *gongen-zukuri*. It is recorded that Ota Dokan rebuilt the structure in 1478, which means that the rebuilding was simultaneous with that of another famous Tokyo

shrine, Hie Jinja in Akasaka. Dokan built that shrine on the grounds of the old Edo Castle, and he is also credited with building any number of shrines and castles in the Kanto plain. The grounds of Yushima, though once a bit larger, are now relatively small but contain numerous plum trees beloved of Michizane. Renowned Japanese garden designer Yasumoro Sadao created a magnificent garden on the grounds in 2011 that will doubtless become an important part of the shrine's attraction. There is also a museum of shrine possessions, consisting mostly of paintings of Michizane and plum trees. Admission is ¥500.

Important spiritual features: Yushima Tenmangu was originally established on the order of Emperor Yuryaku (r. 456–79). It enshrined only Ame no Tajikarao no mikoto, whom the *Kojiki* says was the *kami* who rolled away the stone covering the entrance to the Heavenly Rock Cave and pulled Amaterasu out from where she had hidden herself. The name of the *kami* means “heavenly hand-strength” and he descended to earth with Ninigi no mikoto to take over the land from the ancestral line of Susano-o. The *Kojiki* states that the *kami* “dwells in Sana no agata,” which is in Ise. Except for Togakushi Jinja in Nagano and the deity's position in an *aidono*, or sub-altar, of the Naiku at Ise Jingu, Yushima is perhaps the *kami*'s most prominent shrine.

Despite these origins, in 1355 the spirit of Sugawara no Michizane, posthumously titled Tenman or Tenjin, was divided from Kitano Tenmangu in Kyoto and enshrined here. The shrine has been called Yushima Jinja at various times in its history but is now known as either Yushima Tenmangu or Yushima Tenjin. The association with Ame no Tajikarao no mikoto has become obscured, and instead the shrine is well known for Tenjin worship.



The "woman's slope" with plum trees in bloom

He is considered a *kami* of learning and the arts, and students flock to the shrine around entrance exam time in January and February. (For details about the deity please see the entries for Dazaifu Tenmangu in Kyushu and Kitano Tenmangu in Kyoto.)



A rugged and natural-looking waterfall by Sadao Yasumoro at Yushima Tenmangu

Description: Yushima Tenmangu is wedged into a tight triangle of space in the Yushima district of Tokyo, not far from the southern tips of both Ueno Park and the University of Tokyo. It stands on a terraced piece of ground such that the front entrance is at ground level while other entrances are accessed by stairs. In fact there are three different stairways to approach the shrine: from the back (north) and east sides. The north stair is called the *meoto-zaka* (“husband and wife slope”). A gently inclined “woman’s slope” and a more steeply inclined “man’s slope” rise from the east at a right angle to each other and meet at the top. (A print by Ando Hiroshige from 1856 shows that Shinobazu Pond and the Bentendo could be clearly viewed from this spot.) The ground between them is filled with plum trees. At the front entrance, there stands a twenty-two-foot bronze *myojin torii*, constructed in 1667, which lends an air of quality and dignity to this venerable old Tokyo landmark. Two large ginkgo trees planted either side of the entrance turn bright yellow

in autumn. The garden mentioned above is to the left of the *sando* and features a pond, bridges, and a waterfall. It is filled with plum trees, reminiscent of Kitano Tenmangu in Kyoto, though on a much smaller scale. The shrine is very close to the Hongo campus of the University of Tokyo and is one of the most popular shrines for students praying for success with entrance exams, as the huge number of *ema* hanging outside the *baiden* bear witness. It is also very close to the back side of Shinobazu Pond in Ueno Park (though the pond is no longer visible from here). Take the north stairs from the shrine down to Kasuga Dori and turn right. At the first major intersection, turn left. The entrance to the southwest corner of the park is a few blocks ahead. Walking around the pond to the right takes you to the Bentendo, the Kiyomizu Kannondo hall, and close to Ueno Toshogu.

Festivals: Ume Matsuri (Plum Festival), 8 February to 8 March. Less a continuous festival than the approximate time the plum trees bloom, with mid-February as the peak. Somehow 300 trees have been fitted into the tiny grounds, which explode in pinkish-white blossoms; a number of events such as *taiko* drumming, *rakugo*, and Japanese dance are held each weekend of the festival.

Kiku Matsuri (Chrysanthemum Festival), 1 to 23 November. 2,000 pots of carefully cultivated flowers and arrangements are displayed, along with dolls decorated with robes made of flowers.

Reitaisai (Annual Festival), 25 May, but also including the weekend before or after. This is Tenmangu’s main festival, which features the shrine’s two *mikoshi*, fifteen small children’s *mikoshi*, and a *boren* (a cart with a *mikoshi* aboard).

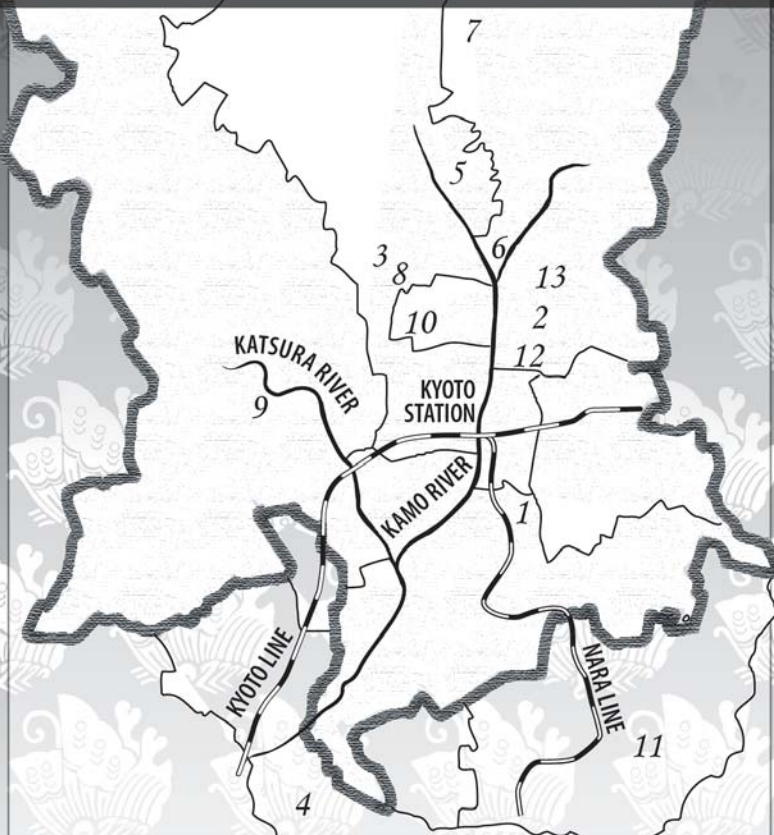


KYOTO

KYOTO

- 1 Fushimi Inari Taisha
- 2 Heian Jingu
- 3 Hirano Jinja
- 4 Iwashimizu Hachimangu
- 5 Kamigamo Jinja
- 6 Shimogamo Jinja
- 7 Kifune Jinja
- 8 Kitano Tenmangu

- 9 Matsuo Taisha
- 10 Seimei Jinja
- 11 Ujigami Jinja
- 12 Yasaka Jinja
- 13 Yoshida Jinja



Fushimi Inari Taisha

MAP 1

DATE FOUNDED: Established at the top of Mount Inari in A.D. 711 by the Hata clan and moved to the present location in the ninth century.

ADDRESS: 68 Fukakusa Yabunouchi-cho, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto 612-0882

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-641-7331. A pamphlet in English is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Nara Line to Inari Station (2 stops from Kyoto Station), then 1 minute by foot. Or take the Keihan Line to Fushimi-Inari Station and pass through the shopping street for food or gifts (about 5 minutes' walk).

ENSHRINED KAMI: Uka no mitama no okami, Satahiko no okami, and Omiya no me no okami. Including the two *kami* of the sessha Tanaka no okami and Shi no okami they are called the "five pillars" (*gohashira*) of Inari or simply the Inari *kami*.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Abundant crops, success in business, the well-being of the family, safety on the roadways, and protection from danger. At specific locations on the mountain, prayers are also offered for other benefits.

BEST TIME TO GO: Fushimi Inari is Kyoto's most popular destination for New Year's *hatsumode*. The walk up the mountain behind the shrine can be enjoyed in any season, but particularly when the autumn color is at its best in late November and early December.



Fushimi Inari Taisha *honden*

ally a few steps away. Fushimi is the oldest and most important of the thousands of Inari shrines throughout the country. The shrine was burned down in 1468 but the existing buildings are still of great age. The *honden* was rebuilt in 1499 (when it was expanded to enshrine five *kami*) in a *nagare-zukuri* style with an extra long roof on the front. Its red-lacquered woodwork and white stucco walls are typical of Inari shrines, but this shrine is rather large at five bays wide. It is designated an Important Cultural Property. The *romon* ("tower gate") was built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1589, and the *ochaya* (teahouse) located to the right of the *honden* was originally from the early-seventeenth-century palace of retired emperor Go-Mizuno-o. But the most impressive feature of Fushimi Inari is the network of walking paths, covered by five thousand back-to-back bright red *torii*. They begin to wind their way up and around Inari mountain from immediately behind the main shrine. Indeed, so striking and awe-inspiring a sight are the blazing red tunnels dappled with light against a background of rich green forest that one is tempted to think of them collectively as a "horizontal Gaudi."

Important physical features: From JR's Inari Station, the first large *torii* marking the entrance to Fushimi Inari is liter-

The shrine grounds encompass the three peaks of Mount Inari, and besides the thousands of *torii* are thousands of *otsuka* stone altars and fox statues. Worshipers started setting up stone altars in the Meiji period, and they bear a remarkable resemblance to the *sanzon ishi* (three-Buddha stone arrangement) of Japanese gardens. The stones are engraved with the names of *kami* that have either been created by believers or imported from other places. They are clustered in such high concentrations that they look to the uninitiated almost like a graveyard. The stones represent just one of the many personalized cults and practices that make up the complex of Inari worship.

Important spiritual features: The *kami* of Fushimi Inari Taisha are closely tied to agriculture and to the land. Though originally three, Tanaka no okami and Shi no okami were added from 1266 and the five are collectively identified as Inari. Chief among the original three is Uka no mitama no okami, mentioned in both the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. The Inari *kami* was also amalgamated with the Buddhist deity Daikiniten from an early date and retains a position in both religions. The second most important place of Inari worship, for example, is said to be Toyokawa Inari in Aichi, which is the Zen temple Myogonji. Another important site of Inari worship is Saijo Inari, a Nichiren Buddhist temple in Okayama. But every shrine, Shinto or otherwise, does not enshrine the same three *kami* as Fushimi (though many enshrine Uka no mitama). In fact, over the centuries, “Inari” has become a sort of umbrella term for a wide range of deities and beliefs.

Inari practices were largely unaltered by Meiji reforms and still incorporate many forms of folk religion such as the “seven mysterious traditions” (*Inari yama no nana fushiji*).

They have varied over time, and lists found on web pages include ten or eleven different traditions. Some of them are endorsed by the shrine and some are not. They include such things as the *omo-karu isbi* (“heavy light stones”), a form of divination using the *hoju* spheres on top of stone lanterns. The worshipper faces two lanterns and asks a question, then lifts the spheres from the tops of the lanterns. If they feel lighter than expected, the answer is positive. Another practice is the *Osanba-san no rosoku*. At Osanba-san, the Midwife Inari shrine at the bottom of the mountain, it is said that after a candle is lit and prayed over, the burned stub should be given to a woman when she is about to give birth. In the time it takes the stub to burn out, the birth will be successfully completed.

In addition, Fushimi Inari Taisha represents a perfect middle ground between the options of visiting a single shrine and going on a long pilgrimage. This is due to the tradition of making a pilgrimage to the many sacred sites within the confines of Inari Mountain itself. Since about the twelfth century, it has been a mark of worship in Japan that a pilgrimage accrues greater spiritual merit than does visiting a single location. Several literary references to the practice of circulating the mountain’s three peaks as an act of prayer and devotion from as far back as the Heian period shows the roots of the practice to be older. In the *Kagero nikki* (The Kagero Diary) of a Fujiwara noblewoman from the years 954–74, the author speaks of visiting the lower, middle, and upper shrines. In the early eleventh century, Sei Shonagon, of *Makura no soshi* (The Pillow Book) fame, mentions encountering a woman doing the *shichido mode* (“seven times worship”), a form of pilgrimage apparently in vogue at the time, whereby the worshipper makes the strenuous trip up and down

the mountain seven times in one day. It confirms a prominent feature of Fushimi Inari: the ability to customize worship to individual needs. In the style of pilgrimage and the deities worshipped, individuals and groups of worshippers at Fushimi observe their own traditions, worshipping and performing the rituals they consider most spiritually rewarding. These include some of the typical rituals of Shinto, such as ablution beneath waterfalls and offerings of food and money along with prayer, as well as many that are specific to this site.

Description: The founding legend of Inari, as recorded in the *Yamashiro fudoki*, speaks of Hata no Irogu, from a large clan of Korean immigrants, using *mochi* (pounded sticky rice) for target practice. When he shot an arrow into the *mochi*, it was transformed into a white bird that flew to a mountain peak called Mitsumine (the three peaks of Inari Mountain), where it was again transformed into rice plants. The name Inari as used here is a variation on *ine nari* ("rice growing"). The shrine was founded sometime around the eighth century by the Hata clan to worship the *sanza* (three thrones): the rice or grain *kami* (Uka no mitama), the water *kami* (Omiyame), and the land *kami* (Sarutahiko). By the late ninth century, Fushimi Inari was one of sixteen prominent shrines to receive regular offerings from the imperial court. In the ninth century, the founder of Shingon Buddhism in Japan, Kobo Daishi, designated Inari as the protecting *kami* for Kyoto's Toji temple. A legend states that he met an old man carrying rice on Inari mountain and recognized him as the rice deity. He set up a shrine for the *kami* and inscribed the Chinese characters for rice and sack (*inari*) on a plaque. His recognition of the *kami* was of great importance in the development of Inari worship, and Kobo

Daishi is still worshipped in many spots on the mountain.

Historically, Inari worship spread by absorbing groups who adopted Inari as their *yasbiki-gami* (estate *kami* enshrined on or near the land on which a family lives). During the Edo period Inari was also adopted by tradespeople in the rapidly growing cities, and was gradually transformed into a *kami* of business. The practice of dividing and re-enshrining of a *kami* elsewhere is part of the reason for this dynamic growth. Especially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, selling a divided spirit or a higher rank for a shrine could increase the prestige of its town or sponsor. Though other shrines have grown in similar ways, for Inari the practice was confirmed in a decree in 1194 by Emperor Go-Toba that only Fushimi had the right to divide and re-enshrine the spirit of Inari (and transfer its top ranking). The practice continues today, and a Motomiya Festival is held in July to celebrate the nearly one hundred thousand enshrinements of the Inari deity. Most of these are not full-fledged shrines but home shrines or part of other institutions.

Finally, there are the foxes that act as messengers and protectors of Inari. One tradition has it that when the *kami* descends from the mountain to the fields in the spring to become the rice *kami*, it rides on a horse led by a fox. Another tradition associates Inari with the Buddhist deity Daikiniten who rides on a white fox and was associated with Daikokuten, the Buddhist deity of the kitchen and the Five Grains. Another tradition is that the association comes from an expression for Toyouke okami, which was Miketsu. (Toyouke is a deity of grains enshrined in the outer shrine of Ise who was closely associated with the rice *kami* Ukemochi okami.) When written phonetically, as *miketsu*, it echoes an old expression for "three foxes." A separate tradition identi-

fies foxes (known today as *kitsune*) as wily creatures believed to have the ability to change into human form (the more malevolent ones are also said to enter into humans and possess them). Probably entering Japanese lore from China in the twelfth century, the latter are not the same as the foxes of Inari. Foxes were not part of the earliest traditions of worship here, though now they hover everywhere one looks—many dressed smartly in a bright red bib with some found holding the key to the rice granary in their mouth. Whatever the true origin of the connection, foxes at the entrance (rather than *komainu*) are now the mark of Inari shrines throughout Japan. At Fushimi Inari they take on the air of spirits.

For the ordinary visitor it is the thousands upon thousands of *torii*, in every size imaginable—from the mammoth entrance *torii* to the thousands of diminutive one-foot-high wooden *torii* offered as devotions, clinging to every available space—that create the strongest impression. They permeate the air of the shrine with a religious fervor not usually associated with Shinto. Even if you do not climb the whole mountain, at least be sure to pass through the *senbon torii*, not far behind the main shrine building. It is a double row of about one thousand *torii* featured in the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*. According to the shrine's web site, *torii* can be set up with the name of the sponsor for ¥300,000 to ¥1,300,000 each. Ideally, you should plan to spend three to four hours or longer at Inari, taking time to walk around the mountain, stop for refreshments, or enjoy a bowl of *kitsune udon* ("fox" noodles).

Festival: Hatsuuma Taisai, early February (day varies by year). The first "day of the horse" of the second month is the traditional day for this festival, the most important of the year at Fushimi Inari.

Heian Jingu

DATE FOUNDED: 15 March 1895, on the 1,100th anniversary of the founding of the Heian capital (Kyoto). Refurbished, expanded, and rededicated in 1940.

ADDRESS: Okazaki Nishi Tenno-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-8341

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-761-0221. Opening and closing times vary by season, either 5 or 6 A.M. and 5 or 6 P.M. Garden viewing hours begin at 8:30 A.M., with closing times varying between 4:30 and 5:30 P.M. Entrance fee for the garden is ¥600 for adults and ¥300 for children (which includes a small pamphlet in English with a map of the grounds). Color booklet in Japanese and English available for ¥800.

HOW TO GET THERE: From JR Kyoto Station, take city bus 5 or 32 to Kyoto Kaikan / Bijutsukan-mae. Other options include the Tozai Line to Higashiyama Station and then 15 minutes on foot, or the Keihan Railway to Jingu Marutamachi Station followed by a 10-minute walk.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Emperors Kanmu and Komei, the first and last emperors to reside in Kyoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Peace, the well-being of the family, and protection against danger.

BEST TIMES TO GO: The gardens are famous for *yaebenishidare* cherry blossoms (a very dark pink variety), which are best viewed in early April (the peak is around 10 April). For four days during peak cherry blossom season the gardens close briefly at 6 P.M. and reopen at 6:15 for lighted nighttime viewing. The garden is also famous for irises and water lilies between May and September. Getting there early to avoid the crowds is best.

MAP 2



Dragon fountain with white tiger pavillion (left) and *daigakuden*

Important physical features: The main physical feature of Heian Jingu is its grand scale. It is a five-eighths reproduction of the Heian-period *chodo-in* (Hall of State), a building within the grounds of the imperial palace used for deliberations on affairs of state. The main structure occupying the north side of the compound was the *daigokuden*, reproduced at Heian Jingu as the shrine's *haiden*.

The first sight of Heian Jingu is usually the massive 80-foot-tall vermillion *myojin torii*, constructed in concrete in 1929 (there was no *torii* prior to that date). It stands about 900 feet in front of the main gate. Unlike many shrines that sport three *torii* on the approaching *sando*, Heian Jingu has only one. But what it lacks in quantity it more than makes up for in size. The *otenmon* gate that marks the entrance to the grounds is typical of massive Chinese-style *nijumon* (two-story gates). It has a huge double-tiered hip-and-gable roof clad in dark green tile and is five bays (about

85 feet) wide. The roof was originally *ibushigawara*, which has a carbonized silvery-black surface. The gravel-covered courtyard that extends from the *otenmon* in the south to the *daigokuden* in the north is separated into a front and back section by an elevation of four steps, and is surrounded by a semi-enclosed, roofed corridor (*kairo*).

Along the right (east) and left (west) sides close to the *daigokuden* are Chinese pavilion-style towers called the *soryuro* ("blue dragon pavilion") and the *byakkoro* ("white tiger pavilion"). This reflects the orientation of the buildings in the Heian period that followed Chinese feng shui precepts (the White Tiger protected the West, the Blue Dragon the East, the Red Phoenix the South, and the Black Tortoise the North). An echo of these pavilions is found in tiger and dragon sculptures over hand-washing basins just inside the *nijumon* gate. Like these structures, the *daigokuden* was also built in 1895. It was destroyed by arson in 1976, but promptly rebuilt in 1979. The building is about 109 feet wide by 40 feet deep. A long, narrow "inner ritual hall" (*naibaiden*) built in 1979 is located parallel to and behind the *daigokuden*, and the *bonden*, the only building not painted in vermillion, is located behind it. The *bonden* is in *nagare-zukuri* style, without *chigi* or *katsuogi*. The extended stair canopy is attached directly to the *naibaiden*, and a covered corridor leads to the *haiden*'s central bay. A small stage surrounded by four pillars also sits directly under the canopy, on both sides of the corridor. At the time of the enshrinement of Emperor Komei in 1940, there were actually two *bonden*, but they were combined in the rebuilding of 1979. Interestingly, the *bonden* has three bays, with Kanmu enshrined in the right bay and Komei in the left. In an unusual feature, the outer bays are approached by the *guji* (chief priest) from the central bay.

One of the most charming features of Heian Jingu is the set of gardens, collectively called *shin'en*. Three of them were designed by Ogawa Jihei, also known as Ueji. He is often considered a successor to the seventeenth-century designer and architect Kōbori Enshū. Ueji is a pivotal figure in Japanese gardening history, noted for incorporating Western-style plants and aesthetics into traditional Japanese gardens. The *shin'en* gardens employ both Heian and Meiji motifs in a pond/stroll garden, which wraps around the back of the shrine. It is entered from the left side, known as the south garden, which was added in 1968 from a design by Nakane Kinsaku. A sub-garden contains two hundred plants used in Heian times, as described in various scrolls from the period. An electric streetcar, said to be Japan's oldest, is also located in the garden. When the trolley was discontinued, it was felt appropriate to house it at Heian Jingu, highlighting the commemorative aspect of the shrine.

Continuing through this garden you enter the first of those designed by Ueji and with the first of three ponds. While not very large, the pond is bordered by a cluster of two thousand irises that bloom in June. The next garden contains a second, somewhat larger pond, with a famous stepping-stone bridge called *garyūkyō* that slinks across the pond in the form of a dragon. The stones were taken from the remains of two bridges built by Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The last and most impressive garden occupies the entire eastern side of the shrine grounds and contains the largest pond. Its main feature is a bridge that recalls the slender and elegant architecture of Ginkakuji. This *taibeikaku* was originally three bridges that were brought from the imperial palace and remade into one with a length of 276 feet. A small pavilion in the center of the covered bridge is an excellent spot to rest and view the

garden. The *shōbikan*, a guesthouse in the style of a Heian-period fishing pavilion that sits on the western side of the pond, was also brought from the palace grounds at that time. The water for the ponds comes from a canal that was dug to Kyoto from distant Lake Biwa in the Meiji period. As the elevation drops drastically from Biwa to Kyoto, falling water was used to create the electricity that lit the streets and powered the first electric streetcars. Interestingly, since water from the lake has fed the ponds from the beginning, the environment of Lake Biwa has been recreated here to such a degree that many species of aquatic life that have become extinct at the lake still thrive at Heian Jingu.

Important spiritual features: Heian Jingu enshrines Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806), who created Heiankyō (present-day Kyoto). While he was the only *kami* enshrined when the shrine was built in 1895, Emperor Kōmei was added in 1940 on the 2,600th anniversary of the nation's founding. It was an unusual case, in which one emperor was enshrined as a *kami* more than a thousand years after his death, and a second emperor (only distantly related to the first) some forty-five years later. The shrine was established as much as a commemorative emblem of the past glory of Kyoto as a religious institution. Of course, it is not the only one in Japan to enshrine emperors. But the others are simply shrines, whereas Heian Jingu is strongly symbolic, dedicated to both the founder of the old capital and the last emperor to reside there. Kanmu is revered as a clever and creative leader who built the city that was the center of Japanese culture for the better part of a thousand years. Kōmei, on the other hand, is best known for his anger at the forced entry of Commodore Matthew Perry's black ships in 1853 and the

edict he issued in 1863—impossible by then to obey—to “expel the barbarians.” By the time of Komei’s death at the age of just thirty-five in 1867, the country was in disarray, and the wholesale import of Western culture into Japan had begun. But what was hardest for the citizens of Kyoto to swallow was the prospect of the young Emperor Meiji relocating to the country’s new eastern capital, Tokyo.

Description: The scale of Heian Jingu is impressive, from its massive *torii* to the huge expanse of white sand that greets the visitor inside the equally huge main gate. The late 1800s, when the shrine was built, was an age of World Expositions. Japan had participated in its first in Vienna in 1873, by invitation of the Austrian government, creating a Japanese garden and exhibition of arts. In 1893, Japan built a reproduction of the Byodo-in temple for the World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. In this way, Japan became acquainted with the concept of reproducing past achievements to exhibit traditional culture and enhance national pride. The occasions that inspired the building of Heian Jingu were the 1,100th anniversary of the city’s founding and the fourth National Industrial Exhibition (the first exhibition to be held in Kyoto). The first three exhibitions had been held in Ueno Park in Tokyo, under the slogan “Enrich the country and strengthen the military; encourage new industry.” Hosting the fourth exhibition and building Heian Jingu helped restore Kyoto’s economy and pride, after the shock of losing the emperor to Tokyo. Today the shrine not only recalls the city’s glorious past, but also serves as the site of excellent gardens and a significant natural preserve. It has become a major tourist destination in a city already brimming with tourist destinations.

Festivals: Jidai Matsuri (Festival of Ages), 22 October (rain date: 23 October). The main festival of the shrine is a great procession of people in costume from the Heian to Meiji periods, inspired by the World Expositions. Japanese leaders who viewed these early European expositions were impressed by great parades of people in ancient costume. Such events gathered huge numbers of onlookers, and the authorities believed that a procession honoring the history of Kyoto would be an excellent means of drawing attention to the opening of the shrine. Today this is one of the three great festivals of Kyoto (including the Gion and Aoi festivals), with two thousand participants wearing carefully crafted reproductions. The costumes feature the highest level of skill in crafts that include weaving, dyeing, leather, woodwork, metal, and beadwork. Because many of the techniques are known only to a small number of Kyoto families, it is difficult to duplicate the festival outside of the city. The procession starts at the imperial palace and moves to its climax at Heian Jingu, while moving back in time from the Meiji to the Heian period. An excellent color brochure on the parade in Japanese and English is available for ¥800 at the shrine.

Noh performances, 1–2 June. *Takigi* Noh is performed outdoors in the evening by torchlight. The custom began around 1255 with the Shuni-e fire ceremony at Kofukuji temple in Nara. It involved the burning of sacred *takigi* wood and the performance of *takigi sarugaku*, a forerunner of Noh. In the postwar period, Heian Jingu was chosen by Kyoto City as a new venue for the tradition (it also continues at Kofukuji and elsewhere). The spectacle starts at 5:30 P.M. (gate opens at 4:30) and ends around 9 P.M. Tickets cost ¥3,000 in advance or ¥4,000 at the door. Group discounts available.

Hirano Jinja

MAP 3

DATE FOUNDED: Imaki no sune okami was enshrined in Tamura Palace, in Heijokyo (Nara) in A.D. 782. In the year 794 Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806) gathered Imaki and three other *kami* together and founded the shrine in Heiankyo (Kyoto). The present buildings date from 1625.

ADDRESS: 1 Hirano Miyamoto-cho, Kitaku, Kyoto 603-8322

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-461-4450. A single page in English on the history of the shrine is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take bus 205 or 50 from JR Kyoto Station to Kinugasakou-mae bus stop. Or walk 10 minutes from Kitano Hakubaicho Station on the Kitano Line.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Imaki no sune okami, Kudo no okami, Furuaki no okami, Hime no okami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: To find love and marriage, revitalization and new beginnings, protection against danger, and safe childbirth.

BEST TIME TO GO: Around mid-April to early May for the cherry blossoms, or October when the camellias are in bloom.

Important physical features: The *honden* of Hirano Jinja houses four *kami*, and each has its own *kasuga-zukuri* structure. The unusual thing about the architecture here is that the *honden* are in paired sets, with two side-by-side gable roofs to the right and two to the left. A roof running perpendicular between the gables creates two identical “H” shapes when seen from above. Infill panels between the paired structures create the impression of a single building with



The *honden* and *kairo* of Hirano Jinja with the *haiden* at the front right

two doors, two sets of stairs, and two gabled roofs. A single pent roof runs along the front of this double gable, and a veranda wraps around each set of buildings. The roofs are surfaced in cypress-bark tiles, and the roof ridges are in copper, as are the slender *chigi* and *katsuogi*. The structures are unpainted but make good use of gold-plated details such as the chrysanthemum *kamon*. A roofed space between the two sets of shrines leads to the entrance gate in the open corridor (*kairo*) that surrounds the *honden*. The space is used as a *beiden*. The roof over the entrance gate is an undulating bargeboard type (*karabafu*), and the first 30 feet or so of *kairo* on either side of the entrance are covered by a very broad roof. It is an extremely elegant and unassuming group of structures. The shrine was rebuilt in 1625, the previous buildings having burned in the Onin War (1467–77), together with all shrine documentation. Considering that the style is so atypical of what was built in the late Momoyama period, it is likely that the current buildings resemble the original.

The *haiden* that stands in front of the entrance gate is said to be one of the oldest in Japan. It is a type of *haiden* with no walls

that resembles a *kaguraden*. It has a large *irimoya* roof of Japanese cypress bark supported by six slender legs, one at each corner and additional legs on two of the four sides. The opposing two sides have an open span of more than 20 feet. It seems almost miraculous that the very large roof could be supported on such slender pillars without toppling over in typhoons and earthquakes. The *baiden* was constructed in 1650 and is called a *tsugiki* (spliced-wood) type, so perhaps its surprising strength has something to do with the mysterious mortise and tenon splice joints (*kanawa tsugi*) at the base of each pillar. A fence once enclosed the area, restricting access to the *bon-den*, but we currently have the opportunity to view this Important Cultural Property up close.

While the total area of the shrine grounds is not very large, Hirano Jinja has about five hundred cherry trees of fifty varieties. Since Heian times it has been famed as a prime spot for cherry-blossom viewing.

Important spiritual features: The four *kami* enshrined in Hirano Jinja are neither widely known nor well understood. The shrine describes Imaki okami as a god of revitalization, Kudo okami as a deity of the cooking pot, Furuaki okami as a deity of new beginnings, and Hime no okami as a deity of fertility and discovery. The *Engishiki* (967) mentions the shrine as guardian of the imperial household kitchen. It seems that Emperor Kanmu gathered these *kami* together in one shrine and founded Hirano Jinja in the northwest corner of Kyoto to act as a protector of both the city and of the imperial court. Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354) was apparently the first to consider the *kami* as ancestral, assigning them to the Tahira, Minamoto, Oe, and Takashina branches of the imperial line. His thinking may have been slanted by his desire

to validate the Southern Court of Emperor Go-Daigo. Later, the Shinto scholar Ban Nobutomo (1773–1846), in his research into *banshin* (foreign *kami*), stated that the *kami* of Hirano are ancestors of the Paekche dynasty. However a spokesman for the shrine believes Nobutomo erred in his translation of certain words, which drew him to an erroneous conclusion. A related theory identified Hime no okami with the mother of Kanmu, Takano no Niikasa. If so, it may be one reason why Kanmu, whose mother was descended from a Korean king of Paekche, valued the shrine. Perhaps incidentally, the term “Imaki” is applied to Korean immigrants in the Nihon shoki.

Be that as it may, the deities of Hirano were considered “eminent *kami*,” and so Hirano Jinja was included in the sixteen important shrines (later expanded to twenty-two) which received regular offerings from the imperial palace. The *kami* of Hirano were considered very powerful, and the hereditary priests who controlled the shrine were from a clan of tortoise-shell diviners called the Urabe. Tortoise-shell divination (*kiboku*), imported from China through Korea, became one of the main forms of divination regulated under the Council of Kami Affairs (*jingikan*). The Urabe were an important clan of hereditary Shinto priests (*jingidoke*) considered one of the “three houses of Shinto” along with the Shirakawa and Nakatomi clans. They divided into the Hirano and Yoshida clans, with the Yoshida becoming one of the most influential *kami* clans throughout the late medieval and Edo periods. The Yoshida controlled the right to appoint new priests and rank shrines. The Hirano were transcribers of the classics and experts on the *Nihon shoki*. A compilation of research, called *Shaku Nibongi*, written by Urabe Kanekata, earned the family the sobriquet “house of the *Nihon shoki*.”

Description: Hirano Jinja is one of the oldest shrines in Kyoto, having been founded by Emperor Kanmu when he founded the city in the eighth century. Besides receiving offerings from the imperial palace, the shrine was the site of extraordinary rites (*rinjisai*) involving participation of imperial princes and the emperor. In the Heian period it was considered one of the “major seven” shrines, along with Ise, Iwashimizu, the Kamo shrines, Matsuo, Fushimi Inari, and Kasuga. It was associated with a *shinbutsu shugo* (syncretistic) belief known as the “thirty tutelaries” (*sanjubanshin*), which originated with the Tendai monks of Mount Hiei in the ninth century. This was a belief that thirty *kami* (presumably chosen by Tendai monks) alternated daily to protect the Lotus Sutra. The *kami* of Hirano was also included in this grouping.

Today, the shrine sits quietly on the northwest corner of its larger neighbor, Kitano Tenmangu, in the quadrant of the city that also hosts the temples of Ryoanji and Kinkakuji. Hirano's small grounds are entered through a single red *torii* and a modest gate, where hanging paper lanterns sport the unmistakable cherry blossom motif. In a city full of famous cherry blossom spots, Hirano Jinja is one of the best, and it is said that a blossom-viewing festival has been held here since 985. The cherry trees were planted during the brief reign of Emperor Kazan (r. 984–6).

Festivals: Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival), 10 April. One of the oldest festivals in Kyoto, which has been held more or less continuously since 985. It features traditional *koto* and *shamisen* performances by players in courtly costume. The festival begins with a ceremony at Emperor Kazan's mausoleum in the morning, and in the afternoon there is a procession back to the shrine.

Iwashimizu Hachimangu

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 859 by the monk Gyokyo at the behest of Emperor Seiwa (r. 858–76).

ADDRESS: 30 Yawata-takabo, Yawata-shi, Kyoto 614-8588

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-981-3001

HOW TO GET THERE: From Yawata-shi Station the shrine is a 20- to 30-minute walk uphill. There is also a cable car that leaves from in front of the Station. It takes just 3 minutes and costs ¥200. To get to Yawata-shi Station, take the Keihan Honsen Line from Osaka or from Kyoto.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Hachiman okami (also known as Hondawake no mikoto and associated with Emperor Ojin), Hime okami, and Jingu Kogo (Okinagatarashihime no mikoto).

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection against danger, safe childbirth, and the attainment of goals.

BEST TIME TO GO: In early April for the cherry blossoms.

Important physical features: Iwashimizu Hachimangu is located at the summit of a 469-foot mountain known as Otokoyama, about 30 minutes southwest of Kyoto Station. The small peak stands in the midst of the city of Yawata. The north side of the mountain is bordered by the confluence of three rivers: the Kizugawa, Ujigawa, and Katsuragawa. Built in a style known as *hachiman-zukuri*, the shrine was reconstructed in 1634 by the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu. Besides the highly ornate finish, the chief characteristic is that the shrine looks like two separate and parallel buildings. In fact it is one building with two parallel, cedar bark–

MAP 4



Iwashimizu Hachimangu *romon* and *kairo*

covered gabled roofs that lie so close together that the eaves almost touch. Under the eaves is a wide and deep rain gutter made of wood and covered in gold, contributed by the warlord Oda Nobunaga (1534–82). A small room (*ainoma*) one bay deep (about 6 feet) is created between the buildings by the space under the eaves. There are doors at both ends of the *ainoma* that, when opened, allow priests to walk directly through the building as if through a corridor, without entering the front or rear structure. The rear structure is called the *naiden*, and the front is called the *geiden*. There are three entrances on the front of each structure for the enshrined *kami*. Hachiman is enshrined in the center, Jingu Kogo to the right, and Hime okami to the left. While three sets of doors enclose the *naiden*, the entrances to the *geiden* remain open, covered only by hanging screens (*sudare*). Each entrance has a separate staircase, and a Heian-era chair is placed toward the front of each interior as a

seat for the *kami*. The *naiden* has a raised dais intended as a sleeping place for the *kami*. The exterior walls are in white plaster, with the wooden elements painted in red lacquer. The interior is entirely painted in red lacquer as well. The building is richly polychromed and decorated with gold and copper trimmings. There are hundreds of intricate carvings of plants and animals, many of which are by the famous Edo-period sculptor Hidari Jingoro (known as the carver of the “three monkeys” and other reliefs at Nikko Toshogu). The building is surrounded by a 6-foot-high *tamagaki* fence (in the *sujikai-goshi* style), with a copper roof and diagonal wood-lattice infills.

Standing directly in front of the *bonden* is an open-sided structure that serves three basic purposes. The front section close to the *bonden* is called the *beiden* and is used for performing rites of worship. The section farthest from the *bonden* is called the *buden* and is used for offerings of music and dance. Together they form a covered arcade that serves also as rain protection. The tall and elegant *romon* is effectively the face of the shrine, as only priests can approach the *bonden*. The vermilion-lacquered wood is beautifully set off by the dark surface of the cypress-bark roof. With its steep slope and upturning corners, the roof seems poised to take flight. From the front, a long, curved bargeboard (*karabafu*) roof extends to cover the staircase leading to the entrance. An extremely wide (about 7 feet) tile-roofed corridor (*kairo*) almost 600 feet long emerges from the right and left sides of the *romon* and encloses the buildings within. The entire structure and interior compound are raised about 10 feet off the ground, necessitating a stone staircase in addition to the wooden one leading to the *romon*. There is one more outer gate, called the south *somon* and dating from the late Edo period that encloses the front area of

the inner precincts, creating a large courtyard where a stage for *kagura* is erected on special occasions. All the buildings are designated Important Cultural Properties. Iwashimizu underwent a major renovation of the *honden* and *romon* to coincide with its 1,150th anniversary in 2010.

Important spiritual features:

Iwashimizu represents the emergence of Hachiman as a god of war as well as exemplifying the *kami*'s identification with Buddhism. It is also significant as the *kami*'s second enshrinement close to a capital city and seat of power. (For the beginnings of Hachiman worship, see the entry for Usa Jingu.) The first was in Tamukeyama Hachimangu in Nara as protector of the Great Buddha of Todaiji in 752. After that time, the connection between Hachiman and the imperial court grew stronger. In 855 Hachiman was again called upon to "protect the nation" when the head of the Great Buddha of Todaiji suddenly fell off during an earthquake. Emperor Montoku launched a campaign to rebuild the Buddha shortly afterward, and the first place he turned for assistance was Usa Jingu. For the first time, the imperial message addressed Hachiman as "awesome *Daibosatsu*" (great Buddha) and called upon him to "protect the emperor [country] to eternity." At the same time, a statement was issued that the *kami* who assisted in this project would gain "merit" (in the sense of Buddhist enlightenment). It was an important step in acknowledging *kami* as "trace" manifestations of the "original ground" (*bonji-suijaku*) of the Buddha.

It is in this context that the *engi* of Iwashimizu Hachimangu notes that in 859 a monk of Daianji temple named Gyokyo went (or was sent) to Usa, where he prayed before the *kami* for six months, receiving an oracle from

Hachiman that the *kami* wished to move near the capital to "protect the state." After returning to Kyoto, Gyokyo had another vision telling him to build a hermitage on Otokoyama. At about the same time, the emperor had a dream of a purple cloud rising from Otokoyama and descending on the capital. As a result, Iwashimizu Gokokuji ("temple for the protection of the nation") was built, two years before the completion of repairs to the Great Buddha. It was the first shrine in which a monk performed Buddhist rites for the enshrined *kami* (rather than establishing a temple near a shrine to pray for the *kami*). Such a shrine was called a *miyadera*. Since its dedication, Iwashimizu Hachimangu has been considered one of the country's most important shrines. This is partly due to the identification of Hachiman as imperial ancestor in the form of Emperor Ojin. In 965 it was one of sixteen shrines receiving offerings from the imperial court, and pilgrimages by high court officials and emperors became frequent. When the Seiwa Genji branch of the imperial family (otherwise known as the Minamoto) began to pray to Hachiman for success in battle, the deity came to be viewed as a god of war and protector of the samurai as well.

Hachiman's more explicit role as a *kami* of war began when Minamoto no Yorinobu, who was the governor of Kawachi Province (which included present-day Osaka), prayed at the tomb of Ojin in 1046 and addressed him as "martial emperor." On an earlier occasion around 1039, Yorinobu's son, Yoriyoshi, had a vision of Hachiman while praying at Iwashimizu. In the same month, his wife conceived a son, Yoshiie. When the boy turned seven, his initiation into manhood (*genpuku*) was held at the shrine and he took the name Hachiman Taro. As an adult he became a legendary warrior, and commentaries from the time refer to him as a "god in



human form.” When father and son finished a successful twelve-year campaign against the rebellious Abe clan in the northeastern part of the country in 1063, Yoriyoshi established Tsu-rugaoka Hachimangu in Kamakura. So it was that Hachiman grew in the following centuries to be the god of the samurai and to occupy tens of thousands of shrines across the country.

Description: The walk from Yawata-shi Station to the shrine is mostly up a stone stairway to the peak of Mount Otokoyama (some might prefer to take the cable car to the top and walk down). The entrance to what was once a great shrine-temple complex is marked with a large stone *torii* that is reached by turning left out of the station and walking 2 minutes. A number of temples line the eastern base of the mountain, and several old shrines, such as Kora Jinja, also founded by Gyokyo around 860, are in the immediate area. Although several others burned down, Kora Jinja was rebuilt in 1884 and moved to its present location in 1902. The Meiji government’s policy of separating Shinto and Buddhism also caused the destruction of temples related to Iwashimizu Hachimangu. One temple to survive is Zenporitsuji, situated at the southeastern side of Otokoyama. It was created in 1259 when an official of Iwashimizu named Zenpoji had his house converted into the temple. He was from one of the hereditary priestly clans of the shrine, along with the Tanaka clan, who claim descent from the founder Gyokyo.



Monument to Thomas Edison on *otokoyama*

On the way to the mountain from the station, it is possible to visit the *tonguden* (the *otabisbo*, or temporary resting place, for Hachiman’s *mikosbi* during festivals) and Kora Jinja. You can also see the historic Angobashi bridge that spans the river Hojogawa nearby. After passing under a second stone *torii*, the staircase leading up the mountain comes into view. It contains the “seven-bend road,” a series of switchback stairways that make for a fairly steep climb. At the top you turn right and encounter a third *torii* at the beginning of the long, straight *sando* to the south gate.

Otokoyama lies near the midpoint of the Japanese archipelago, and coupled with its relative isolation, this gives the government-protected mountain a large range of plant and bird life. One aspect of this is the abundance of bamboo on the mountain. There is an interesting story related to the bamboo of Otokoyama. In 1880 Thomas Edison sent one of his researchers, William H. Moore, to Japan in search of good bamboo to use as light bulb filaments. It is said that he had tested six thousand materials, but the bamboo taken from a fan lasted the longest—200 hours. Moore was directed to Kyoto and more specifically

Otokoyama, and the bamboo he found there made a filament that lasted close to 1,200 hours. Ironically, the rock that makes up Otokoyama is a poor surface for growing bamboo, as a result of which the type that grows there is harder than normal. It became part of Edison's incandescent lamp for the following ten years, and the inventor maintained close ties to Japan. The Japan Industry Club hosted him in Tokyo in 1922 on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday. Interestingly, the founders of Nippon Electric Company (NEC) and Toshiba both worked in Edison's lab in Menlo Park, California, where they learned not only technology (Toshiba created Japan's first electric light) but also manufacturing processes and management. It is strange to think that the mammoth Japanese electric industry began with Edison, and that Edison's light bulb began with the grace of the *kami* of Iwashimizu Hachimangu. Today there is a monument to the inventor on Otokoyama, and a Festival of Light has been observed since 1999. It is also possible to purchase *ema* votive plaques bearing an image of Edison.

Brief mention should be made here of the shrine's association with Shigemori Mirei, well known in the world of garden design. It seems that for many years he visited the shrine on the twenty-seventh of every month. When the shrine office burned down and was rebuilt in 1952, Shigemori created a small *karesansui* garden (dry-landscape rock garden) using stones from the site and the oldest stone lantern in the shrine's possession. The modest little garden can only be viewed from within the guest rooms of the shrine office or when the doors that enclose one side are open on festival days. Interestingly, the garden is walked through on such days, and the design seems to allow for this unusual usage.

Festivals: Iwashimizu Festival, 15 September. This is the main festival of the shrine and it's rather complex, beginning in the black of night when the *mikoshi* carrying the *kami* is brought down the mountain in a silent procession of priests and shrine maidens. The solemn rites finish at about 5:30 A.M. An imperial messenger arrives with offerings from the emperor at about 8 A.M. Afterwards the Hojo-e takes place, in which fish are released into the Hojogawa river on the eastern side of Otokoyama and into the Hojo pond on the grounds of Kora Jinja. Children also perform a "butterfly dance" on the Angobashi bridge. According to shrine tradition, the festival began on the 15th day of the 8th month of 863 (by the old Lunar calendar August 863). It represents an example of the joint worship of Shinto and Buddhism.

Toryoka (Festival of Light), 4 May. In this festival begun in 1999 thousands of lanterns made of cut bamboo are lit to celebrate the founding of the shrine and in praise of Thomas Edison. A prayer can be offered by having your name written on paper that is wrapped around a lantern (a ¥500 fee is requested). Tea is served in the guest rooms of the shrine office (also ¥500). Incidentally, Edison's birthday on 11 February happens to coincide with the mythological day on which the founding of Japan is said to have taken place in 660 B.C.

Stone and sand garden by Shigemori Mirei



Kamo Wakeikazuchi Jinja (Kamigamo Jinja)

MAP 5

DATE FOUNDED: The origin of the shrine is unknown, but thought to date back to pre-history. First documented date of the shrine's founding is A.D. 678.

ADDRESS: 339 Kamigamo Motoyama, Kita-ku, Kyoto 603-8047

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-781-0011. A description in English is available. Every morning at 9:30 (with some holidays excepted) there is a 20- to 30-minute tour of the shrine, including a purification ritual, for which a ¥500 donation is asked. Groups can also arrange in advance to receive an English-language lecture and tour which includes some of the shrine treasures not normally open to the public.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the number 4 city bus to Kamigamo Jinja-mae or Kamigamo Misonobashi.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Kamo Wakeikazuchi no okami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection against danger, and to find love and marriage.

BEST TIME TO GO: The vast lawn, cooling streams, and shady trees make it pleasant in summer, but the grounds are worth visiting throughout the year. Especially attractive are the cherry blossoms from March through mid-April.

Important physical features: Kamo Wakeikazuchi Jinja is commonly known as Kamigamo Jinja (upper Kamo shrine). It is located on 170 acres in the north of Kyoto, just before the plain gives way to mountains. Along with its sister shrine, Shimogamo Jinja, it is considered one of the oldest shrines in Kyoto,



Kamigamo Jinja *roman*

and both were designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1994. The grounds encompass Mount Ko to the north, where legend states that Wakeikazuchi no kami first descended during the age of Emperor Jinmu.

Kamigamo has a number of unique physical features, beginning with the *honden* that is paired with a second identical building called the *gonden*. Normally the replication would occur only at a shrine that worships two *kami*, or for a brief time during a regular rebuilding. That is not the case here. The shrine maintains that the *gonden* is intended for use in an emergency, if anything should happen to the *honden*. Even so, at shrines that make this provision, the building is called a *karidono* and is usually located away from the *honden*. The *gonden* is, however, used every twenty-one years to host the *kami* temporarily while the *honden* is being rebuilt (these days it is only repaired, rather than completely reconstructed—the forty-second “rebuilding” will take place in 2015). Emperor Go-Ichijo (r. 1016–36) ordered the first renovation, and it was carried out sporadically thereafter.

One might expect that since the *kami* is housed in the right-hand building the approach through the *chumon* gate would be aligned with it, but this is not the case. Instead it leads between the *bonden* and *gonden* structures. The current buildings date from 1863, but it is said the original forms were meticulously researched to reproduce them as they were in earlier times. They are in the *nagarezukuri* style, but with no *chigi* or *katsuogi*. This is not unusual, but what is rare (and perhaps unique to this shrine) is the painting of large *komainu* (Korean dogs) on the front wall of the *bonden*. The *gonden* too has this unusual feature, painted by a member of the Kano school in their unmistakable style. It is said to be a *kage koma* ("shadow *komainu*") that protects the divine spirit. When renovations are about to begin, a temporary building made of Japanese cypress is constructed behind the *gonden*. The sacred objects kept there are transferred to the temporary structure, and the *gonden* is refurbished. Then the *goshintai* ("sacred body" of the *kami*) is transferred to the *gonden* from the *bonden*, which is itself refurbished.

The shrine has a double gate structure. The first is a modest roofed gate, approached by several stone steps, which marks the entrance to the inner compound. A small courtyard separates this from a red *romon* gate with a *kairo*. The entrance to the *romon* is over a curved bridge that crosses one of two streams on the grounds. On the way to the *romon* is the most important auxiliary shrine, called Kataoka Jinja, where Tamayorihime is enshrined. An interesting tradition on certain occasions at Kamigamo is that before *norito* prayers are read by the *guji* in front of the *bonden*, two priests are sent to announce this intention to the *kami* at Kataoka Jinja. On completion, it is announced to a priest, who stands under

the *romon*, and he in turn announces it to the inner shrine; only then does the *guji* commence the ceremony.

Another unique feature found at both Kamigamo and the closely related Shimogamo is the *hashidono*, which is a covered platform similar to a *kaguraden* or *buden*. It stands some distance outside the red *romon* gate, spanning a stream like a covered bridge. It is the place from which the emperor's messenger (*chokushi*) reads the official petition (*gosaimon*) to the *kami*. He does this inaudibly, since the words are meant for the *kami* only. At that time the *guji* of Kamigamo, who sits on a rock in front of the bridge and receives the petition, turns toward the *bonden* and relates it to the *kami* within. To the right and left of the *hashidono* are the *tsuchinoya* (purification pavilion) and the *bosodono*. In front of the *bosodono* (a type of worship hall often seen in Buddhist temples) are two cones of sand called *tatesuna*, a permanent fixture of the shrine, which are said to reflect the shape of Mount Ko. There is a sprig of pine at the top that represents the pine forest of Mount Ko and the way the *kami* was worshipped by erecting a *bimorogi* (temporary altar) on the mountain top. The reason for two cones is explained as representing the principle of yin/yang, for the Kamo clan who founded the shrine were experts of *onmyodo* (yin/yang divination). Kamo no Tadayuki was a teacher of the famous tenth-century *onmyodo* master Abe no Seimei. Although the symbolism of the cones is more far reaching, perhaps it is yin/yang too that accounts for the *bonden* and *gonden* pairing.

Overall the shrine consists of thirty-four structures. Excluding the *bonden* and *gonden* they were all rebuilt in 1628. The *bonden* and *gonden* are National Treasures, while all the other buildings are designated Important Cultural Properties. There are also an unusually

large number of bridges (ten in all, including the *bashidono*) that span two streams—the Omonoi and the Mitarashi, which join to form the Nara no ogawa.

Important spiritual features: It is documented in the *Nihon shoki* that Emperor Kinmei began a festival here around the year 544 in order to remove the displeasure of the Kamo deity, which was thought to be causing storms and failed crops. The festival's proper name is the Kamosai, but it is commonly known as the Aoi Matsuri (Hollyhock Festival). The popular name derives from the hollyhock decoration worn by all the participants in the procession. The hollyhock is associated with the story of Wakeikazuchi (literally, “divided thunder”), the *kami* enshrined here. It is mentioned in what little is left of the *Yamashiro fudoki* as well as in the history of the shrine. Wakeikazuchi's grandfather (Taketsunumi no mikoto) and mother (Tamayori-hime) are enshrined at Shimogamo. The two shrines were once one (the names Kamigamo and Shimogamo mean upper and lower Kamo), and both retain various traditions within the Kamo clan lineage. However, they now maintain different founding traditions. (For details of the *kami*, please see the next entry, for Shimogamo.)

A shrine was established in the current location during the reign of Emperor Tenmu in 678, which is considered the official founding date. But as the founding date of the Aoi Matsuri indicates, worship of the *kami* is much older. There is archeological evidence of habitation or worship on the mountain from as far back as 100 B.C. An ancient secret ritual called the *miare shinji* held in the black of night every year on 12 May reflects the shrine's origins. A *himorogi* (temporary altar) is erected near two cone-shaped piles of sand where the

deity descends and is then carried back to the *bonden* to renew the sacred spirit of the shrine.

Emperor Saga (r. 809–23) reemphasized the importance of the shrine in 810 when he instituted the office of *kamo no saiin*, or “consecrated princess” chosen from among the emperor's daughters. The special favor implied the highest possible honor to the Kamo deity: only Ise Jingu had a similar post, called the *saio*, or *itsuki no miya*. Both the *saiin* and *saio* were virgins, usually selected from among daughters of the imperial family by divination. Once selected, they left the imperial compound and were kept in ritual purity in a separate residence until they were prepared to take up residence near the shrine. The ritual purity extended to a taboo on the use of words in the presence of the *saiin* relating to Buddhism or suggesting impurity. The *Engishiki* (“Procedures of the Engi Era,” completed in 927) lists such words as Buddha, pagoda, sutra, blood, death, etc., that could not be uttered. Instead, euphemisms (*imi kotoba*, or “taboo words”) were used, such as “long-haired” for monk and “sweat” for blood. The *Engishiki* also describes the interesting figure Princess Senshi (964–1035), who served as *saiin* of the Kamo shrines for fifty-seven years and wrote Buddhist poetry despite the prohibitions. Her *Hosshin wakashu* (Collection of Poems on the Awakening of Faith) reflected deep unhappiness at not being able to express her Buddhist faith as a sacred representative of the emperor.

Description: Kamigamo is in the northern Kita Ward of Kyoto and contains many large Japanese yew, chinquapins, and weeping cherry trees. But what is most striking is the vast lawn of grass—extremely unusual for a shrine. It lends the shrine the air of a park, and people can be seen leisurely relaxing and enjoying the atmosphere.



Left to right: *hosadono*, *hashidono*, *tsuchinoya*

In fact it has long been a spot for relaxation. Since ancient times horse racing and horseback archery have been performed as offerings to the *kami*. Some even believe that horse racing in Japan began at this shrine. There is a large red *torii* at the entrance to the grounds, and a second *torii* beyond the lawn, within a perimeter of trees at the entrance to a broad plain of sand. Particularly on a hot summer day one can enjoy the cool, quiet atmosphere with its murmuring stream and shade trees.

The Kamigamo and Shimogamo shrines were both founded by the Kamo clan. Together with the Hata clan (also of continental origin), they controlled most of the area in 794 when Emperor Kanmu came looking for a place to locate his new capital, Heiankyo. It is the tradition of the Hata clan, as expressed in their family history, that Ikakoyahime of the Hata clan married Kamo Taketsunumi no mikoto and produced two children. This would imply a family relationship between the clans. While the claim is disputed at Kamigamo, other scholars record that the Hata were the sacerdotal lineage of the Kamo shrine in the eighth century. Be that as it may, both the shrine of the Hata clan, Matsuo Taisha, and that of the Kamo were included in the upper rank of the twenty-two shrines (*nijunisha*) receiving offerings from the imperial court during

the Heian period. From that time, Kamigamo grew to be the guardian shrine of Kyoto and one of the most important shrines in the nation, second only to Ise Jingu during certain periods in its history. Today, it is one of only three shrines included in the registration of World Heritage Sites in Kyoto, along

with Shimogamo and Ujigami Jinja.

Festivals: Aoi Matsuri (Hollyhock Festival), 15 May. Also known as the Kamosai, this is one of the three biggest imperial procession-style festivals in Kyoto. The procession originated in about A.D. 544 and now features 511 people in period costume, 36 horses, and 2 ox-drawn carriages. It begins from the old imperial palace at 10:30 A.M., proceeds to Shimogamo, and then departs for its final destination at Kamigamo, where it ends around 4 P.M. An exhibition of horseback archery is conducted after the procession ends. The festival is an Important Intangible Cultural Property.

Kurabe-uma-e Jinji (Ritual of the Race-horses), 5 May. This is said to be the origin of horse racing in Japan, begun during the eleventh century. An Intangible Cultural Property of the city of Kyoto.

Karasu-zumo (Crow Sumo), 9 September. Shrine officials imitate the voice and manner of crows hopping, and then children perform sumo for the entertainment of the *kami*. It is an event that links the deity of the shrine to, the *yatagarasu* ("eight-span crow") that guided the first emperor, Jimmu, to Yamato. (For further information on the *yatagarasu*, please see the following entry.)

Kamo Mioya Jinja (Shimogamo Jinja)

MAP 6

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in the seventh year of the reign of Emperor Sujin (r. 97–37 B.C.), according to shrine tradition.

ADDRESS: 59 Shimogamo Izumikawa-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-0807

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-781-0010. A single-page flyer containing a map and a small eight-page color pamphlet in English are available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: From JR Kyoto Station, take city bus 205, 4, or 14 to Shimogamo Jinja-mae bus stop. Alternatively, take the Keihan Subway Line to Demachianagi Station, and then walk 5 minutes to the first *torii* (which is best for walking through Tadasu no mori).

ENSHRINED KAMI: Kamo Taketsunumi no mikoto (identified with *yatagarasu*) and his daughter Tamayorihime no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: A good harvest, a good marriage, safe childbirth, and safety on the roadways. Fortunetelling slips related to marriage, based on *The Tale of Genji*, are available. There are also seven small auxiliary shrines housing deities of the twelve Chinese zodiac years (such as ox, snake, dragon, and monkey); people pray at the site where the deity of their birth year is enshrined.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Shimogamo is located within an old forest called Tadasu no mori, and spring and fall are both great times to visit. May is also the time of the Aoi Matsuri (Hollyhock Festival), one of Kyoto's most important cultural events.



Shimogamo Jinja *ramon*

Important physical features: Perhaps Kamo Mioya Jinja's most striking physical feature is its location in an old-growth forest called Tadasu no mori ("forest of truth"), in the northern part of Kyoto, at the confluence of the Kamogawa and Takanogawa rivers. Along with its sister shrine, Kamigamo Jinja (the upper shrine), it is one of the oldest shrines in Kyoto and was designated a World Heritage Site in 1994. (Kamo Mioya Jinja is commonly known as Shimogamo, which means "lower Kamo"). With just 30 acres the shrine area is much smaller than Kamigamo's, but since the long *sando* takes you right through the center of the small forest, it makes a strong impression. Tadasu no mori has been shown to be the oldest patch of forest in the city of Kyoto. It is also largely deciduous, which is due partly to its being mostly unspoiled and partly to the composition of the water that flows through the site. Evidence of human occupation in the Yayoi period (ca. 300 B.C. to A.D. 300) comes from excavations of earthenware. There are fifty-five structures

on the grounds that are designated Important Cultural Properties, and the two *bonden* are designated National Treasures. The current *bonden* were rebuilt in 1863 and are modeled on a form from the eleventh century, and the other structures were rebuilt in 1629. Shimogamo has the same twenty-one-year rebuilding cycle (*shikinen sengu*) as Kamigamo, but both have changed from complete rebuilding to repair only. In the case of Shimogamo, a small temporary shrine is built to the rear of each *bonden*, and the *goshintai* is transferred there before repair work commences.

The layout of the buildings is both similar to and different from Kamigamo. There are many buildings and bridgelike structures, with a double *kairo* as at Kamigamo, but there is more of the centrality typical of shrines, with the inner shrine area more or less directly in line with the *sando*. Passing under the two-story vermillion *romon* with its *kairo* brings you to the *maidono* and then to the *chumon* gate directly behind it. Passing through the *chumon* brings you to another *kairo* that surrounds the *bonden*. In the little courtyard between the two *kairo* stand seven small shrines called *eto no yashiro*. Each is dedicated to one or two signs of the Chinese zodiac. The system is based on the year of birth, with each year being assigned an animal such as rat, dragon, or monkey. The shrines probably date from the Edo period, when the signs were amalgamated with Shinto *kami* (as here) and Buddhist deities. Inside the small courtyard, it is customary to stand before the *bonden* to pray. That on the right is dedicated to Tamayorihime no mikoto, and that on the left to Taketsunumi no mikoto. The simple, unpainted *nagare-zukuri bonden* are visible through the *kairo*, as are the startlingly colorful *komainu* that reside on the balconies surrounding both *bonden*.

Another interesting feature of Shimogamo

is the Mitarashi Pond to the right of the main shrine, which is fed from a natural spring. A shrine called Mitarashi-sha stands above the point where the spring originates. The “pond” has been reconstructed quite geometrically, with stone stairs on either side leading down to a flat base of cobblestone. A ritual ceremony is carried out in front of the shrine eighteen days before the first day of autumn. Dedicated to a *kami* who takes away plague and misfortune, the Mitarashi Festival attracts thousands of worshippers who walk barefoot through the stream and the pond to bring good health for the coming year.

A further important auxiliary shrine, Kawai Jinja, is located close to the southern entrance of Shimogamo. It enshrines the wife of Emperor Jimmu, also called Tamayorihime. On its grounds stands a replica of the famous “ten-foot-square hut” of Kamo no Chomei, described in the thirteenth-century classic *Hojoki (An Account of My Hut)*. The replica was prepared for a foreign exhibition by a Japanese professor who deduced from Chomei’s writings how it would have looked. The book was influential on the circle of elites instrumental in the development of the tea ceremony and the *wabi* aesthetic of expressing splendor within the simplicity of humble surroundings. Chomei was born Kamo no Nagakura, son of the *sho negi* (superintendent) of Shimogamo, and he was in line to inherit his father’s post. However, it went to a cousin after his father died and Chomei became marginalized from the upper levels of society. Though he remained a poet of some recognition, he chose the path of a hermit, living out his life in Buddhist-inspired seclusion.

Important spiritual features: The founding legend of the shrine concerns a miraculous birth of a *kami* and is bound



Reproduction of the "ten-foot-square hut"

up with Kamo Wakeikazuchi no mikoto, who is enshrined at Kamigamo Jinja. The story comes to us from the few existing lines that remain of the *Yamashiro fudoki* (Regional Record of Yamashiro), compiled in the eighth century. Together with the *Kamo chushin zakki* (Historical Record of Kamo Shrine), compiled in the seventeenth century, the work is the major source of shrine history and lore. The legend of Kamo Taketsunumi states that he descended to Mount Takachiho in Kyushu and helped to guide Emperor Jinmu on his expedition to Yamato, at one point taking the form of *yatararasu*, the "eight-span crow." The *kami* subsequently moved to Yamashiro, where he settled near the Semi no ogawa river (possibly the Kamogawa river), married a *kami* called Ikakoyahime, and had a boy and a girl, Tamayorihiko and Tamayorihime. One day, when Tamayorihime was playing by the river, she snatched up a red-lacquered arrow that was floating on the water and put it by her bedside before she went to sleep. When she awoke, she was pregnant with a male child.

This type of myth, in which a human figure is wed to a *kami* and bears a divine child, is common in Shinto. The name Tamayorihime means "spirit-inviting maiden" and often occurs in stories related to supernatural relations and miraculous births. Water in the form of rivers, waterfalls, and rain is a common feature of myths and often associated

with female deities. The myth continues that when the divine child grew, his grandfather was determined to learn the identity of the father. He organized a banquet and invited all the local deities. Then he gave the child a cup of rice wine and instructed him to take it to his father, whereupon the child flew up, broke through the roof of the dwelling, and ascended to heaven. The father was therefore said to be Honoikazuchi, the god of thunder, and the child was named Wakeikazuchi (divided thunder). The grandfather, who longed to see his grandson again, received a vision that if he would worship in a manner that included the wearing of leaves from the *aoi* (hollyhock) and *katsura* (Judas tree; *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*), the *kami* would descend.

So it was that Kamigamo Jinja came to enshrine Kamo Wakeikazuchi and Shimogamo came to enshrine the deity's grandfather, Kamo Taketsunumi, and his mother, Tamayorihime. The two shrines have always been considered to have the same history and roughly the same foundation date (though these days they maintain slightly different traditions), and both are considered ancestral shrines of the Kamo clan that settled in the area. When Emperor Kanmu wanted to construct his new capital, Heiankyo (present-day Kyoto), he came to the Kamo shrine, which was established more than a hundred years earlier, to pray for the safety of the new city. Thereafter, the Kamo shrines were always closely connected with the imperial house and the history of Kyoto.

Description: The approach to Shimogamo Jinja through Tadasu no mori gives some sense of what visiting a shrine in ancient times must have been like. The *sando* takes you through a tall wood alive with the sounds of nature and a certain air of mystery. The name of the forest, Tadasu

no mori, is variously interpreted as forest of “truth” or “justice,” but the Chinese character used here means “to examine or verify a sin,” as in an inquiry. You will notice water running in streams along the left and right of the *sando*. Emerging from the wood, you encounter a curious hand-washing basin (*temizuya*) shaped like a rock-boat (such a rock-boat is mentioned in the *Kojiki* and elsewhere as a vehicle of the *kami*), before passing under the second *torii* and into the shrine grounds proper.

One reason the two Kamo shrines have been named a World Heritage Site is the importance of the Kamosai festival. Popularly known as the Aoi Matsuri (Hollyhock Festival), the procession is the oldest of its kind. The name derives from the fact that the people in the procession are adorned with hollyhock leaves, the symbol of the Kamo deities. The original form of the procession probably dates back to the sixth century—well before the founding of Kyoto. The present form involves two main figures and their retinue: the imperial messenger (*chokushi*), who delivers an offering from the emperor to the Kamo deities, and a girl acting as the *saiin* (who once maintained ritual purity as the head priestess). However, the office of *saiin* was not instituted until A.D. 810 and altogether there were thirty-five priestesses before the custom was abandoned in the early thirteenth century. It was modeled on the *saio* of Ise, the first of whom was said to have brought the *gosshintai* (“sacred body”) of Amaterasu from the imperial court and installed it in the Naiku of Ise Jingu. Traditionally, the *saiin* proceeded from her isolated lodgings situated between the Kamigamo and Shimogamo shrines while another procession proceeded from the palace. The two groups met up on the way to enter the shrines together.

Festivals: Aoi Matsuri, 15 May. This is one of the major festivals of Kyoto, together with the Gion Matsuri in July and the Jidai Matsuri (Festival of the Generations) of Heian Jingu in October. These days, other than the *chokushi*, the participants are all symbolic. The festival was more or less continuous until the time of the Onin War (1467–77), but was revived in 1694. It consists of two parts: the procession (*oto no gi*) and the rites held in front of the shrines (*shato no gi*). The procession leaves the old imperial palace led by warriors on horseback called *norijiri*. Warriors follow these on foot, and then courtiers, police of lower rank (including *kado no osa* and others), police of higher rank (*kebiishi*), halberd bearers, and a person representing the Yamashiro *tsukai* (vice governor). Overall there are 511 participants, all of whom are in the traditional costumes of the period. The procession is more than half a mile in length and takes about one hour to arrive at Shimogamo. Six selected imperial guardsmen offer dances in front of the shrine and the *chokushi* delivers greetings from the emperor. The procession sets off again at about 2:20 P.M. and arrives at Kamigamo at about 3:30 for the final ceremonies, followed by a display of horseback archery.

Kemari Hajime, 4 January. *Kemari* is an elegant game played by court nobles of the Heian period, involving kicking a ball made of deer-skin between participants to keep it from touching the ground. This reenactment of an ancient pastime is a very popular New Year's ritual.

Yabusame Shinji (horseback archery), 3 May. Traditional-style archers mounted on horseback display their skills in a martial art that dates back to before the Heian period. Difficult to view unless you get there early.

Kifune Jinja (Kibune Jinja)

MAP 7

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in the early fifth century, according to shrine tradition. The main shrine was rebuilt in 2005.

ADDRESS: 180 Kurama-Kibune-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 601-1112

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-741-2016. A four-page pamphlet in English is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Eizan Railway from Demachiyana Station to Kibuneguchi Station. From there it's about a 20-minute walk uphill. Or take the city bus to Kibune from the front of Demachiyana Station to the last stop; it's a short walk from there to the shrine.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Takaokami no kami (*hongo* and *okunomiya*).

PRAYERS OFFERED: The shrine is known as a place to pray for good fortune in romance and marriage. In addition, you can pray for safety in the home, success in business, and anything to do with water.

BEST TIMES TO GO: In November for the autumn color. Also from June to September, when riverside restaurants erect platforms directly over the Kibunegawa river for al fresco dining. Special evening lighting is offered from 1 July to 7 August.

Important physical features: Perhaps Kifune Jinja's most important physical feature is its location in the mountains just north of Kyoto. The road leading to the shrine runs continuously uphill, and from Mount Kibune flows one of the sources of Kyoto's Kamogawa river. The name Kifune



Kifune Jinja *haiden* and *honden*

originally meant “yellow ship,” though the characters for “precious ship” are used now. The shrine prefers the pronunciation Kifune, though it and the area are commonly referred to as Kibune. The name refers to the legend of Tamayorihime no mikoto (“spirit-inviting maiden”), who sailed upriver to this spot in a yellow ship. The name Tamayorihime can refer to any woman who is the consort of a *kami*, or a medium possessed by a spirit. (Kyoto's Shimogamo Jinja, downriver from here, enshrines a Tamayori from a different legend.) The original yellow ship is said to be covered in stones now and buried next to the *okunomiya*. It is known as the *funagata iwa* (rock ship).

Kifune Jinja is divided into two parts: the *bongu*, or main shrine, and the *okunomiya* 550 yards farther up the road. The latter is the original shrine, which was repeatedly damaged by natural disasters and relocated to its present position in 1055. Between the *okunomiya* and *bongu* stands a sub-shrine named *juinoyas-biro* (also called *nakanomiya*), where the *kami* Iwanagahime no mikoto is enshrined. It is the smallest of the three buildings and set in a grove of magnificent old cedars. The main

shrine sits at the top of a long, stone staircase. Rebuilt in 2005, it appears much newer than other buildings on the grounds. The *baiden* is of a somewhat modern design, but the *bonden* behind it keeps its original *nagare-zukuri* style—except that the roof material has been changed to copper tiles. The hills are home to many magnificent old trees, and next to the shrine is a four-hundred-year-old *katsura* (Judas tree), a hundred feet high and considered Kifune's most sacred tree (*shinboku*).

Another important aspect of the shrine's location is its proximity to Mount Kurama ("horse saddle mountain") and the famous shrine-temple complex Kuramadera, founded in A.D. 770. The temple is about 1,800 feet above sea level and can be reached by an hour's walk east across the mountain. Kurama and Kifune are often mentioned in the same breath, and a rugged path has linked them since ancient times. Tradition has it that a monk named Gantei had a dream that he would be guided to a sacred spot on the saddle of a white horse. En route, he was attacked by a demoness and saved by Bishamonten (protector of the north gate in the Buddhist heaven). He founded a temple and dedicated it to Bishamonten to protect the "north-east gate" of Kyoto (the direction from which demons enter).

A commissioner of temple construction, Fujiwara no Isendo, rediscovered the site in 796. He too had a dream of being guided by a white horse and went in search of a place to build a temple to Kannon. He was led to the temple built by Gantei, and after another dream that Bishamonten and Kannon were in fact the same deity, he rebuilt the temple to honor both. Apparently Isendo named the temple, from which the mountain took its name. Kuramadera became a Tendai sect complex of about nineteen temple and shrine buildings, including Yuki Jinja, founded in 940 and

enshrining Onamuchi no mikoto (also known as Yuki Daimyojin). The deity was a tutelary *kami* of the imperial family and was ordered to be moved here from the imperial palace by Emperor Suzaku (r. 930–46).

Yuki Jinja is known for its *wari-baiden* (divided *baiden*), which spans a flight of stone steps. If you approach from Kurama Station and climb these stairs, you pass under and through the center of the building, emerging at the base of an even longer set of steps that leads to the main shrine. It was remade in 1607 at the behest of Toyotomi Hideyori. Beside these steps is a massive Japanese cedar said to be eight hundred years old. The shrine hosts the Kurama Fire Festival, which commemorates its founding, on the same day as Heian Jingu's Jidai Matsuri. The buildings of Kuramadera are farther up the mountain. Since 1949 it has been the main temple of a new Buddhist-based religion called Kurama Kokyo. It enshrines Bishamonten (one of the seven gods of good fortune), Senju Kannon (the thousand-armed Kannon), and a mysterious *kami* named Mao Son ("great king of the conquerors of evil"). This deity is said to have descended from Venus when a piece of a falling meteorite came down on the mountain. That meteorite is enshrined at the Okunoin Mao-den.

Besides the spectacular physical surroundings of Kuramadera, the mountain has connections to the healing art known as reiki. Reiki is based on generating heat from the hands, placed in certain specific ways on the body. It was founded by Usui Mikao in the early 1900s after a mystical revelation while meditating on Mount Kurama. Through this connection Kurama is a popular destination for reiki practitioners. The mountain has connections too with the founder of the martial art of aikido, Ueshiba Morihei, who had a mystical awakening there during one of his many retreats. Though Ueshiba credited his teacher

Takeda Sokaku with “opening his eyes” to the techniques that formed the basis of his aikido, it was this religious experience that some see as the real origin of his art. Therefore, Kurama also has a deep significance for aikido practitioners.

The most time-honored connection at Kurama is with the warrior Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–89), who was sent here as a boy after Taira no Kiyomori killed his father. Legend has it that besides learning Buddhist scripture, Yoshitsune trained in martial arts, slipping away from the temple to be tutored in swordsmanship by the king of the *tengu*, Sojobo. The *tengu* (literally, “celestial dog”) are forest goblins with birdlike features, a fierce countenance, and the ability to assume human or animal form. They figure in both Shinto and Buddhist mythology, where they appear as red-faced creatures with long noses and wings (similar to the way the fierce Shinto *kami* Sarutahiko is depicted). *Tengu* were skilled in the arts of the warrior and were known to punish the vain and arrogant, including monks who had strayed from the true path. Mount Kurama has long been associated with them, as have the *shugenja*. It was believed that *tengu* could change into these mountain ascetics and vice versa. In time, *tengu* came to be depicted wearing the clothes of a *shugenja*. It comes as no surprise that when Yoshitsune became an adult, his most loyal retainer and fiercest defender was the *shugenja* warrior-monk Benkei, who followed Yoshitsune to his death.

The legends and beliefs surrounding Mount Kurama reflect not only the syncretism between Shinto and Buddhism, but the importance of place in relation to both. In recent times, the mountain has become something of a “new-age power spot,” which highlights the connection with the sense of awe connected to a “magic place” that is characteristic of Shinto and the religious impulse.



Entrance to the *honden* lined with lanterns

Important spiritual features: Kifune Jinja enshrines Takaokami no kami (*Nihon shoki*), also called Kuraokami (*Kojiki*). It is one of the *kami* that formed when Izanagi cut off the head of the fire *kami* Kagutsuchi, who caused the death of Izanami. From 850 or earlier, the *kami* of Kifune Jinja became important as a *kami* of rain. Offerings were made by emperors to pray either for rain to fall (*kiu*) or for rain to stop falling (*shiu*). It was one of the sixteen shrines receiving regular imperial offerings by this time, and there is a theory that it was established as a branch of Niukawakami Jinja in Nara, where prayers for rain had been offered since ancient times. One of the fundamental strains of Shinto is the concept that *kami* reside in nature and that natural forces are embodied in them. Mitsuhanome (“water female”), Kuraokami (“dark rain-dragon”), Mikumari (“water-dividing”), and numerous other *kami* are associated with water (called generally *suijin* or *suiten*). From at least the seventh century there was a custom of offering a black horse when praying for rain to fall, and a white horse when praying for rain to stop. The black is said to represent clouds, and white the sun. From the early ninth century, both Kibune and Niukawakami were sent offerings of horses at the same time.

A number of other legends from Kifune Jinja are associated with water. The most

important concerns the yellow ship from which the shrine derives its name. It speaks of how Tamayorihime (or Tamayoribime) no mikoto, a daughter of the ocean *kami* Watatsumi no kami and mother of Emperor Jinmu, came up the Kibunegawa river in a yellow boat, looking for a pure source of water. She found it flowing from a spring where the *okunomiya* was founded. Then she ascended to heaven, leaving the yellow ship behind. Because it was a sacred vessel, it was buried under stone to keep it from being defiled by humans. Some scholars believe that rather than sailing up the Kibunegawa, Tamayorihime sailed from the source of the water inside the mountain, in other words from the *ne no kuni* (the underworld). But the fact that Tamayorihime is not enshrined here may indicate that the story of the yellow boat, while relating to the name of the shrine, may have been of later origin.

Another story linking water, love, and Kifune Jinja is that of the Heian-period poetess Izumi Shikibu, who often wrote of her troubled affairs with men. She went to the river at Kifune to pray to the *kami* when her husband neglected her. She wrote a verse describing her sorrow, and apparently her wish to be reunited with him was answered. The story is an important element in the shrine's reputation as being favorable to marriage. However, while women often consult the *kami* about problems with men, it seems the deity was equally willing to help a woman get revenge. As a result the practice of *ushinokoku-mairi* (literally, "going to the shrine at the hour of the ox," which is approximately 2 A.M.) in order to put a curse on a lover became associated with the shrine. It was done voodoo-style, by using a straw doll and nailing it to a tree in the shrine. Effigies and scapegoats are common in Shinto to remove pollution or bad spirits—not to set them on your enemies. Effigies are also used as

a substitute for offerings to the *kami* (such as an *ema* decorated with the painted image of a horse, rather than offering an actual horse).

Another story associated with the shrine tells how a woman named Hashihime of Uji went to Kifune to pray to be turned into a demon. It seems she was burning with jealousy at being shunned for another woman. The *kami* advised her that if she went to Uji (in southern Kyoto) and immersed herself in the river, she would indeed become a demon. This she did, and after twenty-one days emerged as a demon that not only caused the disappearance of her rival but that of the relatives of the man who had caused her such grief. The shrine has other dire love stories, such as of a woman who asked the *kami* for the death of her lover's wife, at the cost of being made a beggar for the rest of her life. Finally, the *Kibune no bonji*, a medieval text describing the foundation of the shrine, relates how a young courtier fell in love with the picture of a beautiful woman. Bishamonten arranges for them to meet, and they fall in love. She turns out to be the daughter of a demon from the mountain, however. He will have none of this, and eats his own daughter. She then is reborn as a human, able to marry her prince. All these legends may just prove the adage: "Be careful what you wish for; you may receive it."

Description: There are really two ways to approach Kifune Jinja. One is to take the train to Kibuneguchi Station and walk up the road along the river that leads to the shrine. The other is to take the train to the next station at Kurama, then begin the long climb to Kuramadera, and continue over the mountain to Kifune Jinja. Either way, you need to have your walking shoes on because you are in for a hike. From Kibuneguchi Station a 20- to 30-minute trek (or a short bus ride) brings you

to the red *torii* that marks the entrance to the lower shrine, the *bongu*. Next there is a flight of eighty-four stone steps lined with lanterns; their steepness is a taste of things to come. Like all shrines, Kifune offers strips of paper with divinations called *omikuji*, for a ¥200 donation. To impress the idea that a water *kami* is enshrined here, the *omikuji* are blank pieces of paper that reveal your fortune only when placed in water. After paying respects to the *kami*, you return down the stairs to the road that continues up the mountain, along the side of the fast-flowing Kibunegawa. The middle shrine is level with the road. The final climb to the upper shrine leads to a *torii* in front of a bridge and a long, lantern-lined *sando* that parallels the road. It leads to the *okunomiya* and the *funagata iwa* (rock ship). Besides the shrine buildings themselves there are a number of large *iwakura* (stone altars). The town stretches out along the main road, which is lined with Japanese restaurants that set out platforms (*kawadoko*) across the narrow river in summertime for customers to dine above the rushing waters. Be warned: most of these places are pricey (minimum ¥7,000 per person). Still, there are worse ways to spend a hot summer night than sipping saké to the roar of falling water.

If you decide to head first to Kurama Station, you will be greeted by a giant red *tengu* head. A short walk takes you through the *sanmon* gate, and close by is the Kuramadera cable car, which is the only one in the country run by a religious institution. It will take you to a spot near the main temple in 2 minutes, rather than the 30 minutes it takes on foot (but you would miss seeing Yuki Jinja that way). The climb across the mountain is strenuous but worthwhile. Passing through the *sanmon* (also called a *niomon* because of the great deities guarding either side), you encounter the first of many steep staircases on

the way to the main hall of Kuramadera. Stop for a rest and to take in the view, then continue up another set of stairs on the left side of the temple. Apart from the natural beauty of the mountain, there are a number of sub-shrines of interest, including Mao-den. When you reach the top, you also reach the beginning of the *kinone michi*, a precarious combination of winding, packed-earth stairs and twisted, exposed roots. The path leads down to Kifune Jinja, but the danger of a sudden fall is only offset by a simple pipe railing that shows up at some point. A word of warning to the unaccustomed: my ankles ended up swollen!

Festivals: Reisai, 1 June. A *mikoshi* portable shrine procession with traditional music makes its way through the village to the *okunomiya*. A performance of Izumo *kagura* (ancient dance) is also held.

Mizu Matsuri (Water Festival), 7 July. This is a new festival that includes *bugaku* and a tea ceremony by the Urasenke school. A kitchen knife ceremony is performed, displaying an ancient technique for cutting fish without touching it by hand. If you want to partake in the tea ceremony and have a light *bento*-box lunch, the fee is ¥3,000, which includes bus fare from the train station.

Kurama Hi Matsuri (Fire Festival), 22 October. A festival of Yuki Jinja. Ten-foot-tall “watchfires” are set up around the town of Kurama and ignited at 6 P.M. A procession of young children and men carry more than 250 lighted pine torches (*taimatsu*) while chanting and marching to drumbeats. The largest torches weigh more than 175 pounds each. At 8 P.M. the torches gather at the entrance to Kuramadera to reenact the original procession of the *kami* when Emperor Suzaku moved the shrine here in 940.

Kitano Tenmangu

MAP 8

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 947. The present *honden* and *haiden* were built in 1607 at the behest of Toyotomi Hideyori.

ADDRESS: Bakuro-cho, Kamigyo-ku, Kyoto 602-8386

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-461-0005. Open daily from 5 A.M. to 6 P.M. A brief flyer on the history of the shrine in English is available for free. Admission to the *homotsuden* (treasure house) is ¥300. Admission to the plum tree garden in February is ¥600.

HOW TO GET THERE: From JR Kyoto Station, take bus number 50 or 101 to Kitano Tenmangu-mae bus stop. Or take the Keifuku Railroad Kitano Line to Kitano Hakubaicho Station, and then walk about 5 minutes.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Tenman Tenjin, the deified spirit of Sugawara no Michizane.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Good grades, help with entrance exams, and study in general. Also to improve one's skill in the arts and calligraphy.

BEST TIMES TO GO: When the plum trees are in bloom, between about the beginning of February through mid-March. Also 15 November through 9 December, for viewing the maples along the Kamiyagawa river on the shrine grounds. In addition, Kitano Tenmangu hosts a large flea market on the 25th of each month focused on crafts and old kimonos, but offering everything from antiques to food.

Important physical features: Kitano Tenmangu is known as one of the best examples of *yatsumune-zukuri* (eight roof-ridge-style) shrine architecture, also



Kitano Tenmangu *haiden*

called *gongen-zukuri*. In this style the *haiden* and *bonden*, which lie parallel to each other, are connected under one complex roof, which is covered in Japanese cypress bark. In Kitano, the space between the structures called the *ishinoma* is three steps lower than the *haiden*. The shrine is a magnificent example of the architecture of the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1573–1603) and differs somewhat from other *gongen-zukuri* buildings in that it has music chambers, known as *gakunoma*, added to the right and left of the *haiden*. A *kairo* corridor extends from these wings to encompass the inner grounds. The exterior of the building is unpainted except for the gables, some ornaments, and the upper half of the *kairo*. The interior floor of the *haiden* was once black lacquer, and the interior of the *bonden* is still exquisitely lacquered in red and black. The *kairo* ends at the *chumon* gate known as the *sankomon* (“gate of three luminaries”), so called because of reliefs of a star, sun, and moon representing heavenly deities.

The *sankomon* gate is on a path that branches off to the left of the long, straight

sando that bypasses the shrine, leading from the southern gate on the right side and continuing until it exits the northern gate at the rear of the grounds. On the same branch path, immediately to the left after one passes through the southern gate, is the *ema-dokoro*. It is an open-sided structure, used as a rest area, hung with a large number of old votive pictures painted with themes relating to the shrine and with images thought to be pleasing to the *kami*. The southern gate is a three-bay type, with the outer bays containing *zuijin* archer-guardian sculptures. It marks the entrance to the fenced-in part of the grounds. From here it is a short distance to the first stone *torii* that marks the separation of the shrine grounds from the city just outside. The *sando* was drastically shortened at some point, and the compound used to house a pagoda, a sutra hall, and other Buddhist-related buildings prior to the Meiji government's policy of *shinbutsu bunri*, or forced separation of Shinto and Buddhism. The grounds in front of the shrine are given over to two thousand plum trees (Japanese apricot), a typical symbol of Tenmangu shrines. Another symbol is an ox in a reclining position, which is related to the story of Michizane's funeral. The ox pulling the cart that carried his body suddenly stopped and lay down, refusing to budge. That place became the site of Dazaifu Tenmangu in Kyushu.

Kitano's *homotsuden* (treasure house) is worth seeing if only for the reproductions of a late-eleventh-century copy of the *Nihon shoki* and the *Kitano tenjin engi* scroll painting, a National Treasure from 1219. The latter is a text with pictures that gives an account of the life of Michizane and of his deification as Tenman Tenjin. Such scrolls spread belief in the *kami*, and a number exist in other Tenjin shrines, which derived from this. Incidentally, though not related to Tenman worship the

shrine grounds are home to the Kamiyagawa River, which runs through a little valley along the entire length of the left (western) side of the shrine. It is lined with about 250 maple trees, creating a lovely environment best viewed from November to December (entry fee of ¥600).

Important spiritual features: Kitano Tenmangu is considered by some to be the head of the ten thousand or so Tenjin shrines around the country. Dazaifu Tenmangu in Kyushu is the place where Sugawara no Michizane (posthumously called Tenman Tenjin) is buried, and the origin of his worship. Although not the first to enshrine the spirit, Kitano's location in the capital helped to give it importance. Together with widespread fear of and respect for the deity, this helps to explain why Kitano was included in the twenty-two shrines (*nijunisha*) selected to receive offerings from the imperial house at the beginning of the Heian period.

It is somewhat unusual that both Kitano and Dazaifu were established independently to enshrine the same *kami*. Typically one shrine is the origin from which others become branch shrines. The creation of Kitano Tenmangu was due to a series of disasters in Kyoto that were attributed to Michizane's angry spirit, called a *karaijin* ("thunder god") or *goryo* ("vengeful spirit"). In this way Michizane joined the ranks of angry spirits thought to cause plagues and all manner of suffering. The concept dated from an earlier time, and festivals known as Goryo-e, or "spirit meetings," were established in the ninth century. They were intended to take the edge off the god's wrath and send it away happy. Buddhist monks were called upon to read sutras and "transform" the malevolent spirit into a protective one. In Michizane's case, the transformation happened on both a political and a popular level. On the political side,

Michizane's position, which had been wrongfully stripped from him, was posthumously restored step by step. His rank was elevated to one higher than he had held in life, and finally the original exile order was withdrawn. The process was aided by the revelations of a Buddhist monk named Nichizo Doken, who reported to the imperial court that he had died and gone to heaven, where he met a deity named Nihon Daijō Itokuten (roughly, "Japanese chancellor awesome deva"), who turned out to be Michizane. Doken informed the deity that he was revered as a "fire and thunder *ten-jin*," to which Michizane replied that it was only one of his aspects, and that he would continue to punish his enemies but reward those who worshipped him. Then Doken went to hell, where Emperor Daigo (who exiled Michizane) and several of his ministers were in torment. The former emperor begged to have the court offer prayers for his salvation. Doken's report about his otherworldly experience was influential, no doubt in part because he was a son of Miyoshi no Kiyoyuki—one of those who had conspired to slander Michizane.

In the intervening forty years since Michizane's death, popular anger had grown over the domination of the government by the corrupt Fujiwara and the constant disasters that seemed to plague the city. In 942, a year after Doken's revelation, an oracle was received by a poor woman named Tajihi no Ayako. Michizane revealed to her that he was now called Tenjin and wanted her to build a shrine to him at Kitano. The term *tenjin* means "heavenly *kami*" and had been used for other *kami* before this time. Word of the oracle spread and in 945 hundreds of people set off for the capital, singing and dancing and carrying portable shrines for the new *kami*. In 946 Miwa no Taromaru, the seven-year-old son of a Shinto priest, received a similar oracle. A shrine was

established at Kitano in 947 (where a thunder deity had formerly been worshipped), and it was quickly elevated to one of the top-ranked shrines in the country. In 959 Minister of the Right Fujiwara no Morosuke enlarged the shrine, and in 976 Michizane's family was given control of it (as they had been given control of Dazaifu years before). The first Kitano Matsuri was held in 987, when the shrine came under the control of the imperial court and the Tendai Buddhist sect on Mount Hiei. The shrine subsequently became part of a large shrine-temple complex known as Kitano-Kannonji. From that point the stage was set to revise Tenjin's image from a god of thunder and revenge to one of learning and literature.

Two points may be emphasized in relation to this deity. One is that Buddhist "salvation" and political expediency could turn malevolent spirits into protective ones. In this way the qualities of Michizane as poet and scholar were magnified, and the vengefulness (and thus the original injustice) was forgotten. Today Tenjin is a god of scholarship and prayed to by students throughout the country. The second point is the complex and often combinatory nature of many *kami*, as exemplified by Tenman Tenjin. Not only was he considered a *goryō* and *karaijin*, but his mythology is a mix of religious traditions. Furthermore, while Buddhist transformations were often supported by the aristocracy, the "wrathful" nature of Shinto spirits was often perpetuated by the belief of the common people.

Description: A huge granite *torii* and two *komainu* statues mark the southern entrance of Kitano ("north field") Tenmangu. This and the tree-filled grounds of the shrine make for a clear separation from the traffic-filled Imadegawa Street. A *sando* nearly 660 feet long delivers you to

the first of two entrance gates. On the 25th of each month it is lined with stalls selling all manner of goods, at one of Kyoto's largest and oldest regular flea markets. The approach to the shrine passes by a grove of flowering plum trees (*ume*, technically Japanese apricot but usually translated as plum). Michizane loved the tree from the time he was a child and wrote many odes to it. One of his last, written as he left for exile, is his best known:

When the east wind blows,
Let it send your fragrance,
Oh plum blossoms.
Although your master is gone,
Do not forget the spring.

(Borgen, Robert. *Sugawara no michizane and the Early Heian Court*. University of Hawai'i Press, 1994.)

The most famous story of Michizane and the plum is that of the tree that flew to Dazaifu from Kyoto, because it so longed to be with him. Called the *tobiume* ("flying plum"), it is said to be the same as the one that stands in front of the shrine at Dazaifu to this day. As a result of Michizane's lifelong passion all Tenmangu shrines feature the plum, as does the shrine's insignia. At Kitano, nearly two thousand trees flower during a festival called the Baikasai, held on 25 February every year. In addition to plum viewing, a tea ceremony called the Nodate Ochanoyu is held. It commemorates the historic Kitano Ochanoyu of 1587 held by the regent Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The tea is served by *maiko* (apprentice geisha) and *geiko* (geisha) from the nearby quarter of Kamishichiken. The name of the geisha district, literally "seven houses in the north," derives from the original seven teahouses (also houses of prostitution). It is said that the teahouses were constructed using wood from the rebuilding of Kitano Tenmangu during

the Muromachi period. Another famous event relating to the Ochanoyu is called the Kenchaisai and is held on 1 December. To commemorate this most extravagant of tea ceremonies, meant to reflect Hideyoshi's taste and wealth, six of the top schools of tea alternate each year in hosting a tea ceremony on the grounds of the shrine.

An interesting aside about scholarship and Kitano Tenmangu: it seems that shrines in Kyoto and Osaka were used from the early eighteenth century as book repositories. Publishers deposited one copy of each publication in the event that the original print blocks were destroyed or lost. Kitano Tenmangu was one of these shrines, as was Sumiyoshi Taisha in Osaka. Books were produced in Japan from at least the early seventeenth century, but it was not until the late nineteenth century that movable type was widely used. Until then, Japanese books were printed from wooden blocks. Movable type was known from a much earlier date, but the Japanese preferred block prints, possibly because they preserved the characteristics of brush-written characters. Apparently a number of old books are still held in storage at the shrine today.

Festivals: Baikasai (Plum Blossom Festival), 25 February. As part of the festival a huge open-air tea ceremony is hosted by *geiko* and *maiko* from the nearby Kamishichiken district. The plum festival began about nine hundred years ago.

Zuiki Matsuri (Vegetable Decoration Festival), 1–5 October. The festival features unique *mikoshi* portable shrines, decorated with vegetables, seaweed, dried foods, and flowers. All the parts are made with plant material, especially taro stalks (*zuiki*), from which the festival derives its name.

Matsuo Taisha (Matsunoo Taisha)

MAP 9

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in A.D. 701 by a lord of the Hata clan. The *honden* dates from 1397, with major repairs made in 1542.

ADDRESS: 3 Arashiyama Miyamachi, Nishikyo-ku, Kyoto 616-0024

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-871-5016. A leaflet in English on the shrine history is available for free. Entrance to the shrine grounds is from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. There is a ¥500 entrance fee that covers a visit to the gardens and the *homotsuden* (treasure house). Entrance to the Saké Museum is free.

HOW TO GET THERE: The Hankyu Railway Arashiyama Line to Matsuo Station, and then 3 minutes on foot. Or take one of the buses that go to the Matsuo Taisha-mae bus stop.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Oyamagui no mikoto and Nakatsushimahime no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Saké brewers come to pray for a good product. The *kami* is also worshipped as a god of development and as a protector of the country.

BEST TIME TO GO: From mid-April to early May, when 3,000 yellow Japanese rose bushes (*yamabuki*; *Kerria japonica*) are in bloom.

Important physical features: Matsuo Taisha is located on the western edge of Kyoto along the Katsuragawa River, south of Arashiyama and north of the famous Katsura Rikyu. It takes its name from Mount Matsuo that rises up directly behind it. The original shrine—a large *iwakura* (stone altar)—is located at the top of the mountain, and the origin of worship there is likely quite ancient.



Haiden, chumon, and honden of Matsuo Taisha

The *iwakura* can be seen by climbing the path from inside the shrine grounds. The entrance fee is ¥1,000, which includes entrance to the *homotsuden* (treasure house) and gardens. The climb takes an hour up and back, and no one is admitted after 3 P.M.

The shrine is famous for its associations with water. There is a waterfall called *reiki no taki* (“waterfall of the sacred turtle”) that runs down in a long, slender ribbon from the mountain behind the shrine. Walking past the *bonden* on the right side, down a few stairs, and then up a few more brings you to a red *torii* and a small shrine at the base of the falls. On the way you will pass a well on the right called *kame no ii* (“turtle well”) from which the “magic” water that once was used by saké makers is drawn. The water from this well is said to prolong life and was used in making saké to prevent it from turning sour. The well’s name refers to a story about Hata no Imikitor, the shrine’s founder, who was out walking in

the area in around A.D. 710 when he saw a turtle at the base of a waterfall. The turtle is considered a symbol of longevity, so Imikitori took it as a good sign and named the well accordingly. There are also two man-made waterways crossing the grounds called simply Ichinoigawa and Ninoigawa ("first well river" and "second well river"). These were made by the Hata clan, who were relied upon throughout the country for their construction and engineering, as well as many other skills such as saké brewing.

The *bonden* is known for an unusual style called *ryonagare-zukuri* and is designated an Important Cultural Property. It is a three- by two-bay building with a cypress-bark shingle roof, with extended overhanging eaves on the front and back of the non-gabled side. There are enough variations (such as a square ridge-pole and an absence of *chigi* and *katsuogi*) for this particular form of *ryonagare* to be called *matsuo-zukuri*. The *bonden*, constructed in 1397, underwent major repairs in 1542 but was never torn down, making it one of the oldest shrine buildings in the country. The *tsuridono* hall stands directly in front of the *bonden*, and a *chumon* gate and *kairo* encloses both. The *baiden* stands on the *sando* in front of the *chumon*. It is an open-sided type that strongly resembles a *kaguraden*. Beyond it, at the entrance to the interior grounds, stands a three-bay-wide *romon* gate with the outer bays holding seated guardian figures (*zuijin*). Besides the *bonden*, all the structures date from the Edo period. The Ichinoigawa runs across the *sando*, just inside the *romon*, and is lined with three thousand *yamabuki* rose bushes that bloom during April and May.

Of great interest are the treasure house and the surrounding gardens. The treasure house, built in 1973, contains three of the oldest single-block wood carvings of Shinto deities in Japan. They are presumed to be images of

the *kami* enshrined here: Oyamagui, Nakatsushimahime, and Tsukiyomi (the latter is enshrined separately from the *bonden*). They were probably carved around the middle of the tenth century. To accompany the treasure house, three gardens were created in 1975 by garden designer Shigemori Mirei. Each has an individual theme, but two of the gardens bear the unmistakable graphic, twisting, and jagged appearance characteristic of Shigemori's work. The *joko no niwa* ("ancient garden") is the simplest and uses large stones arranged in a steep, undulating slope, with the mountain and its magnificent cedars skillfully incorporated as backdrop. The garden makes reference to the ancient *iwakura*, located on the mountain. Worship at sacred rocks is one of the roots of Shinto worship, and indeed of the Japanese garden itself. The *kyokusui no niwa* ("meandering stream garden") is inspired by the Heian-period style. It incorporates a wildly undulating stream against shaped azalea bushes, studded with a large number of arranged stones. The *borai no niwa* ("Horai garden") draws inspiration from the Kamakura period. Horai (in Chinese, Penglai) was an ancient Chinese concept of Paradise. It was said to be an island carried on the back of a turtle, where the immortals lived in eternal youth. The theme is expressed in "islands" with "mountains" of stone set into a pond. This garden has been modified somewhat to replace moss on the islands with sand, and some unsightly lights and figures of turtles have been added. There is also a *kareansui* dry garden, not counted as one of the three, set into an interim space. Collectively the gardens are called *shofuen* ("pine breeze garden"). They were Shigemori's last creations, and he died before construction was completed on Horai; his son Kanto completed the garden.

Important spiritual features: Oyamagui no mikoto, one of the *kami* enshrined at Matsuo Taisha, is a grandchild of Susano-o and considered an earthly *kami*. Most *kami* descended from Susano-o are related to foodstuffs and are thought by some to have been worshipped originally by Korean immigrants, which would make him a *banshin* or foreign god. Indeed, it was the Hata clan of immigrants that founded Matsuo Taisha, as well as a number of other important shrines and temples, such as Fushimi Inari Taisha and Koryuji temple. They brought many of the skills that helped build ancient Japan, such as land reclamation and saké brewing. The methods introduced from the continent became standard, and the immigrant clans, of which the Hata was one of the oldest and largest, amassed wealth and influence. In fact it was the Hata who provided a large part of the funds and land for the failed capital of Nagaokakyo in 784 and the more successful Heiankyo (Kyoto) several years later.

Matsuo Taisha has some ancient links with Kamigamo Jinja. Both shrines were established before the city itself. The deity of Kamigamo is Wakeikazuchi, an ancestor of the Kamo clan and a *kami* of thunder. The *kami*'s mother, Tamayori hime no mikoto, is said in a history of the Hata clan to have been a member of that family. Interestingly, Mount Matsuo is also known as Mount Wakeikazuchi, which seems to corroborate the connection between the two clans. In addition, Matsuo and Kamigamo both use the *aoi* (hollyhock) and *katsura* (Judas tree) in their rituals (as do Shimogamo and Hiyoshi Taisha). The ties between the shrines are unclear, however, and open to interpretation. A clearer connection is with Mount Hiei. The *Kojiki* states that Oyamakui is the *kami* of Hiyoshi Taisha and Matsuo (Matsuo now uses the pronunciation Oyamagui). Hiyoshi

was overseen by the Tendai sect of Buddhism, and the combination of Oyamagui and the *kami* Onamuchi was worshipped collectively as Sanno, the Mountain King.

Description: Matsuo Taisha is located well to the southwest of the heart of Kyoto. Its illustrious neighbors include Katsura Rikyu Villa to the southeast, and Saihoji—also known as Kokedera—to the southwest. Besides Oyamagui no mikoto and Nakatsushimahime no mikoto, Matsuo enshrines Tsukiyomi (Tsukuyomi) no mikoto—the *kami* of the moon and brother to Amaterasu and Susano-o. He is housed in a separate shrine slightly to the south. The Hata clan arrived in Japan in the fourth and fifth centuries, then moved up from Kyushu to parts of present-day Kyoto. They began to worship at an existing site at the top of Mount Matsuo and founded a shrine here when the capital was still at Nara.

The approach to the shrine is brief. The first large red *torii* stands hard by Matsuo Station, and the second *torii* 600 feet beyond that. Another hundred feet brings you to the *romon* and the entrance to the grounds proper. The mountain rising up directly behind the shrine lends it a magnificence that belies the proximity to the urban environment. Though the shrine is dedicated to a mountain *kami*, many of the features are related to water—the canal that you cross immediately after passing through the *romon*, the contemporary gardens with their winding or placid water, the *reiki no taki* waterfall, and the *kamenoi* well. The well is a particularly good place to sample the life-prolonging water.

Matsuo Taisha (also called Matsunoo Taisha) can be considered a monument to the immigrant families who brought the skills from their native countries that helped build



Saké casks at Matsuo Taisha

the Yamato state's power. The Hata were a large clan who probably immigrated in A.D. 405, during the reign of Ojin. There has been much speculation about the origins of this clan, with some even claiming that they may actually have originated in Israel or Assyria. The *Nihon shoki* records that the Lord of Yuzuki, an ancestor of the Hata, came to Japan with "one hundred and twenty districts of people." While it is not clear exactly how many this represents, by the year 540 the *Nihon shoki* records that the clan comprised "7,053 houses." By the early eighth century the Hata had settled in the Uzumasa area, which is part of present-day Kyoto, and were instrumental in the establishment of the capital there. They were associated with a variety of crafts, including silkworm cultivation, weaving, metallurgy, and saké making. They were learned in Chinese, had supervision of government storehouses, and held the title of *miyatsuko* (high-ranking chieftain).

The name Hata, or Hada, is written in Japanese with the characters for Qin China—which led to the presumption that the clan were Chinese. But it is possible they were from one of the ancient kingdoms of Korea. There is a great deal of debate surrounding the relationship of Korea to the establishment of Yamato, and to the roots of the imperial family itself. Whatever the truth of the Hata's origins, it is clear that successive waves of Chinese and Korean immi-

grants, from at least the third or fourth centuries, were crucial in transmitting skills to Japan. Many of the clans were organized into groups of skilled workers called *be* (pronounced "bay"). The *be* were indispensable to the rising power of the Yamato kings. Those skills included erecting temples and shrines, carving sculptures, painting pictures, and casting bronze. Immigrants not only brought Buddhism and writing, but royalty from Korea intermarried with that of Japan as well.

A unique form of fortune-telling called *taru uranai* is available to anyone who visits Matsuo Taisha. This involves shooting an arrow at an empty saké barrel (*taru*) to predict one's future; the closer to the center, the better your prospects. The shrine also offers an unusual votive, the *kigan shamoji* ("prayer rice paddle"). It is simply an *ema* votive plaque on which the visitor writes his or her wish, but it is made in the shape of the flat paddle used to scoop up rice.

Festivals: Shinkosai, the first Sunday after 20 April. The thousand-year-old festival includes a *mikoshi* procession that begins at the shrine and proceeds over the Katsuragawa river on a narrow wooden boat. It joins five other *mikoshi* for a grand event. Three weeks later the single *mikoshi* returns to the shrine in a festival called the Kankosai.

Seimei Jinja

MAP 10

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 1007 at the behest of Emperor Ichijo (r. 986–1011). The current buildings are from 1905.

ADDRESS: 806 Horikawa-dori Ichijo-agaru, Kamigyo-ku, Kyoto 602-8222

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-441-6460. Open from 9 A.M. to 6 P.M.

HOW TO GET THERE: From Kyoto Station, take the number 9 bus running north up Horikawa Street and get off at the Horikawa-Imadegawa stop, and then walk 2 minutes. Or take the Karasuma Subway Line to Imadegawa Station and walk 12 minutes.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Abe no Seimei.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection against danger, protection from illness, to find love and marriage, and success in passing entrance exams.

BEST TIME TO GO: In mid-June when the Chinese bellflowers are in bloom.

Important physical features: Seimei Jinja sits on a narrow patch of land off one of Kyoto's main north–south avenues, called Horikawa Street. Although the first *torii* stands directly on that main thoroughfare, the shrine actually fronts onto a narrow street just behind it. The most striking physical feature is the preponderance of five-pointed stars, or pentagrams, that appear everywhere—on the first *torii* (boldly emblazoned with the five-pointed star rather than the name of the shrine), the *bonden*, and just about everywhere in between. It is an ancient symbol that has been used for thousands of years in the Far East, the Middle East, and Europe. Used within



Seimei Jinja fences with *haiden* and *bonden* behind

a circle in China and Japan, it is associated with the “five elements” or phases (wood, fire, earth, metal, water). In Japan, the mark has come to be strongly associated with Abe no Seimei, the *kami* enshrined here.

Most of the buildings and sculptural features are modern in construction—such as the water font in the shape of a five-pointed star, the bronze peach, and the bronze statue of Seimei himself. The *bonden* is from 1905, but the refurbished copper-shingle roof makes it look much newer. Between the worshipper and the *bonden* is an open-sided *haiden* with a *chidoribafu* on the front side of the gabled roof, and in front of that a *mizugaki* fence with a four-post gate and large *karabafu* roof. It is effectively the face of the shrine, where most visitors stop to pray. The dark wooden gate with gold-colored metalwork makes for a very stately appearance. Between the first and second *torii* that marks the entrance to the shrine grounds is the diminutive Ichijo Modori Bridge, once considered a gateway to the spirit

world. The bridge figures in such stories as *Ashiya Doman ouchi kagami* from 1734, in which Doman (Seimei's rival) has the father of Seimei killed, though Seimei later restores him to life. It once spanned the waterway that runs along the opposite side of Horikawa Street, just east of the shrine. When a new bridge was built, the old one was moved here and a small sculpture of a gremlin-like character representing a *shikigami* (child-sized familiar) was placed by its side. Seimei was said to be able to see such spirits and summon them to do his bidding.

Important spiritual features: Abe no Seimei (921–1005) was a scion of the Abe clan, one of the largest in Japan prior to the mid-seventh century. He was enshrined here—on the grounds of his former home—by Emperor Ichijo. As with most clans, the Abe developed many branches, one of which led by Abe no Hirafu comprised warriors sent to subdue the northeastern peoples called the Ezo, or Ainu, in 658. His descendants stayed in the northern Honshu province of Mutsu and controlled the territory for the imperial court. However, in the early eleventh century the Abe themselves rebelled against the government in Kyoto, thus beginning the *zenkunen kassen* (Early Nine Years' War). Defeated members of the clan were exiled to Shikoku.

Seimei was from a branch of the Abe clan who settled in present-day Kagawa. He rose to become a master of *onmyodo*, the art of yin/yang divination that was one of the most influential imports from China. It was a combination of occult and natural sciences as they were understood at the time, which included astrology, calendar making, five-element theory, and various forms of divination.

The Bureau of Yin-Yang (*onmyoryo*) was an important division of the government established under the *ritsuryo* system of adminis-



The *torii* of Seimei Jinja

trative and criminal codes in the early seventh century. With its divination and protection from evil spirits, *onmyodo* arts had many overlapping areas with Shinto, Confucianism, Daoism, and esoteric Buddhism.

The known facts about Abe no Seimei's life are few. He became a pupil of the Kamo clan (of Kamigamo Jinja), who were *onmyoji* wizards and masters of astronomy. Though his rank in the government was not very high, he held appointed positions such as Doctor of Astronomy and administrator of the left half of the capital. He became the ancestor of the Tsuchimikado clan, who were hereditary heads of the *onmyoryo*, and in the Edo period Tsuchimikado Yasutomi (1655–1717) combined aspects of the Confucianist Suika Shinto with yin/yang to create Tsuchimikado Shinto, also called Anke Shinto.

It is the legends and myths about Abe no Seimei and his mastery of “magical arts” that have elevated him to the level of cult hero. The accounts are found primarily in literary works, including *Konjaku monogatari* (“Tales of the Past”) from the early twelfth century, the *Hoki-sho* (a medieval book of astrology prefaced with tales of Seimei), *Uji shui mono-*



An *ema* votive plaque of Seimei Jinja

gatarī (“Tales from Uji”) from the thirteenth century, the *Abe no Seimei monogatari* of 1662, *Shinoda-zuma* (“The She-Fox of Shinoda,” from 1674, about Seimei’s birth from a fox-mother), and a popular *bunraku* and kabuki play *Ashiya Doman ouchi kagami* from 1734.

The *Hoki-shō* in particular seems to be the source of a number of the legends, including that of Seimei’s mother being a white fox named Kuzunoha. Among the powers claimed for Seimei are that of controlling *shikigami* to do his bidding, that of transforming any object from one thing into another, and that of raising the dead. One well-known aspect of the legends is the rivalry between Seimei and his jealous antagonist Doman. The latter is also an *onmyōji* of some repute, and the rivalry sets up the classic “good-versus-evil-wizard” framework. It lies at the core of the *Ashiya Doman* legends and the 2001 movie *Onmyōji*. Though Seimei was an actual historical figure, the legends about his magical life have eclipsed the reality and the tales of his supernatural exploits have ensured his immortalization as the Merlin of Japan.

Description: The original Seimei Jinja was destroyed in the fifteenth century and was reputedly a much

grander affair. While the present shrine may not be as impressive a structure as would befit its *kami*, it is nevertheless a place of some interest. It is also a popular destination for Japanese and foreign fans alike, thanks to the many popular manga, television shows, and films that have focused on the life of Seimei. One of the great attractions is the variety of amulets on offer that sport pentagrams. The bellflowers planted on the grounds also echo the symbol, with their five-cornered shape. From ancient times the pentangle (or pentacle) has been used as a protective and magical talisman to ward off evil. A water font on the grounds also sports the symbol, and it is said that Seimei caused water to well up here by magic. The pentagram on the top of the font is turned to a different position each year, and the water is said to protect the drinker from illness. The direction the water spills out determines who will receive the most benefit from drinking it. This is based on the Chinese zodiac sign of the year in which the person is born, an important part of *onmyōdo* divination.

There is one other Abe no Seimei Jinja in Osaka, and an Abe Monju-in temple in Sakurai City, Nara. Both lay claim to being Seimei’s birthplace, though the web site of the shrine in Osaka admits two other possibilities (Kagawa and Ibaraki). Prevailing thought favors Kagawa in Shikoku. (Interestingly, the Osaka shrine claims to have been founded in the same year as the Kyoto shrine, at the behest of the same emperor.)

Festival: Seimei Festival, 22–23 September. Held over the autumn equinox, the festival features a procession and a performance of *kagura* ancient dance on the 22nd, and a procession of about five hundred people on the 23rd.

Ujigami Jinja

MAP 11

DATE FOUNDED: Exact date unknown but perhaps in the late ninth century. In 1067 it became the guardian shrine for Byodo-in (built in 1052), and that is often given as the founding date. The current *honden* dating from that time is recognized as the oldest shrine building in Japan.

ADDRESS: 59 Ujiyamada, Uji-shi, Kyoto 611-0021

TEL/INFORMATION: 0774-21-4634. A small leaflet in English is available for ¥100. Tours of Uji are available by contacting the Uji Sightseeing Association at 0774-23-3334 or the Volunteer Tour Guide Club at 0774-22-5083.

HOW TO GET THERE: From Kyoto Station, take the JR Nara Line or the Keihan Uji Line to Uji Station. From there it's about 20 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Emperor Ojin and his sons Uji no Wakiratsuko and Emperor Nintoku.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection against danger, and academic success.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Uji is famous for green tea, which makes spring the best time to visit for the new tea of the year. The cherry blossoms along the Ujigawa river are famous in early April, and November is popular for the colors of the Japanese maples in the surrounding hills.

Important physical features: The most important feature of Ujigami Jinja is its age. Various sources describe it as “the oldest shrine in Japan,” but this is incorrect. The *honden* from around 1060 makes it the oldest



Ujigami Jinja *Honden*

shrine *building* in Japan. It is impossible to verify just which shrine is the oldest, and claims are made for several named in the *Kojiki* or *Nihon shoki*, but Ujigami is not one of them. The oldest building in Japan, and one of the oldest wooden buildings in the world, is the pagoda at Horyuji in Nara, considered to date from about 711. While Ujigami Jinja is in no way as splendid, it is an interesting example of Heian-period architecture as it pertains to shrines.

The *honden* is unusual in that it incorporates three separate shrines called *naiden*, sitting side by side within one encompassing building. The sheltering building is called an *oiya*, or *sayado* (sheath hall). It is marked by a *nagare-zukuri* cypress-bark roof and an open-lattice front wall that incorporates sliding lattice doors on the right and left side. This type of latticework is seen at many shrine buildings. The three inner shrines contain a number of unusual features such as plaster infill walls, an open-latticework sliding door front, and delicate *sukashi kaerumata* (open-work frog-leg struts)—a stylistic touch that helps date the work to the late Heian period. The *naiden* contain a wooden stair outside the

structure (but within the *oiya*) and another wooden stair within the latticed area, both with fine wooden balustrades. As a result there is a door to the three *naiden* that is only half the height of the structure (approximately three by two feet). The doors on the left and right *naiden* are painted with images on the inside, which are apparently worn and barely visible. The right shrine supposedly shows a young boy holding a fan, while that on the left depicts an attendant in formal attire and holding a *shaku* (a wooden accessory used by Shinto priests and court officials). Both are likely from the same period as the buildings.

Another interesting aspect of the shrine is that the left and right *naiden* are slightly larger and structurally connected to the outer building, with shared pillars, walls, and roof, whereas the middle *naiden* is smaller and totally independent. It even has its own gabled roof. Curiously, it seems as though the outer building was made at a later date, but the shrines were originally constructed to anticipate the additional structure. One would assume that for some time the outer shrines had temporary roofs and walls, but the reason for constructing the building this way is pure mystery.

The Kamakura-period *baiden* that stands four feet in front of the *bonden* is built in a residential architecture style known as *shinden-zukuri*. It may have been moved to this site from the nearby Uji Detached Palace (Uji Rikyu). *Shinden-zukuri* was a type of single-story, raised-floor construction favored for the homes of the aristocracy in the Heian period. Though the *baiden* is believed to be from around 1215, it retains the earlier style, which makes it the oldest existing example and the second- or third-oldest shrine building in the country. (Isonokami Jingu claims a date of 1081 for its *baiden*). Ujigami's *baiden*

is a bit longer and deeper than its *bonden*. It has latticed windows along the front side that swing upward to open (*shitomido*), a typical component of *shinden-zukuri* construction. It also has additional "wings" to the right and left, with walls in white plaster. But it is the roof construction with *sugarubafu* that gives the building its distinctive style. Essentially, a pent roof has been incorporated in the gable side of the building (right and left sides). The extension overhangs the veranda at the front of the structure, and its slightly upward-curving shape is met by the curving edge of the eaves that overhang the front of the building. The result is a peak that interrupts the normally straight line of the front bargeboard, partway over the building wings. The slightly upturned corners of the *sugarubafu* and the canopy roof (*kobai*) over the wooden stairs give the appearance of being lifted upward by a breeze.

The location of the shrine between the southern Higashiyama mountain range and the Ujigawa River makes for a peaceful and isolated setting. The Uji area is famous for its crystal-clear water, and a spring is located on the grounds of the shrine to the right front of the *baiden*. Called the *kiribarasui*, it is one of the so-called "seven waters of Uji." The water was used to brew the tea for which Uji is so famous, though of the original seven springs only *kiribarasui* survives.

Important spiritual features: Ujigami Jinja enshrines Emperor Ojin and two of his four sons. The *Nihon shoki* records that before he died, Ojin appointed his youngest son, Uji no Wakiiratsuko, as his successor. But on his father's death Wakiiratsuko refused to take the throne, deferring instead to his elder brother. He too demurred, not wanting to go against his late father's wishes. The back-and-forth continued for three years until

the younger prince moved out of the capital to his villa at Uji, where he drowned himself for the good of the country—or so some believe. (There are reasons to believe there may in fact have been a succession struggle.) The elder brother subsequently became the sixteenth emperor under the name of Nintoku (313–99). The two sons involved in the succession dispute, together with their father, were eventually enshrined as the *kami* of Ujigami.

Legend has it that Emperor Daigo received an oracle in 901 to build a shrine here. (The emperor is known for having Sugawara no Michizane exiled to Dazaifu, which was to lead to the establishment of the Tenmangu shrines around the country.) The original shrine may have been built on the grounds of a former villa of Emperor Ojin close to the Ujigawa river, where Wakiiratsuko died. Perhaps Daigo felt sympathy for him and sought protection from the *kami* lest he suffer a similar fate. Be that as it may, there was a shrine here from the late ninth century called variously Rikyusha, Rikyu Myojin, and at a late date Rikyu Hachiman. Because the word *rikyu* means detached palace, it seems the shrine was connected with the imperial family and was perhaps a protecting spirit for it. In 1067 Emperor Go-Reizei gave the title of Rikyu Myojin to the shrine as a protector for Byodo-in, located just across the river. (The magnificent villa of Fujiwara no Michinaga, built in 998, had become a temple shortly beforehand in 1052.)

Generally, shrines dedicated to Emperor Ojin are considered Hachiman shrines. They typically enshrine Himegami, Jingu Kogo, and sometimes Emperor Chuai—at least in a *sessha*. However, in this case the father and two sons are enshrined, and the *sessha* is from Kasuga Jinja dedicated to the ancestral *kami* of the Nakatomi/Fujiwara clan. Nintoku is enshrined at several other shrines, but not in a

way that would befit his status in life. Instead, that status is reflected in the largest burial mound (*kofun*) in Japan, the 113-acre Daisen Kofun in Sakai, Osaka. Given the account of Ojin's successor in the *Nihon shoki*, it seems clear that Ujigami Jinja is primarily dedicated to his other son, Uji no Wakiiratsuko. Perhaps from a sense of propriety, however, Ojin is enshrined in the central *naiden*, with Wakiiratsuko on the left and Nintoku on the right. It may also have been reverence for Ojin by the Heike and the Genji clans that saved the shrine from being burned to the ground when they clashed nearby in the late twelfth century.

Description: Ujigami Jinja is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of seventeen in Kyoto and one of just three Shinto shrines in the group (the others are Kamigamo and Shimogamo). The entrance to the shrine begins on the east bank of the Ujigawa. The typical route leads first to Byodo-in, the more famous of Uji's two World Heritage Sites. The bridge from that side of the Ujigawa leads to To no shima, a long, narrow island in the middle of the river. The name is related to a 50-foot-tall, thirteen-layered stone pagoda called *jusanju no sekito* built in 1286 (rebuilt in 1908). From the other side of the island, the red-colored Asagiri Bridge leads to a red *torii* that marks the entrance to Uji Jinja (rather than Ujigami Jinja, which is located behind it). The two shrines were one and the same until the Meiji period, referred to as the Kami Rikyu and Shimo Rikyu shrines (upper Rikyu and lower Rikyu). Uji Jinja also enshrines Uji no Wakiiratsuko, and its *bonden* is a *nagare-zukuri* structure from the Kamakura period that is designated an Important Cultural Property. The area occupied by Uji Jinja is reputed to be the former location of Uji no Wakiiratsuko's villa, which was called Kirihara no Higeta.



Byodo-in

Another shrine, named Hakusan Jinja, southwest of Byodo-in, is also a remnant of the ancient Uji Detached Palace, where Ujigami's *baiden* was originally located. The shrine was built in the eighth century in response to an epidemic of smallpox. It was once part of a larger shrine-temple complex called Konjiki-in, but the shrine is the only building left. The present *bonden* dates from 1277 and houses a wooden sculpture of Izanami. The entire Uji area is well known as the site where various emperors built villas and many great battles were fought.

One particular point of interest is that the last ten chapters of the eleventh-century classic *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*), about the trials and tribulations of Heian-period courtiers, are set in Uji. Stone markers commemorate the sites associated with the novel, including the Ujibashi bridge, which is still the main means of crossing the river. A common mistake that one finds in various guides relates to the name of this bridge. The monk Doto built the original one in 646, making it one of the oldest known bridges in Japan. The current incarnation is an unsightly mix of tradition and modern engineering, but the point of the story is this: it is not the Ujibashi bridge that leads to the Naiku of Ise Jingu. That bridge spans the Isuzugawa and is a beautiful wooden bridge, rebuilt every twenty years along with the Jingu. Other bridges in Uji also figure in *Genji monogatari*; most have been rebuilt in modern form.

Traditional fishing using cormorants is demonstrated on the Ujigawa river, and boats line up at night to view this ancient fishing style.

If you walk from Amagasebashi bridge north along the right bank of the river, it is worthwhile stopping at Koshoji Temple, built in 1648 and known for its walkway called *kotozaka*, which is lined with maple trees. The original temple, called Kannon-dori-in, was built by the founder of the Soto Zen sect, Dogen, in 1233. It later expanded to become Kosho Horinji Temple.

It is also possible while in the area to take the Keihan Railway Uji Line to Obaku Station (two stops from Uji) and visit the Zen temple of Manpukuji. Founded in 1661, it is the head temple of the Obaku sect of Buddhism, which was established in Japan by the Chinese monk Yinyuan (in Japanese Ingen) about 1654. Walking onto the grounds of this magnificent complex is like stepping back in time. Especially noteworthy are the Ming dynasty-influenced structures from the mid-seventeenth century, which include the Chinese-style *chumon* gate and worship halls. In addition, look out for the carved wood "fish drum" and the laughing Hotei sculpture. This temple was originally a center of Chinese culture and continues the tradition through such means as Chinese-style vegetarian food called *fucha ryori*.

Festivals: Reisai, 1–5 May. Despite the shrine's status as a World Heritage Site, its main annual event, featuring its *mikoshi*, is a simple affair attended mostly by parishioners.

Agata Matsuri, 5–6 June. This is a festival of Agata Jinja, located less than a half mile from the Ujibashi bridge. A statue of the shrine's deity, Konohanasakuyahime, in the form of the Indian deity Bonten is carried by men in the darkness at 1 A.M. to the *beiden* of Agata Jinja, where it is met by a *mikoshi* from Uji Jinja. Its a nocturnal festival, thought to emulate a divine marriage between the *kami*.

Yasaka Jinja (Gion-sha)

MAP 12

DATE FOUNDED: Shrine tradition holds that the shrine was established in 656. The original buildings were constructed in 876. The present ones date from 1654.

ADDRESS: 625 Gion-machi Kitagawa, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto 605-0073

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-561-6155. A small color brochure in English is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Keihan Railway to Gion Shijo Station, then a 5-minute walk. Or take the Hankyu Railway to Kawaramachi Station and walk about 7 minutes. A number of buses from Kyoto Station including numbers 206 and 207 will let you off at the shrine.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Susano-o no mikoto, Kushiinadahime no mikoto, Yahashira no mikogami ("eight child kami"; also called Yasaka no sume no kami).

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection from danger, the well-being of the family, and protection against illness. Also for a good pregnancy, to find love and marriage, and success in business.

BEST TIMES TO GO: In April for cherry-blossom viewing (*hanami*); the park adjacent to the shrine is known for its weeping cherry trees, which are lit up in the evening for late viewing. Also the whole month of July (but especially the 16th and 17th) when the Gion Matsuri is underway.

Important physical features: Yasaka Jinja stands near the foot of the Higashiyama hills at the eastern end of Shijo Street, one of Kyoto's most important east-west



Yasaka Jinja *romon*

thoroughfares. The entrance sports a great two-story, three-bay gate called the *nishi romon*, built in 1497 after the previous one burned down. It is complete with Shinto archer-guardians sitting at either side of the entrance. The whole gate stands at the top of a staircase of some twenty-plus steps, near the top of which are two impressive stone *komainu* sculptures. The elevated height makes the vermillion gate visible down Shijo Street all the way to the Kamogawa River. Although this is the most visible gate, the south gate (also a *zuijin romon*) is considered the main entrance. It faces the *bonden* directly and is the gate through which the *kami* enters and leaves during festivals. A large stone *torii*, reputed to be the largest in Kyoto, stands before it. The 30-foot *myojin torii*, erected in 1646, was repaired after earthquake damage in 1666. This and the red wooden *torii* at the east entrance are the only large *torii* on the grounds. The shrine grounds are not very large, though they once encompassed the adjacent Maruyama Park. But within this small area is the most massive *bonden* structure of any shrine in Japan.



The *honden* of Yasaka Jinja

The shrine (known formerly as Gion-sha) was under the control of the Tendai sect of Enryakuji on Mount Hiei. It was forced to separate from Buddhism in the Meiji period (when its name was changed from Gion-sha Kanshin'in to Yasaka Jinja). However, the style of the *bonden* remains close to its roots as a *miyadera* (shrine where Buddhist rites are performed). Designated an Important Cultural Property, it is built in the *yasaka-zukuri* (or *gion-zukuri*) style, combining the *bonden* and *baiden* in a single building somewhat resembling the main hall of a Buddhist temple. The shrine is almost square, at 69 by 57 feet in size, and it is 50 feet in height. It is covered by a massive hip-and-gable (*irimoya*) cypress bark-covered roof with an area of nearly 12,000 square feet. It is thought that the *bonden* and *baiden* were originally two buildings side by side, which were covered with a single roof in the Heian period. The present form probably took shape when the shrine was rebuilt in 1148. It was subsequently rebuilt in 1654 at the behest of Tokugawa Ietsuna. At first glance it appears from the front to be seven bays wide, but this is only the building under the massive roof. There are additional one-bay aisles (*bisashi*) on three sides that have their own separate roofs. From the front of the building stairs covered by a

large step canopy (*kobai*) lead to an exterior veranda. The massive canopy alone requires four pillars to support it. The first interior space is seven bays wide by two bays deep and constitutes the *baiden*. Next there is a one-bay corridor that surrounds the three bays wide by two bays deep *bonden*. The *baiden* and *bonden* constitute two separate buildings with their own separate roofs. Within the *bonden* is a third, independent structure, also with its own roof. The interior is partially lacquered, and the exterior wood is painted in vermilion, with walls of white stucco.

In front of the *bonden* and dominating the center of the compound is a large dance stage (*buden*). It is ringed with a triple row of paper lanterns bearing the names of donors. When lit, they make a stunning setting for the performances, rituals, and weddings held there. Yasaka also has many small sub-shrines representing many of the major shrines around the country, such as Ise Jingu (Geku and Naiku), Izumo Taisha, Taga Jinja, and Kasuga Taisha. The given reason is that a worshipper may pay respects to all of the *kami* without leaving Kyoto. The shrines dedicated to Ise are particularly notable for being set on stone, each with its own dormant site of rough gravel.

Important spiritual features:

Susano-o no mikoto, his wife, and eight children are enshrined at Yasaka Jinja. Historically, however, the shrine has been important for the cult of Gozu Tenno, an Indian-Buddhist-Shinto syncretic deity with the power to protect against (or to cause) illness. The wife of Gozu Tenno is called Barime no miya or Hari Sainyo, and their children are the *bachioji* (eight princes).

There are various theories about the founding of Yasaka Jinja. Shrine history credits a man named Irishi Omi, who was appointed

miyatsuko (high-ranking chieftain) and gives the founding date as 656. Some scholars attribute the foundation to a monk named Ennyo, who built a temple called Kankeiji here in about 876 dedicated to devotion of the Yakushi Nyorai (the Buddha of medicine). But it seems likely that Ennyo established Yakushi on a site that had long enshrined *kami* of disease prevention. The land for the temple was donated by the powerful *kampaku* Fujiwara no Motot-sune (836–91), and Kofukuji, the Fujiwara family temple in Nara, exercised control over Kankeji in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. The Tendai temple Enryakuji wrested control of the shrine, possibly with the help of Motosune, who was creating a network of temple/shrine complexes under the patronage of his branch of the clan. The shrine would develop into a flashpoint for battles between Enryakuji and Kofukuji, and acted as a base in Kyoto for the “warrior-monks” (*sobei*) from Mount Hiei. Then in 926, it is recorded that a shrine called Tenjindo on the site was dedicated to Gozu Tenno, his wife, and his children. In any case, the deities enshrined here were worshipped under both Shinto and Hindu/Buddhist belief systems from a very early stage.

Jetavana Vihara (in Japanese, Gion Shōja) is the name of the first monastery built for the Buddha. The protector of the monastery was a deity named Gavagriva (in Japanese, Gozu Tenno). An Indian story relates how the ox-headed god was in search of a wife when he was refused food and shelter at the home of King Kotan but shown hospitality by the king's poorer brother Somin. Gozu Tenno continued his journey and found a suitable bride, the daughter of the dragon king. On his trip home, he took revenge on King Kotan by chopping him to bits and killing all his people. By contrast, the king's poor brother Somin, who had welcomed the deity into his house, was given

magic grass which he wore around his waist to ward off disease. (The grass ring became the *chinowa* [see p. 51] used today in every Shinto shrine.) The story is almost identical to that of a god called Muto Tenshin as depicted in the *Bingo fudoki* (a gazette from the eighth century). It illustrates how one god could become associated with another, and with both the spreading of disease (if slighted) and its prevention (if treated well). The story from the *fudoki* calls Muto a foreign god and identifies him as Susano-o. In both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shōki*, Susano-o is associated with protection (slaying the eight-headed dragon) and disease (as a child, his never-ending lamenting caused all manner of disaster). When the Meiji government declared a separation of Shinto and Buddhism the deity of Gion was henceforth identified as Susano-o. But the association of the two deities had, as the *Bingo fudoki* shows, deep roots.

In the eighth and ninth centuries it was commonly believed that plague was caused by the angry spirits of wrongly executed or otherwise mistreated members of the court. One such figure was Prince Sawara (750–85), who was implicated in a murder and exiled to Awaji Island. En route he committed suicide (or was assassinated). Afterward, one of Emperor Kanmu's wives died of plague and one of his sons died after being declared possessed by the prince's angry ghost. Such events prompted Kanmu to appease the ghost by posthumously naming the dead prince Emperor Sudo (the only time in history this occurred). But the number of “angry spirits” continued to increase until there were six. As well as Prince Sawara they included Prince Iyo, Fujiwara no Kisshi, Fujiwara no Hirotsugu, Tachibana no Hayanari, and Fun'ya no Miyatamaro.

It was in such an atmosphere that the first officially sponsored ceremony to appease

angry spirits took place. Called Goryo-e (meeting with angry spirits), it was held by Emperor Seiwa in a garden called Shinsen-en near the palace in 863. The *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* records that it was held for the first time in response to an epidemic that swept through the country in the spring of that year. It was an attempt to stop spontaneous festivals held by citizens that could turn into demonstrations against the government. This was not the first attempt to appease angry spirits or spirits of pestilence. Measures such as reciting sutras and giving offerings were common, as were “festivals of the road” that feted such deities as Yachimata-hiko and Yachimata-hime, Kunado, and *sai no kami*, deities of the roads and boundaries through which pestilence was thought to enter the city. However, the Goryo-e was distinct in that offerings were made to six “spirit seats” (*ryoza*) representing the six vengeful spirits. Children of noble families performed dances for the *kami*, with the public invited to watch. Later, a severe pestilence was attributed to the anger of Gozu Tenno and a great festival was ordered. Sixty-six halberds (Japanese lances) were erected at Shinsen-en, representing each of the provinces of the country. This was the origin of the Gion Matsuri, which is now the most important festival in Kyoto and one of the most important in the country. It became a yearly event in 975.

The idea of “turning” the vengeful spirits into protective deities that developed during the early Heian period was part of the Buddhist concept that *kami* were in need of enlightenment. The same thinking led to the building of *jinguji* (temples where the merit gained by reciting sutras was transferred to the *kami*). The practice was used by Buddhism to gain influence over *kami* cults, as had been done in India with Hindu deities. While *goryo* belief (the original word, *onryo*, meaning “vengeful

spirit,” later merged with *goryo*, or “honorable spirit”) existed from at least the Nara period (710–94), it only became a significant influence during the Heian and medieval periods. It embodied the meeting point of Shinto, Buddhist, yin/yang, and folk beliefs. The festivals not only encompassed the fear of natural disaster, but also became a way of allowing the common people to vent frustration with the ruling class. Such was the case with a later addition to the *goryo*—Sugawara no Michizane, who was another victim of court intrigues to undergo a transition from mortal to vengeful spirit to protective deity.

Description: The Meiji government specifically cited Gozu Tenno as an example of the “distortion” of Shinto, and Gion-sha was forced to expunge ties to Buddhism and rename itself Yasaka Jinja. It is said to be a reference to the Yasaka clan of Korean immigrants who settled in the area and worshipped at nearby Hokanji Temple. (The temple is survived by a single five-story pagoda that was rebuilt in 1440 and lies directly south of Yasaka Jinja.) A famous bell of the shrine is mentioned in *Heike monogatari* (*The Tale of the Heike*) in its opening line, learned by every school child in Japan: “The bell of the Gion temple tolls into every man’s heart to warn him that all is vanity and evanescence.” The bell was removed in the Meiji period and now resides in Daiun-in Temple next door. (That temple is known for its unusual tower shaped like one of the floats of the Gion festival.)

Today Yasaka Jinja stands at the head of around three thousand related shrines. It no longer enshrines Gozu Tenno and the identity of Susano-o as a protector against pestilence is far less important these days, but the Gion Matsuri has evolved into a month-long festival with the same basic pattern as it had in the



The *shinko-sai* with the three *mikoshi* arrayed in front of the *ramon*, during the Gion Matsuri

tenth century. It begins on 1 July with ceremonies in the neighborhoods of each participating community, and on the 10th a *mikoshi* is carried from the shrine down to the Kamogawa river and purified. From the 14th through the 16th, floats are brought out for display and festooned with lanterns for night viewing. The parade takes place on the 17th. Although the festival originally consisted of sixty-six floats, today there are thirty-two massive floats classified as *yama* and *boko* (or *boko*), which are paraded on 17 July. *Hoko* are drawn on massive wooden wheels approximately 7 feet in diameter, by upwards of fifty people each. The *yama* floats are about 20 feet tall and carry larger-than-life-sized dolls of famous figures. The lead float in the parade is the *naginata-boko*, which has a halberd on its mast to ward against evil, and it carries a young male child whose human body the spirits may temporarily occupy so as to more thoroughly enjoy the festival. The nine *boko* floats are what remain from sixty-six halberds originally used to represent the sixty-six provinces that comprised Japan of the tenth century. They are about 82 feet tall, richly ornamented with carvings

and tapestries—many of them imported from Europe in the seventeenth century—and carry up to twenty-four people, mostly musicians.

Festivals: Okera Mairi, 31 December to 1 January. Not a festival per se but a New Year's tradition whereby a sacred fire is lit at three locations in the shrine. A medicinal plant named *okera* (*Atractylis ovata*) is smoked in the fire and worshippers light strips of bamboo rope to take home with them. Using the smoldering rope to make a cooking fire is said to ward off illness for the year ahead.

Gion Matsuri, 1–31 July. A magnificent festival that has been held for the past 1,100 years. The month-long event begins with Kippu-iri on 1 July and ends with the Eki Jinja Nagoshi Matsuri on the 31st. During the month various religious services and ceremonies are held throughout the city. A number of townhouses exhibit personal treasures from the 14th to the 16th. The climax of the festival occurs with the parade on the 17th. This Gion Matsuri was the model for many similar festivals that spread throughout the country.

Yoshida Jinja

MAP 13

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 859 by Fujiwara no Yamakage. Present *honden* from 1648.

ADDRESS: 30 Yoshida Kaguraoka-cho, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-8311

TEL/INFORMATION: 075-771-3788

HOW TO GET THERE: By Kyoto city bus number 17, 102, or 203 to the Kyodai Nogakubu-mae bus stop. By Kyoto city bus number 31, 65, 201, or 206 to the Kyodai Seimon-mae bus stop near the gate of Kyoto University. Or by the Keihan Line to Demachiyang Station, and then a 20-minute walk.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Takemikazuchi no mikoto, Iwainushi no mikoto (Futsunushi no mikoto), and Ame no Koyane no mikoto and his wife Himegami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Well-being of the family, protection from danger.

BEST TIMES TO GO: In mid-November for the autumn color, and 2–4 February for the Setsubun festival.

Important physical features: Yoshida Jinja stands at the southwestern foot of Mount Yoshida, a small tree-covered peak originally called Kagura-oka on the eastern edge of Kyoto. Higashi Ichijo Street, which runs directly east from the Kamogawa river, passes the southern end of Kyoto University and connects directly to the *sando* of the shrine. As a Fujiwara clan shrine, it is a branch of Kasuga Taisha in Nara (the third after Oharano in Nagaoka-kyo, now part of Kyoto). The *kami* are the same *shisbo myojin* (four gods of Kasuga), and the structure of the four side-by-side *hon-*



Yoshida Jinja *honden*

den is much the same as at Kasuga. One distinction is that each *honden* at Yoshida has a set of *komainu* sitting directly on the veranda, whereas those at Kasuga and Oharano do not. The four *kami* are enshrined in separate one-bay (about 6 by 8.5 feet) structures, the design of which is known as *kasuga-zukuri* (for details, please see the entry for Kasuga Taisha).

The structure that most distinguishes Yoshida Jinja is called the Daigengu (“shrine of great origin”). It was the main building of the site called the Saijoshō (“ritual space”). Everything about it is unique and unprecedented in the history of shrine architecture. The eight-sided structure has a complicated *irimoya* gabled roof covered in thatch. The ridge is oriented north–south and includes *chigi* and five *katsuogi*. But there are two types of *katsuogi*: a rounded, log-like type bundled together in three groups of three, and a square type bundled side by side in two groups of two. The square type represents *in* energy (yin) and the log type *yo* (yang). The ends of the *chigi*

are cut horizontally in the front of the shrine to represent the yin (female) and vertically in the rear to represent yang (male). There is also an ornament in the center of the ridgepole called a *yata no misbirushi* ("eight-span" or "eight-fold" symbol) that represents the sacred mirror of Amaterasu (*yata no kagami*). It is embedded in a lotus that catches rainwater, which flows down a central beam in the interior that is set on an eight-sided base. An eight-sided well is placed vertically above the base, which stands in a sea of 3,132 black pebbles (the number of *kami* noted in the *Engishiki*).

While there are any number of precedents for eight-sided buildings in Buddhist temples, none combines a gabled and thatched roof with an eight-sided structure such as this. The *nanendo* and the *bokuendo* eight-sided pavilions of Kofukuji in Nara, built in the eighth and ninth centuries, are good examples of the Buddhist style. They are both eight-sided, but so are their tiled roofs. Such structures may have influenced the shape of the Daigengu. But the main influence on the design seems to be that it was built as a substitute for the *bassbinden* that was formerly housed within the *jingikan* and that was destroyed during the Onin War. This is the place where the "eight protective deities" of the imperial line were worshipped (Kamimusuhi, Takamimusuhi, Tamatsumemusuhi, Ikumusuhi, Tarumusuhi, Omiyanome, Miketsu, and Kotoshironushi). Around the outside of this structure are enshrined 3,132 *kami* from across Japan, in small shrines set into two continuous structures to the left and right. The architecture reflects the intention of its fifteenth-century founder to make Yoshida the central shrine of Japan, taking the place of Ise. Directly behind the building are two shrines that are more conventional-looking and represent the Naiku and Geku of Ise Jingu.

Important spiritual features: The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* state that the main *kami* enshrined at Yoshida Jinja, Ame no Koyane no mikoto, was sent to earth with Ninigi no mikoto by Amaterasu. Ame no Koyane was charged with the important task of taking command of the mirror of Amaterasu. This heavenly *kami* is the ancestor of the Nakatomi clan, who inherited the right to perform Shinto rituals and purifications. In 645 the clan was allied (in the form of Nakatomi no Kamatari) with the future Emperor Tenji in overthrowing the ruling Soga clan. Kamatari was given the highest ministerial office under the new government, and in 669 Emperor Tenji honored him with the new clan name Fujiwara. The Fujiwara became the matrilineal line of the imperial house. Kamatari's great-grandson was enthroned as Emperor Shomu in 724. It marked the first time that a child of a woman from outside the imperial line was chosen to be emperor.

Thus began the Fujiwara dynasty that was to hold sway in court affairs until the end of the Heian period in the late twelfth century. For five hundred years the Fujiwara dominated the court by marrying their daughters into the imperial line and controlling the child-emperor grandchildren by acting as regents (*kampaku*). Fujiwara family shrines were built near the center of power, first in Heijokyo (Nara), then in Nagaokakyo when it briefly served as capital from 784 to 794, and finally in Heiankyo (Kyoto). Meanwhile, the Nakatomi branch of the clan occupied the position of hereditary head of the Council of *Kami* Affairs (*jingikan*) created in 701. From the late Heian period, the Nakatomi, Urabe, and Shirakawa were the dominant clans in Shinto affairs. The Nakatomi were charged with, among other things, performing the *oharae* (Great Purification), which was the central rite throughout the Heian



The Daigengu (above) and part of the array of shrines dedicated to the 3,132 *kami* of the *Engishiki* (right)

period. It later became the basis of a great deal of Shinto theology in the medieval period.

When the *jingikan* was established, the Department of Divination (*urabe*) was included and charged with conducting various divinations, such as the Chinese practice of reading cracks in burned tortoise shell (*kiboku*). In time, members of the department adopted the title of Urabe as their surname. In the Kamakura period, a branch of the Urabe from Izu took the clan names of Yoshida and Hirano. The Hirano clan became hereditary priests of Hirano Jinja and experts on the *Nihon shoki*.

The Urabe had been in control of Yoshida Jinja from an early date. From the Kamakura through the Edo periods, the priests there developed one of the most influential schools of Shinto theology. The first to adopt the name of Yoshida was Urabe Kanehiro in 1375, but the clan's great influence began with Yoshida Kanetomo (1435–1511), who founded the school of thought usually referred to as Yoshida Shinto, also known as Yuitsu (“one-and-only”) Shinto. The importance of this

form of Shinto was, first, that it attempted to create a *kami*-centeric, Japan-centric theology; second, that it sought to position Yuitsu Shinto as the supreme and original source of Confucianism and Buddhism; and third, that it provided an impetus for unifying theology and ritual across the entire country and across a broad spectrum of local practices. Kanetomo and his successors did much to assert the clan as the primary authority in Shinto matters, not only by delivering extensive lectures but also by instituting a system of dispersing shrine rankings (*sogen senji*). This system gained acceptance through relatively affordable prices. The clan's power was further enhanced with the blessing of successive shoguns for the Yoshida to license priests. The awarding of shrine and priestly ranks had been the sole prerogative of the *jingikan*, but the havoc wrought by the Onin War (1467–77) left open the opportunity for the new initiative.

Kanetomo's boldest and most controversial move was his effort to claim the central role held by Ise Jingu. He claimed that all the *kami*



of Japan (including Amaterasu) descended on Mount Yoshida every day. Furthermore, he maintained that the shrine's deity, Taigenshin, was the "*kami* of great origin" and the ancestor of the Yoshida. In 1489, three years after a fire at Ise, Kanetomo declared to the court that the *goshintai* ("sacred body" of the *kami*) had flown from Ise to Yoshida. He received the court's endorsement of this "miracle" (though it is said that Kanetomo himself made the shrine's *goshintai*). In this way the Yoshida priests managed to give the impression that they were preserving a pure Shinto tradition in a sea of pollution from Buddhism and Confucianism. Despite their protests, Ise priests were powerless to stop them. Thus the establishment of the Daigengu at the end of the fifteenth century became a declaration that Mount Yoshida was the new center of the *kami* universe.

Kanetomo promoted the idea developed by another member of the Urabe, the Tendai monk Jihen, that "Shinto was the roots, Confucianism the branches, and Buddhism the flower." In this way Shinto was seen as the original source from

which the others were derived. Unilateral actions such as installing the *bassbinden* at Yoshida Jinja brought the clan into conflict with other priestly families such as the Shirakawa (who once controlled the Council of Kami Affairs), but they managed to gain official sanction from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, first from the emperor and then from warlords. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, for example, rebuilt the current Daigengu in 1590 and the Yoshida were in charge of enshrining him as Hokoku Daimyōjin when he died. Despite the close relationship, the clan managed to gain the blessings of Hideyoshi's rival, Tokugawa Ieyasu, to continue in control of the *jingikandai* (successor to the defunct *jingikan*). The theology of the Yoshida was very much of its time, and their cunning business acumen enabled the family to flourish during both the most sustained period of chaos and then the most sustained period of peace in Japanese history. Their legacy is in their advocacy of an ancient indigenous religion, superior to any other, which set the example for the Shinto of the Meiji period.

The Urabe/Yoshida not only were an important sacerdotal family, but were also known for their great scholarship and writings. Probably the most famous member of the clan is Yoshida Kenko (1283–1350), who wrote *Tsurezuregusa* (*Essays in Idleness*). He was born Urabe Kaneyoshi but changed his name late in life after leaving the palace guard and becoming a Buddhist monk. His collection of 243 short essays is one of Japan's most famous classics and part of the standard junior high school curriculum.

Description: A red *torii* at the eastern end of Higashi Ichijo Street marks the entrance to the site, which in many ways set the precedent for the establishment of Shinto as a distinct religion. A short walk and then a short climb up a stone stairway leads to the four *bonden* of Yoshida Jinja. They are located in an inner compound to the left. Return to the opposite end of the grounds to start ascending Mount Yoshida, passing several red *torii* on the way. The Daigengu is on the left (though visitors are only allowed to enter on New Year, Setsubun, and the first day of each month). These days little reference is made to Yoshida Shinto outside of academic circles, and the shrine only says that all the *kami* of Japan are worshipped here and that visiting the Daigengu is the equivalent of going to every shrine in the country. There are two long, curved rows of small shrines painted in vermilion along the left and right sides of the Daigengu. A small paper map gives the number of *kami* from each prefecture as originally listed in the *Engishiki*.

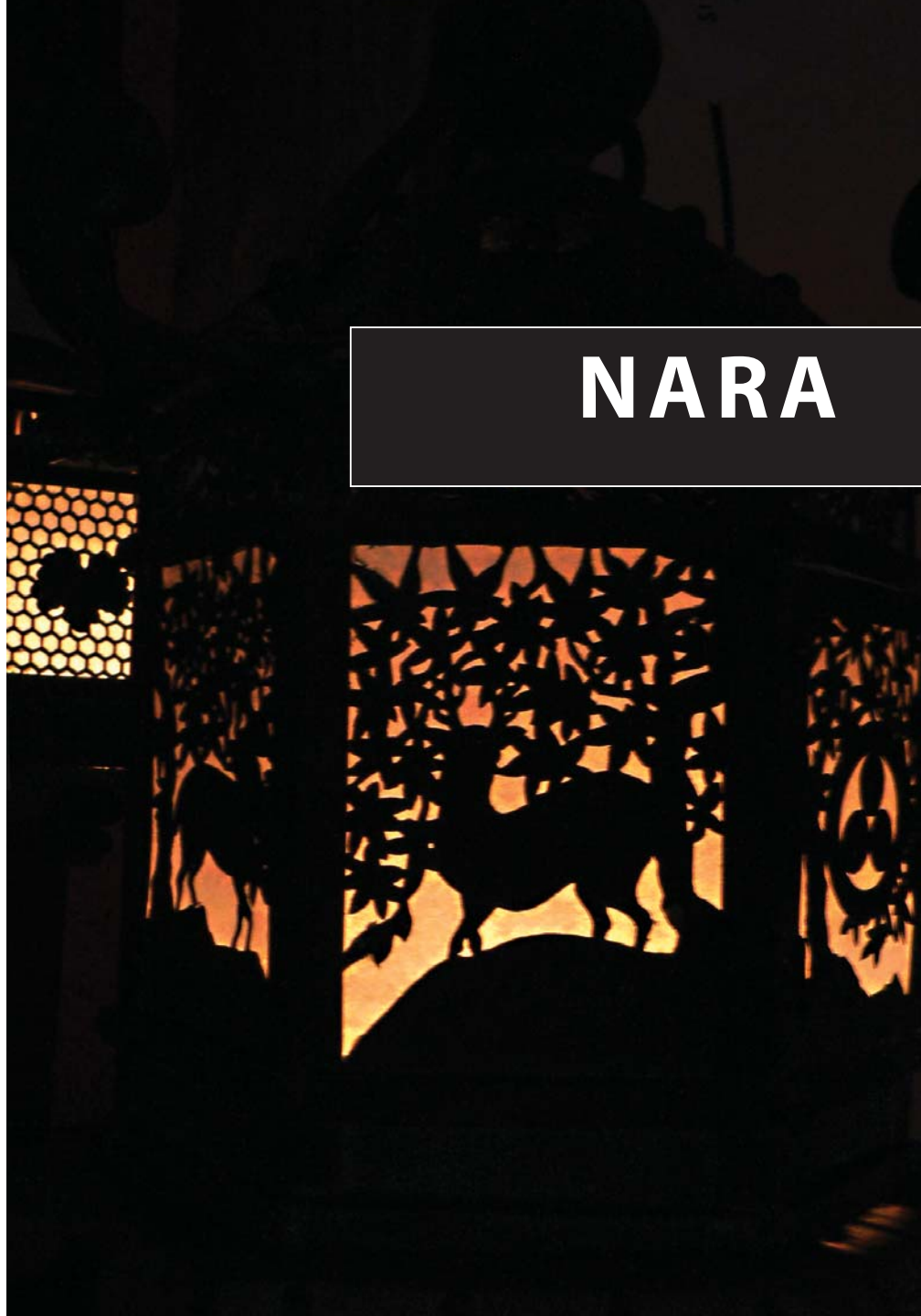
On the way to the Daigengu, a long staircase on the left leads to the Shinryu-sha. It is dedicated to the spirit of Yoshida Kanetomo, the founder of Yoshida Shinto. This modest shrine was named after Kanetomo's posthumous title, which is Shinryu Daimyojin. It is unusual in that it stands over the place where he is buried.

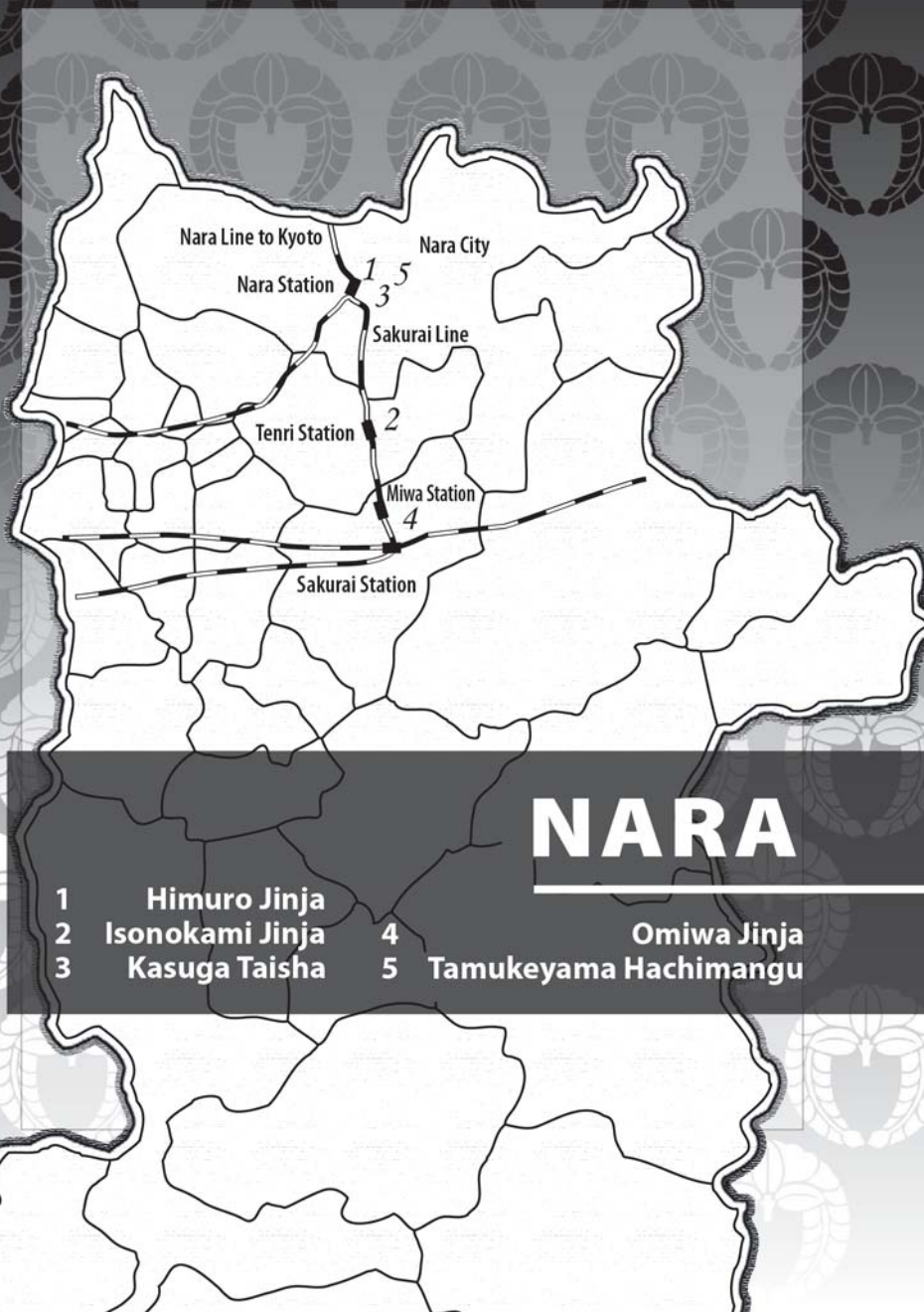
Going past the Daigengu leads to the shrine's numerous *sessha* and *massha*. Among them is the shrine to the founder of Yoshida Jinja, Fujiwara no Yamakage. Interestingly, it was established only fifty years ago. At some point legend attributed skills with a chef's knife (*bocho*) to Yamakage, and the shrine became a protector of chefs and restaurants. The story apparently grew out of legends about secret transmissions of the Shijo-ryu, one of the oldest schools of cooking from the Muromachi period. Reference is made to Fujiwara no Yamakage creating thirty-six ways of cutting carp without touching the fish with his bare hand. Accordingly, a knife ceremony is held annually at the shrine in May. The shrine grounds are spread over most of Mount Yoshida, and the mountain provides a viewing spot for parts of the city and for the Chinese character for *dai* ("great") that is set ablaze in the Daimonji Okuribi fire festival each year on 16 August.

Festivals: Setsubun Festival, 2–4 February. Setsubun is the day before the beginning of spring on the old lunar calendar. The custom to ensure a good coming year is to scatter roasted soybeans while saying "*Oni wa soto, Fuku wa uchi*," which means "Demons, out! Good fortune, in!" At Yoshida Jinja just before midnight on the 3rd, a huge bonfire is lit and the "demons" come out. The festival has been held since the Muromachi period and attracts half a million visitors over three days when stalls line the street to the shrine.

Yamakage Jinja Taisai (Grand Festival), 8 May. Fujiwara no Yamakage was the founder of the family shrine in Kyoto. According to legend, he was related to the Shijo school of cooking. During the festival the master of the Ikama school of cooking demonstrates one of the secret techniques handed down over the ages.

NARA





Nara Line to Kyoto

Nara City

Nara Station

1
3
5

Sakurai Line

Tenri Station

2

Miwa Station

4

Sakurai Station

NARA

1 Himuro Jinja

2 Isonokami Jinja

3 Kasuga Taisha

4

Omiwa Jinja

5 Tamukeyama Hachimangu

Himuro Jinja

MAP 1

DATE FOUNDED: When the Heijokyo capital (present-day Nara) was established in 710, a *himuro* (storage place for ice) was built in the mountains by the upper stream of the Yoshikigawa river, and a *kami* was enshrined there. It is said to be the origin of the shrine. Apart from one building erected in 1208, the current buildings are from the Edo period.

ADDRESS: 1-4 Kasugano-cho, Nara 630-8212

TEL/INFORMATION: 0742-23-7297. The outer area is open at all times. The inner area is open from about 6:30 A.M. to 5 P.M.

HOW TO GET THERE: From Kintetsu Nara or JR Nara stations, take the city circulation bus to the Himuro Jinja/Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan-mae bus stop. Or walk about 15 minutes. Located across the street from the National Museum.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Tsugenoigami oyama-nushi no mikoto, who invented a method for preserving ice, Osazaki no mikoto (Emperor Nintoku), and Nukata Onakatsuhiko no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Traditionally a favorite shrine of icemakers, who pray to the *kami* for a hot summer. Also known as a place to pray for a good crop-growing season.

BEST TIMES TO GO: The shrine is known for its beautiful weeping cherry blossoms in early April.

Important physical features: The *bonden* is a variation of *ikkensha nagare-zukuri* style called *sankensha*, with a gabled roof and the entrance on the non-gabled side. There are three doors, one for each *kami* enshrined, with the center door a little taller than the other two. The interior of the *bonden* is partitioned by hanging fabric. The



An offering to the *kami* of ice at Himuro Jinja

wood is unpainted, and a wide wooden stairway leads to the veranda, where offerings for the *kami* are placed. In front of the *bonden* is a red *torii* and fence, with a gate built into the *torii*. The *baiden* consists of a large stage for rituals, sacred dance, and music. Also called a maiden or *bugakuden*—a stage for *bugaku* court dance—it was brought here from Edo at the behest of Tokugawa Ieyasu. It was originally built as a temporary stage, and apparently it had no roof, but Ieyasu thought this inappropriate and ordered one built. The front gate of the shrine, called *gosho no mon*, was also brought here from the imperial palace in Kyoto. Perhaps the most impressive feature, at least in early April, is the magnificent weeping cherry tree that stands in front of the shrine, a favorite spot with photographers.

Important spiritual features: Himuro Jinja is a rare shrine, perhaps the only one dedicated to the god of ice (although Himuro festivals are held at other shrines). The *kami* Tsugenoigami oyama-nushi no mikoto was a man who invented a way to store ice. Naturally occurring ice was

used to predict the growth of the rice crop, a divination method that probably originated in China. It seems that the thicker the ice in winter, the hotter the coming summer. Apparently a hot summer is required for a good rice crop. If there is not at least a week to ten days of hot, dry weather in August, the stalk continues to grow and reduces the volume of rice. The predictive quality of the ice was discovered by a younger brother of Emperor Nintoku (r. 313–99), Nukata no Onakatsuhiko, who brought it to the emperor. That is why all three are enshrined here as *kami*.

Description: Himuro Jinja is a small shrine located on Noboroji Street, the main street leading from Kintetsu Nara Station to Nara Park. Just opposite the Nara National Museum, a red *torii* marks the entrance. The approach is quite short and the overall grounds small, but this is a unique shrine with an ancient history. Himuro means “ice house,” and the main *kami* enshrined here, Tsugenoinagi oyamanushi no mikoto, is considered the god of ice. *Nihon shoki* offers the story of how Nukata Onakatsuhiko, a younger brother of Emperor Nintoku, was on a hunting expedition when he came across a pit containing ice and asked about its use. The village headman, Tsugenoinagi oyamanushi, explained how ice was stored in a hole about 16 feet deep, the floor of which was covered in grass. Then the ice was covered with a thick straw roof. This was apparently done on the sunny side of the mountain, since ground-water, which would melt the ice, does not rise there. He further explained that the ice was used for water and saké in the summer months. The delighted prince brought the ice to his brother, and thus the practice of storing ice at the imperial court was begun. The original location of the shrine is thought to be

where the second *torii* of Kasuga Taisha now stands, a distance of about half a mile from its present site. An old map in the possession of Todaiji shows a Himuro valley and pond in that same area as well. The shrine was first built in 710, but moved in 806 to its present location near the *nandaimon* gate of Todaiji.

Another interesting aspect of the shrine is its ancient connection to *bugaku* (dance) and *gagaku* (music), both originally performed for the imperial court. Dance and music forms that came to Japan in the seventh century from China and Korea were performed for the imperial court. By about the tenth century they had reached the level of refinement in form and theme that we see today. Kyoto, Nara, and Osaka were important centers of the art until Edo became the focus of political and economic activity from the early seventeenth century. Performers traveled to Edo to perform for the shogun, and when the imperial court moved in the nineteenth century so did most of the performers. However, the original centers of these art forms retained the cultural heritage, and Himuro Jinja was at the center of the Nara branch. A Kamakura-period (1185–1333) *gagaku* mask was discovered in the shrine's *bonden* and is now designated a National Cultural Property. Himuro Jinja continues to be associated with Nara *bugaku* and *gagaku*, with frequent performances held at the shrine.

Festival: Kenpyosai (Kenpyo Festival), 1 May. Icemakers from the region gather together to offer two columns of ice three-foot-tall, one containing freshwater fish (carp) and the other saltwater fish (bream). They are dedicated to the *kami*, in the hope that it will bring on a long hot summer and thus good business for the icemakers. The ceremony starts at 11 A.M. *Bugaku* and *gagaku* are performed from 2 P.M.

Isonokami Jingu

MAP 2

DATE FOUNDED: At the behest of Emperor Suinin (r. 29 B.C.—A.D. 70).

ADDRESS: 384 Furu-cho, Tenri-shi, Nara 632-0014

TEL/INFORMATION: 0743-62-0900. A four-page English-language handout on the shrine is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Sakurai Line from Nara Station to Tenri Station. It takes about 30 minutes to walk to Isonokami Jingu, and the route is complicated. There is a bus, but it runs only 5 times a day. It may be best to take a taxi to the shrine (about ¥1,200) and to walk back once you know the way.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Futsu no mitama no kami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: The curing of any type of illness.

BEST TIMES TO GO: In April when the cherry trees are in bloom, or in October for the fall colors.



The *haiden* of Isonokami Jingu

Important physical features: Isonokami Jingu is one of the oldest shrines in Japan, mentioned in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. The shrine had no *bonden* until 1913. Prior to that it had only a *haiden*, which was originally located on the grounds of the imperial palace and was called the *shinkaden*. The *haiden* was moved here in 1081 by Emperor Shirakawa (1053–1129). As such the shrine claims it as the oldest *haiden* in Japan, and it is designated a National Treasure. The modest building is seven bays wide and five bays deep, and the woodwork (other than the floor, ceiling, and exterior balcony)

is painted in red. The front seven bays and the first bay on the side can be fully opened between the pillars. The hip-and-gable roof (*irimoya-zukuri*) is covered in cypress-bark shingles, and a section extends over the entrance stair on the non-gabled side. The area behind the *haiden* called the *kinsokuchi* (forbidden ground) was considered sacred, like the mountain itself. The sword *futsu no mitama no tsurugi*, the *goshintai* (“sacred body”) of the *kami* enshrined here, was supposedly buried there. In 1874 an excavation of the *kinsokuchi* revealed a large number of swords, metal objects, mirrors, armor, beads, and other treasures. A *bonden* was erected in the *kinsokuchi* in 1913. It is an unpainted *nagare-zukuri* style with *chigi* and *katsuogi*. The main gate is a *romon* built in 1318. It is a magnificent one-bay gate with a hip-and-gable style roof, surfaced in cypress-bark shingle, with slightly elongated corners that flare up noticeably. It is unpainted, and a covered corridor (*kairo*) extends from both its sides, with wood painted in cinnabar red and walls of white stucco.

There are two other buildings of note. One was originally the *baiden* of a Sumiyoshi Jinja that was located on the grounds of the nearby Uchiyama Eikyūji temple. It was a huge shrine-temple complex, of which Isonokami later became one part. It was moved here in 1914 after the temple was destroyed as part of the Meiji-era *shinbutsu bunri*, or enforced separation of Shinto and Buddhism. The building is thought to be from around 1137 and has retained its basic form despite numerous reconstructions. It is a modest structure in the *wari-baiden* (split or divided *baiden*) style. The long, narrow building is divided through the center by an earthen-floor passageway. The passageway is marked by a curved bargeboard (*karabafu*), and the two-by-four-bay sections to the right and left are entirely enclosed by doors that contain latticed upper halves, giving the structure a light and transparent feeling. The building is located on raised ground directly in front of the *romon* and is now an auxiliary shrine called Sessha Izumo Takeo Jinja, also designated a National Treasure.

The second building of note is a storehouse that dates only from 1851 in its current form. It stands on a spot where storehouses are believed to have stood since the shrine's founding. Indeed the shrine was at one point a weapons storehouse, entrusted to the Mononobe, a warrior clan supporting the Yamato rulers. The founder is recorded in the *Nihon shoki* as the eldest son of Emperor Suinin (r. 29 B.C.–A.D. 70), Inishiki no mikoto. The story goes that the emperor asked his two sons what they wanted most. The younger son asked for the throne, and the older son asked for bows and arrows. Thus the younger son ascended to the throne and the older son became a military leader. We also learn that the elder prince donated one thousand swords to the Isonokami shrine

in the thirty-ninth year of his father's reign. Therefore since its beginnings, the history of Isonokami has been entwined with that of the Japanese sword.

Important spiritual features: Even in Western culture, the sword was sometimes imbued with a spiritual power sent from heaven to aid the righteous (think of Excalibur). In Japan, it is only one of many special objects that may be imbued with the *tama* ("soul") of *kami*. At Isonokami Jingu, however, the sword—especially the *futsu no mitama no tsurugi*—is supreme. The *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* record that the *futsu no mitama no tsurugi* was sent from heaven by Takemikazuchi on Amaterasu's order. (A *tsurugi* is a double-edged sword used in ancient times, long before the introduction of the single-edged blade associated with the samurai.) Takakuraji no mikoto found the sword and brought it to Emperor Jinmu in Kumano. This occurred during Jinmu's campaign to establish his dynasty when his older brother Itsuse no mikoto had just been killed and his troops had lost their will to fight. But when Jinmu drew the sword, his troops felt its heavenly power and went on to win the campaign. The sword was worshipped at the royal palace until the sixth year of Emperor Sujin's reign, when it was moved to nearby Kasanui. Later Emperor Suinin ordered his eldest son to establish a shrine at Isonokami and have the sword enshrined there.

Another very important sword discovered at Isonokami Jingu is the "seven-pronged sword." It bears an inscription to the effect that it was made in the year 369 for presentation to the king of Yamato by the king of Paekche (part of present-day Korea). The sword is mentioned in the *Nihon shoki* as a gift presented to Emperor Ojin in the year 252, evidence that the dates in

the *Nihon shoki* have been pushed back in time. It also verifies ties between Yamato and Paekche. However, the question of whether it was given to a superior by an inferior or the other way around remains a source of controversy.

The area around Isonokami known as Furu was the stronghold of the Mononobe clan, who branched out across the Nara plain to Kawachi (present-day Osaka) and beyond. Mononobe was originally a professional name (“mono” meaning “warrior” and “be” denoting a professional group). They replaced the Otomo as the primary warrior clan of the young Yamato state. The Mononobe, along with the Nakatomi, opposed the adoption of Buddhism by the state, which led to a struggle with the Soga clan and the Battle of Shigisen in 587. Following the victory of the Soga, Buddhism was given the sanction of the state. The main branch of the Mononobe was the Isonokami. The Mononobe name disappeared after this point. It was recorded later, in 965, that Isonokami was one of sixteen shrines receiving offerings (*beibaku*) from the imperial throne. This indicates that the importance of Isonokami Jingu lasted far beyond the destruction of the Mononobe and its position as an armory.

Description: Isonokami is located along the old Yamanobe road in the city of Tenri in Nara. It is nestled amid the rich green of cedar and black pine. The shrine once guarded the eastern flank of the Yamato kingdom, and was perhaps the young states most important shrine in the fourth century. It also acted as a repository for weapons and a storehouse for tribute paid by the various clans to the Yamato kings. The Mononobe clan, who first worshipped here, traced their ancestry to the heavenly deity Futsunushi no kami, who was sent to subdue Okuninushi in Izumo and



Romon of Isonokami Jingu

to clear the way for the descent of the heavenly grandchild. The Mononobe also claimed another heavenly deity, Nigihayahi no mikoto, as their ancestor. The *kami* descended to the area around the Yamato plain in a “heavenly rock boat” sometime during the age of the gods. In one version of the Jinmu legend, Nigihayahi helps subdue Nagasunehiko, who had managed to place Jinmu and his army under a spell. The story of Nigihayahi’s relationship to Jinmu is told in the *Nihon shoki*, but the relation to the Mononobe comes from a text called the *Sendai kuji hongi*, a record claiming to have been compiled in the sixth century by Soga no Umako and Shotoku Taishi. The claim has been disproved, and the document is believed to be from the ninth century (in part) and probably written by a member of the Mononobe clan. It contains, among other interesting tales, the story of how Nigihayahi descended to earth in the “heavenly rock boat” along with the “ten precious symbols” (*tokusano kamudakara*). It is an important source of mythology that is not included in the *Kojiki*.

Festival: Reisai, or Furu Matsuri, 15 October. This festival features a procession of about two hundred people with a *gobei* (old-style *mikoshi*).

Kasuga Taisha

MAP 3

DATE FOUNDED: Officially in 768 as a shrine to the ancestors (*ujigami*) of the Fujiwara clan. The current *honden* is from 1863.

ADDRESS: 160 Kasugano-cho, Nara 630-8212

TEL/INFORMATION: 0742-22-7788. A bilingual Japanese-English pamphlet is available at no cost. Fortune telling oracles (*omikujii*) are available in English. Entrance to the shrine grounds is free, but there is a charge of ¥500 to stand in front of the *honden* and of ¥400 to see the treasure hall. The inner shrine is open from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. daily.

HOW TO GET THERE: Kasuga Taisha is located on the far eastern side of Nara Park, when approaching the park from the JR or Kintetsu Nara stations. Take the bus for Kasuga Taisha Honden from the station, or walk about 25 minutes.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Ame no Koyane no mikoto, Himegami, Takemikazuchi no mikoto, and Futsunushi no mikoto. The *kami* were invited from other shrines (Hiraoka Jinja, Kashima Jingu, and Katori Jingu). Sometimes called *shisho myojin* (the four bright *kami*) and also known collectively as the Kasuga *kami*.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Good health, long life, safety on the roadways and the sea, well-being of the family, prosperity in business, and career advancement.

BEST TIMES TO GO: In late April and early May when the wisteria is in bloom. Another excellent time to visit is during lantern-lighting ceremonies (Mantoro) for the Setsubun holiday (2–4 February starting at 6 P.M.) and the Obon holiday (14–15 August).



The *chumon* and *oro* of Kasuga Taisha

Important physical features: The *kasuga-zukuri* type of shrine building takes its name from the *honden* of this shrine. Though they form a collective, the *kami* are each enshrined in their own structure, which is only one bay in size (about 6 by 8.5 feet, with slight variations). They each have a curved, gabled roof covered in cypress bark. A deep pent roof (*bisashi*) on the front side (the gable side) is covered in the same material, and overhangs a veranda and stairs that are a little longer than the building itself. The *chigi* at the roof ridge are narrow and slightly curved, resembling crossed swords, and there are only two five-sided *katsuogi*. The woodwork is coated in vermilion lacquer, and the walls are plastered white. The four shrines are arrayed in a line very close to each other, with Takemikazuchi, Futsunushi, Ame no Koyane, and Himegami enshrined from left to right. Walls roughly six feet high between the shrines inhibit walking between them. A wide wooden rain gutter capped in gold sits under the adjacent eaves between the buildings. These shrines were rebuilt every twenty years from the Heian period until 1863.

The group is located in the northeast corner of the compound behind the distinctive hip-and-gable-roofed *chumon* gate that hides it. The *chumon* has in effect become the face of the shrine. The current structure dates from 1613 and is connected to a corridor-like building on each side called an *oro* to form the front and left sides of the inner shrine area that also contains a number of sub-shrines (*sessha* and *massha*). To the left front of the *chumon* is a large Japanese cedar estimated to be eight hundred to a thousand years old and depicted in a picture scroll from 1309.

The wall encircling the compound is a *kairo*, also from 1613, containing four entrance gates. The main entrance is the south gate (*nanmon*). This and the gate known as the *keigamon* on the left side of the compound are used by visitors. Two more gates on the left, the *seijomon* and the *naishimon*, are used by priests. The *kairo* creates an outer compound that contains several other buildings. Chief among them is the *heiden* that stands just in front of the south entrance, the *naoraiden* that stands to the left of it, and the red storehouse (*boko*) behind that. Around the inside of the *kairo* and especially between it and the *naoraiden*, hundreds of hanging bronze lanterns create a light counterpart to the thousands of heavy stone lanterns that dominate the landscape leading to the shrine. The shrine grounds sit on the eastern side of Nara Park that also contains Kofukuji, Todaiji, and hundreds of freely roaming deer. The grounds and structures are part of the World Heritage Site known as the “Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara.”

Important spiritual features: Two of the *kami* of Kasuga Taisha are connected to the central myths of imperial Shinto, while a third is the ancestral *kami* of one of the oldest Japanese clans, the Nakatomi.

The clan was allied to the Yamato rulers who came to control the country and create the Chrysanthemum Throne. In the myth of the Heavenly Rock Cave, when Amaterasu locked herself away and deprived the world of light, Ame no Koyane no mikoto intones *norito* prayers to entreat her to return. Later, when Ninigi no mikoto was sent to earth to take command, Ame no Koyane and Futodama no mikoto (the ancestor of the Inbe clan) were ordered to accompany him and to take charge of affairs related to worship. The descendants of Ame no Koyane, the Nakatomi, were placed in charge of purification rites and of reading *norito* prayers. Thus they became one of the five clans closest to the emperor. The *kami* was invited to Kasuga from Hiraoka Jinja in Kawachi (present-day Osaka).

The two other heavenly *kami* enshrined here, Takemikazuchi no mikoto and Futsunushi no mikoto, were sent by the gods to negotiate with the earthly *kami* Okuninushi to turn over rule of the country to Ninigi. The *kami* are revered at a number of shrines, two of the oldest being Kashima Jingu (Takemikazuchi) in present-day Ibaraki and Katori Jingu (Futsunushi) in present-day Chiba. It seems that the Nakatomi clan was part of a force sent in the seventh century to the eastern province called Hitachi to subdue a tribe opposing Yamato conquest. There is also some evidence that they were originally from the region. Either way, they were the hereditary ritualists of the Kashima shrine. With the growing strength and position of the clan in the eighth century, all the *kami* they revered were brought to the family shrine of Kasuga Taisha in the new capital of Nara.

In the mid-sixth century, the Nakatomi were allied with clans such as the Mononobe against the Soga clan, ostensibly in a fight to keep Buddhism from being patronized by the state. But it was also a struggle for control of



Hanging lanterns at Kasuga Taisha

the state between native clans and immigrant clans such as the Soga. The Soga emerged victorious and ushered in an age of reform and cultural awakening known as the Asuka period (538–70). It was based on the wholesale adoption of Chinese-style institutions and learning. Not only Buddhism but also Confucianism and Daoism flourished under the Soga, of whom Prince Shotoku Taishi is well known for helping to spread Buddhism in Japan. The Soga gained power at the expense of the emperor and set a precedent of weak emperor–strong consular that became the hallmark of Japanese governance. Never taking the throne directly, the Soga held power but allowed the imperial succession to continue.

The Nakatomi exacted revenge in a coup against the Soga in 645 when they conspired with Naka no Oe (the future Emperor Tenji) to assassinate Soga no Iruka and restore imperial power. Empress Saimei continued as ruler until the prince ascended to the throne in 661; however, reforms to further centralize and strengthen the Chinese-style government continued under his reign. This was due largely to the collapse in 660 of Paekche, Japan's closest ally on the Korean peninsula, and the destruction of a four-hundred-ship Japanese armada sent to restore the kingdom in 663. As a result, the Japanese greatly feared advancing Tang and Silla forces and made haste to defend the homeland.

By this time Buddhism was ascendant and a branch of the Nakatomi (who were the

most prominent *jingi shizoku*, or *kami* clan) were rewarded for their allegiance to Tenji by being given the new clan name, or *kabane*, Fujiwara. Whereas the Nakatomi branch of the family continued to be preeminent in *kami* affairs, the Fujiwara branch was free to support both the native and the foreign religion. So it was that they built Kasuga Taisha as their family shrine and nearby Kofukuji as their family temple—both of which have survived to become National Treasures. Ironically, the clan that had supported restoration of the emperor became the power behind the throne, supplying empresses as the *gaiseiki*, or maternal line, clan as had the Soga earlier. In this way they were able to control the affairs of state as regents (*kanpaku*) to a succession of young emperors throughout the Heian period.

Description: Kasuga Taisha is one of Japan's oldest and most celebrated shrines. It might be said that its history is that of the city of Nara. The approach to the shrine once began at Kofukuji, the ancestral temple (*ujidera*) of the Fujiwara located close by. The temple was built in 669 by the wife of Fujiwara no Kamatari, to pray for his recovery from illness, and moved to Nara in 710 from the previous capital of Fujiwara-kyo. At one time the shrine/temple complex was composed of approximately 175 structures, and its preeminence matched that of its sponsors. Even in its present much-reduced state, the five-story pagoda (or *gofumoto*, rebuilt in 1426), the two octagonal halls (*bokuendo*, rebuilt in 1210, and *nanendo*, rebuilt in 1741), and the one remaining worship hall (*tokondo*) are all great symbols of Nara.

Today the accepted approach to Kasuga begins just past Kofukuji (coming from Kintetsu Nara Station on Sanjo Street) at the *ichi no torii*. The long and wide approach is a

quiet passage through old forest, with the trees creating a dense canopy that covers the road. Toward the end of this section of the *sando*, stone lanterns (*isbidoro*) donated by worshippers throughout the ages appear at the sides of the road. It is not until you reach the second *torii*, however, that the overwhelming number makes an impact. The number usually given is two thousand stone lanterns and another thousand hanging bronze lanterns. Directly inside the second *torii* is a water basin with a full-size bronze deer. The road to the right leads to the *nanmon* gate, while the left fork leads to the *keigamon*.

In the spring, wisteria blossoms fill the shrine and the green hills of Mount Mikasa and Mount Kasuga abound with cherry blossoms. The deer roaming freely and passively (other than when food is offered) truly invite a sense of the sanctity and bounty of nature. Since 841 there has been a ban on tree felling and hunting, which helped to preserve that bounty. It is said that when the *kami* Takemikazuchi no mikoto was invited from Kashima Jingu in Ibaraki, he came riding on a white deer. An entry from the twelfth-century diary of Fujiwara no Kanezane records that "On our way to the shrine [Kasuga], many deer appeared in the morning darkness. This is a sign from the gods and a good omen." No doubt, the Buddhist influence was strong, and the monks of Kofukuji began to assert the divinity of the deer (the penalty for killing one was death). The symbolic identification of the Kofukuji-Kasuga complex with the "Deer Park" in Benares, India, where the Buddha gave his first sermon after becoming enlightened, was obvious to the monks and scholars of the time.

Festivals: Kasuga Festival (Monkey Festival), 13 March. The festival was originally held on the first "day of the

monkey" of the second and eleventh lunar months, hence the name. An imperial messenger offers food to the gods and dines with the ancestors in this thousand-year-old Shinto ritual to pray for the safety of the nation. The ritual takes place within the enclosed grounds, and visitors are not allowed. Later, performances of *bugaku* (dance) and *gagaku* (music) are held.

Kasuga Wakamiya Onmatsuri, 15–18 December. Kasuga Wakamiya Jinja is located a short walk past Kasuga Taisha. It is an auxiliary shrine (*sessha*) of Kasuga, and enshrines the child of Ame no Koyane and Himegami, called Ame no Oshikumone. The shrine was founded in 1135, and in 1136 the festival began. It is designated an Important Intangible Cultural Property. At midnight on the night of 16 December, the *kami* is taken from the shrine and transported to a temporary resting place (*otabisho*). It is done in darkness (no photos allowed), with the *kami* surrounded by twenty to thirty people moving slowly in unison. From the afternoon of 17 December, a great procession of one thousand people in Heian- to Edo-period costume begins at the Prefectural Government Building and proceeds to an open area where traditional music and dances such as *dengaku*, *sarugaku*, and *bugaku* are performed. After the conclusion of performances at midnight on the 17th, all lights are extinguished and the Wakamiya *kami* is returned to the shrine amid the incense smoke, ancient music, and calls of the shrine maidens.

Setsubun Mantoro, 2–4 February, and Obon Mantoro, 14–15 August. Though these two festivals are held at different times of the year and have completely different purposes, they share in common the lighting of all of the shrine's three thousand lanterns.

Omiwa Jinja

MAP 4

DATE FOUNDED: The founding date is not known, but the shrine is mentioned in the “age of the Gods” section of the *Nihon shoki*. That would predate the years usually given for the first emperor, Jinmu (660–585 B.C.). The *Kojiki* records a visit by Emperor Sujin (97–30 B.C.) in 91 B.C.

ADDRESS: 1422 Miwa, Sakurai-shi, Nara 633-8538

TEL/INFORMATION: 0744-42-6633. A pamphlet in English explaining aspects of the history, structures, and festivals is available for free at the shrine.

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Sakurai Line to Miwa Station. The shrine is a 10-minute walk from the station.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Omononushi no okami (also called Okuninushi no mikoto and Daikoku sama), Onamuchi no kami, Sukunahikona no kami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Recovery of lost assets and protection against viral illness. Help with industrial and commercial development, success in saké brewing and pharmaceuticals, safe childbirth, and protection against danger.

BEST TIMES TO GO: The beautiful old-growth forests of Omiwa are wonderful at any time of year. In June the shrine is known for its bamboo lilies (*sasayuri*).

Important physical features: The mountain is referred to as both Miwa and the more honorific Omiwa. It is known as a *shintai* (“kami-body mountain”). In other words, the ancient cedar- and cypress-



Omiwa Jinja *haiden* and *shimenawa torii*

covered mountain is believed to be the body of the *kami* and considered a sacred object of worship. For this reason there is no *bonden*, but only a *haiden* that stands in front of the mountain facing west. The original building was constructed around the Muromachi period (1336–1573), and Tokugawa Ietsuna had the current *haiden* built in 1664. Directly behind the *haiden* is a unique *torii* illustrated in the introduction to this book. Called the *mitsu torii* or *miwa torii* (“three gates”), it is a combination of three *myōjin*-style *torii* in a row, with the central *torii* the tallest at 12 feet. It looks somewhat like a gate called a *toriimon* and its origins are unknown, but the present form dates from the twelfth or thirteenth century. It is clear, however, that the *torii* stood at the base of the mountain at the front of the *kinsokuchi* (forbidden ground) before the construction of the *haiden*. The *torii* currently incorporates a *mizugaki* fence that extends about a hundred feet on either side, blocking access to this part of the mountain. It can be seen once a month by worshippers who make a reservation and leave an offering. A purification ceremony (*oharai*)

is held at the *baiden*, through which visitors pass to the front of the *torii* for a short prayer. The original form was probably more akin to the *miwa torii* at a shrine called Hibara Jinja, located about 30 minutes' walk from Omiwa's *baiden*. It can be reached by walking through the shrine grounds and is on view at all times (which the *torii* at Omiwa is not). The *torii* at Hibara Jinja is not fenced. Instead, it has latticed panels on the outer *torii* and hinged lattice doors on the inner.

Two other *torii* at Omiwa merit attention. One is the *shimenawa torii* that can be found in front of the *baiden* and at various points throughout the grounds. It is probably one of the oldest forms of *torii*, with two upright pillars but no lateral beams. Instead, a thick straw rope (*shimenawa*) is strung across the poles. Though not, strictly speaking, unique to Omiwa, it is very rare these days. The other *torii* is a massive steel monument 105 feet tall and 75 feet wide. It was built in 1986 and is currently the second-tallest in Japan. It was the largest until 2000, when a slightly taller and wider one was built at Kumano Hongu Taisha in Wakayama.

Mountain worship in Japan has ancient roots that predate any formal religion. A word sometimes used in reference to sacred mountains and forests is *kannabi*, which denotes a forested place where a *kami* resides. The word is believed to originally carry the meaning of "divine seclusion" or "sacred grove" and was a synonym for Mimoro, the ancient name for Mount Miwa. The mountain is conical, with a long, gradual slope to the south, and the summit is about 1,500 feet. Located at the peak is a shrine called Konomiya Jinja, and about 300 feet from there is an ancient *iwakura* stone altar called *okitsu*, surrounded by tall cedars. Such large rocks were often the original places of *kami* worship.

Important spiritual features: Omiwa was one of the most important shrines—perhaps *the* most important—for the early Yamato court. It enshrines Omononushi, described as an aspect of Okuninushi no mikoto (the great land master *kami*), who is also enshrined at Izumo Taisha. The *kami* is frequently mentioned in the early tales of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, as well as the *Izumo fudoki* (A.D. 733). The *kami* known as Onamuchi was the weakest son of Susano-o, twice killed by his brothers and twice brought back to life by the urging of his mother. In the myth the pure but naïve Onamuchi is put through trials by his father in the *ne no kuni* ("land of roots") and emerges as Okuninushi, the strong and powerful "lord of all the land."

There are several important legends recorded in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* associated with Mount Miwa and its *kami*. One takes place during the time of Emperor Sujin, when the land was wracked by plague. The *kami* Omononushi manifested to the emperor, claiming responsibility for the misfortunes and saying that he would cure the land if the emperor would cause his descendant Otataneko to be placed in charge of worshipping him at Omiwa. This was done, and the plagues ended. Some believe it to be the actual founding of the shrine. It took place around the same time that the worship of Amaterasu was moved away from the imperial palace, and it may point to a reconciliation of the Yamato and Izumo clans.

The *Kojiki* tells us that one of the other *kami* enshrined here, Sukunahikona, is a child of Kamimusuhi no kami, who was among the first *kami* to appear before the earth was formed. Sukunahikona is said to be so small that he slipped through the fingers of his parent and was later discovered by Okuninushi floating down the river on a plant and wearing the skin of a bird. Kamimusuhi



Great *torii* of Omiwa Jinja

exhorted Okuninushi to become like a brother to the tiny *kami* and consolidate the land with him. Sukunahikona is revered now as a *kami* of medicine. When he died and went to the land of Tokoyo no kuni, Okuninushi lamented that he would not be able to finish the work of consolidating the land by himself. A deity appeared who illuminated the sea and instructed Okuninushi that if he worshipped him on Mount Mimoro, the work would be completed. This is the *kami* identified as Omononushi no kami (also called Mimoro no oka no kami). The deity is the *sakimitama* and *kushimitama* of Okuninushi; in other words, different aspects of the same deity (sometimes defined as his blessed and auspicious soul). It is a difficult concept to grasp, but is related to the idea that a *kami* can have tranquil (*nigimitama*) and active (*aramitama*) aspects. The different aspects may reveal themselves at different times, be called by different names, and even be enshrined in different places.

Omiwa was the spiritual center of the early Yamato state. It lies near some of the oldest *kofun* (burial mounds) in the country, including the possible site of the third-century queen

known as Himiko. However, the shrine's fortunes declined as imperial worship at Omiwa was superseded by worship of Amaterasu at Ise and by the rise of powerful shrines close to the new capitals of Nara and Kyoto. Mount Miwa became identified with Ryobu Shinto (syncretic Shinto-Buddhism) when Saicho returned from his studies in China and founded the Tendai sect on Mount Hiei at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He rebuilt the shrine there to house the *kami* of the mountain, Oyama-gui no kami, and also invited the *kami* of Omiwa. Another theory of how the *kami* of Omiwa was enshrined on Mount Hiei proposes that it was at the behest of Emperor Tenji (r. 661–72) when he moved his capital to Otsu on the shore of Lake Biwa around 667.

Mount Miwa's fortunes continued to decline until the beginning of the thirteenth century, when it was revived by the monks of Saidaiji Temple in Nara. Over the next centuries, the area around Mount Miwa became the site of a large *miyadera* (a shrine where Buddhist rites are performed). There were a number of important shrines such as Sai Jinja, Himukai Jinja, and Hibara Jinja (also known as Yamato no Kasanui no mura and Moto Ise), as well as temples such as Daigorinji, Joganji, and Byodoji Byodo-in. More significantly, the complex became a center of medieval Shinto-Buddhist syncretism that came to be known as Miwa Shinto. Much of this thought was set out in a document called the *Miwa daimyojin engi* ("Origins of the Great Miwa Deity") of the early fourteenth century. Besides equating Omiwa with Buddhist sutras and the physical space of Mount Miwa with the "Mandala of the Two Realms," the monks of Saidaiji asserted the superiority of the *kami* of Omiwa over Tensho Daijin (Amaterasu).

Description: Mount Miwa stands to the front of the mountain range that borders the entire eastern side of the great Nara plain. If you get off the train at Miwa Station, you will also notice that the mountain is on the other side of the train tracks, with no apparent way to get across. You need to walk down the street that leads directly away from the station, with your back to the mountain, for 10 minutes. Eventually you will see a mammoth steel *torii*, about the height of a ten-story building, simply called *otorii* (“great *torii*”). When Emperor Showa came to worship at Omiwa Jinja in 1984 (prior to the erection of the steel *torii*), he was driven through a special entrance and is said to have remarked later that he didn’t see any *otorii* at Omiwa. The massive *torii* was completed within two years of this incident.

Near the base of the *torii* is Tsunakoshi Jinja, which is where Omiwa priests recommend that visitors should begin. Make a U-turn to the right to pass under the huge *torii* and continue on another 10 minutes to get to the shrine grounds and a wooden *torii* that is called *ichi no torii* (“first *torii*”). From here you walk a path through a quiet grove before arriving at a water basin where water pours forth from the mouth of a snake coiled atop a saké barrel. You then climb some steps and pass under a *shimenawa torii* before the *baiden* of Omiwa comes into view with the mountain behind. Pilgrims have passed this way since ancient times because Omiwa lies on the Yamanobe no michi, often called the oldest road in Japan. It runs from Isonokami Jingu in the north and passes very close to one of the most famous temples in western Japan, Hasedera, in the south.

During the medieval period, Mount Miwa was a sprawling religious site with many temples and shrines. It followed the Miwa



Great *torii* of Omiwa Jinja

Shinto form of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism. Today only Shinto shrines stand on the large grounds, all of the temples having been destroyed. One reason for the thoroughgoing destruction may lie in the fact that several of the temples were centers of *shugendo* practice. The Meiji government was particularly hard on this form of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, banning *shugendo* outright. The only reminder is the main hall of Daigorinji, which was not strongly identified with the *shugenja* and still stands in a much modified form. It has been renamed Otataneko Jinja. An elegant, tall wooden statue of the eleven-headed Kannon was rescued by priests of nearby Shorinji Temple, where it now resides.

After visiting the *baiden* and viewing some of the magnificent trees, go out of the left side of the courtyard and follow the road around. You will see another *shime torii* and some stairs leading up to the right that will bring you to Sai Jinja, where there is an entrance to climb the mountain. The contribution is ¥300, which you need to pay at the shrine office.

There you will receive a white sash called a *tasuki* to hang around your neck (to show you are authorized to be on the mountain). The climb to the summit takes about an hour and somewhat less than that to come down, and you must return by 4 P.M. Photography, eating and drinking, and disturbing the worship of others are strictly prohibited.

Omiwa is also considered home of the god of saké making. This is in part because the word for the saké (rice wine) used in shrine ceremonies is *miki*. It has always been central to the rites of *kami* worship, and in ancient times another name for *miki* was *miwa*, thus the association with Omiwa. One theory has it that the *sugidama* (cedar ball) hung out in front of breweries to signal when new saké is ready for drinking has its origins in the cedar trees of Miwa. A large *sugidama* still hangs above the entrance to the *baiden* at Omiwa Jinja.

The deity of Mount Miwa is also considered to reveal himself as a white snake. This is why believers make offerings of raw eggs to the *kami*.

Festival: Spring Omiwa Festival, 8–10 April. This is the main festival of the shrine and is said to conform to traditional rituals set out by Otataneko no mikoto, the first priest of the shrine, more than two thousand years ago. A procession of *mikoshi* on 9 April and Noh performances on 10 April.

Saigusa Matsuri (Lily Festival), 17 June. A sacred Shinto dance is performed by shrine maidens holding bunches of lilies. Saké is offered to the *kami* from a vessel wrapped in lilies. Later, visitors may join in the saké drinking as well.

Tamukeyama Hachimangu

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 749 at the behest of Emperor Shomu (r. 724–49), at the time of the building of Todaiji. The shrine was transferred to its present location in 1250. The main building was rebuilt in 1691.

ADDRESS: 434 Zoshi-cho, Nara 630-8211

TEL/INFORMATION: 0742-23-4404. Nara is very friendly to foreign tourists, with plenty of help available (primarily in English). Contact the Nara Tourist Information Center, 0742-22-3900. Also ask about the volunteer tour guides who are available at no charge (please book three days in advance).

HOW TO GET THERE: From JR Nara Station, take the bus to the Daibutsuden/Kasuga Taisha-mae bus stop by city circulation bus; it's a 15-minute walk from there. From either the JR or Kintetsu Nara stations it takes about 30 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Hondawake no mikoto (known as Hachiman okami and Emperor Ojin), Okinagatarashihime no mikoto (Jingu Kogo), and Hime Okami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Hachiman is considered a strong protector deity. Prayers are offered for the well-being of the family.

BEST TIMES TO GO: During the beginning of April for the cherry blossoms, and in late November for the autumn color in Nara Park.

Important physical features: Tamukeyama Hachimangu stands adjacent to the grounds of Todaiji, one of the most celebrated temple complexes in Japan. Walking from Todaiji, the vermilion and white *romon* of the shrine is clearly visible from a distance. Though not of great age, its two-story, single-bay structure with rooms connected to the

MAP 4



The *romon* of Tamukeyama Hachimangu

right and left is characteristic of Hachiman shrines in general. In front of the *romon*, to the right, is an ancient *azekura-zukuri* storehouse that was once a *yuso* (oil storage house) for Todaiji. Though much smaller than the Shosoin, it is of the same style, with its sawtooth interlocking logs standing on piles about 5 feet off the ground. Another small storehouse belonging to the Sangatsu-do of Todaiji stands to the left of the *romon*. Such storehouses were once numerous but are now quite rare and most stand empty, many having become National Treasures. Once you enter the *romon* you come into contact with the open-sided *baiden* that almost fills the space in front of the *bonden*. The unpainted wooden *baiden* doubles as a *kaguraden* for the performance of music and dance. The *bonden*, which stands just beyond, was rebuilt in 1691 in the *magare-zukuri* style, painted in vermilion but with a copper roof that was part of a major renovation in 1979. Both storehouses and the *bonden* are designated as Important Cultural Properties.

Todaiji is approached through the *nan-*

daimon (great southern gate), the largest such gate in Japan, reconstructed in 1203. It soars nearly 84 feet into the sky and houses two magnificent 28-foot-tall wooden *nio* (benevolent king) guardian figures carved by renowned sculptors Unkei and Kaikei. Todaiji includes the *daibutsuden* hall, the largest wooden building in the world, which houses the 49-foot-tall (not counting the base) Great Vairocana Buddha. Directly behind the hall is the Shosoin Repository, a huge storehouse built to hold the treasures of Emperor Shomu, donated to Todaiji by the empress after he died. Built in the *azekura-zukuri* style of interlocking, triangle-cut logs, it is a massive 110 by 30 by 46 feet, with the entire structure built on piles that lift it about nine feet from the ground. The building dates to 756 and is the oldest and largest of its type. To the right and uphill from the Shosoin is the Nigatsu-do (Hall of the Second Month), a sub-complex of Todaiji and home to the famous Shuni-e fire ceremony. The sub-temple was also founded in the mid-eighth century, and the present main building dates from 1669. The highly trafficked veranda commands a wonderful view of the city of Nara and Mount Ikoma in the distance. Continuing east from the Nigatsu-do there is the Sangatsu-do, the oldest building (ca. 733) at Todaiji, which houses many famous sculptures including the Fukukensaku Kannon sculpture (entrance fee, ¥500). There are so many important structures and National Treasures in the complex it is impossible to detail them all here. Suffice it to say that one needs to set aside ample time to see them all.

Important spiritual features: Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the mid-sixth century, and by the middle of the eighth century it had virtually attained

the position of a national religion. It accomplished this in part by absorbing and transforming Shinto. Tamukeyama Hachimangu is one of the first examples of *shinbutsu shugo* (*kami*-Buddha syncretism), which for centuries formed the mainstream of Japanese religiosity. The *kami* Hachiman was enshrined here as the protector of the Buddhist Todaiji.

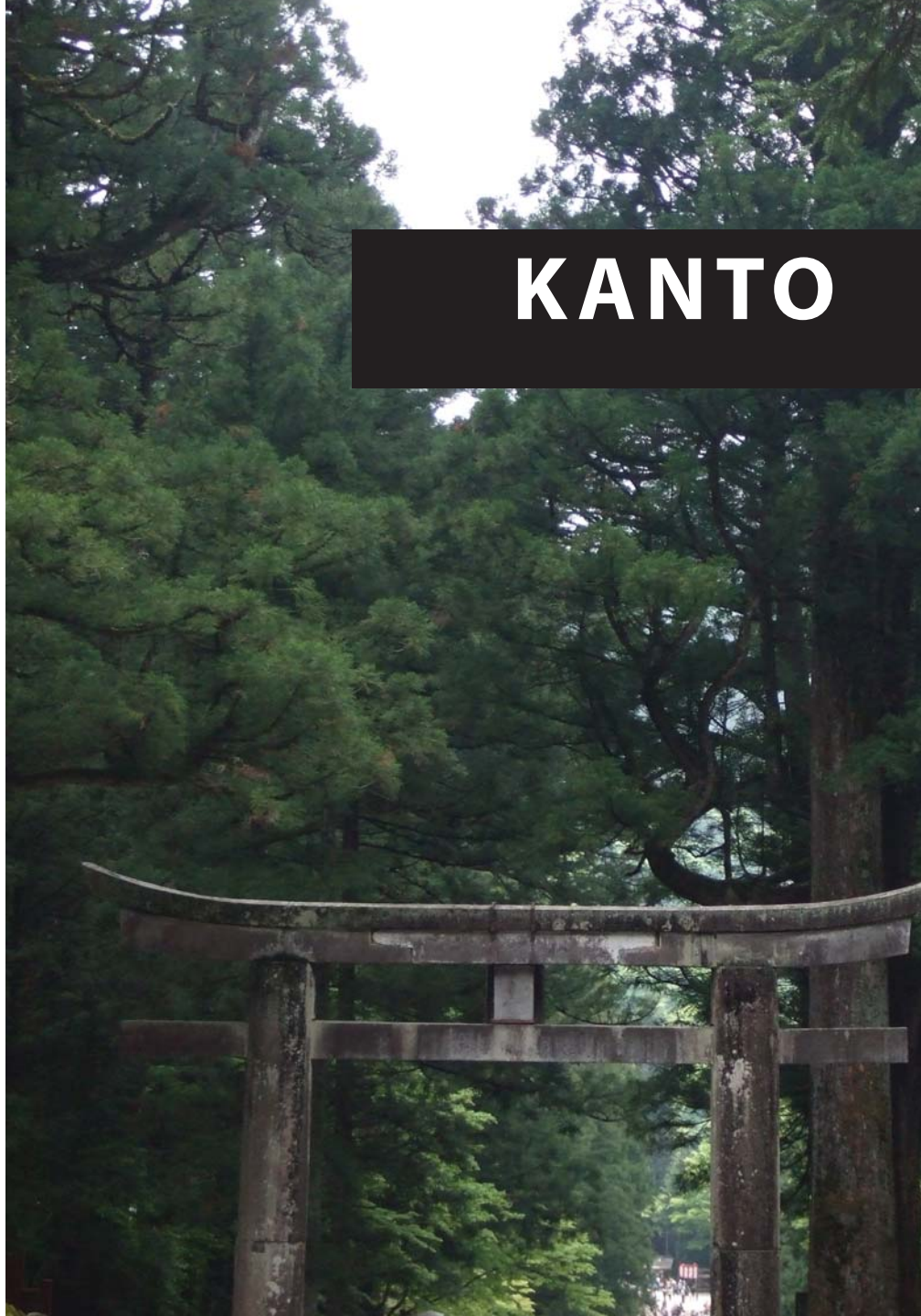
Worship of Hachiman dates from at least the establishment of Usa Jingu in Kyushu, usually given as 725. The *kami* came to be considered a powerful protector and imperial ancestor. Belief that the emperor was descended from the native *kami* served as an important part of the imperial system, so when Emperor Shomu (701–56) decided to build a Great Buddha in 743, he was mindful of the need to receive the blessings of the *kami* cults. One story recounts that he first sent an emissary to Ise Jingu to receive the blessing of Amaterasu Omikami, and was pleased by the positive response (“The Sun is in the state of becoming a Buddha”). The messenger, the monk Gyoki, was enlisted to raise money and labor for the project, though he had been previously outlawed for proselytizing to the common people. Although construction began, it faltered. The story goes that the chief priest of Usa Hachiman and a shrine priestess (*negini*) of the Oga clan traveled to Nara to bring a message from the *kami* (*takusen*) that the *kami* would lend support to the construction of the Great Buddha.

This was the beginning of a long history of oracles from Hachiman. Another version of the story says that Shomu, doubtful after Amaterasu’s ringing endorsement (but no material help), sent to Usa for assistance from the powerful *kami* (not to mention the skilled bronze craftsmen of the area). Yet another story has it that Hachiman correctly predicted that a huge source of gold for the project would be discov-

ered in Mutsu province. Regardless of which version is correct, a palanquin was dispatched to Kyushu to bring the divided spirit of the Hachiman to Todaiji, where it was enshrined at Tamukeyama to act as a guardian (*chinjusha*) of Todaiji Temple (the shrine was located to Todaiji’s front right at the time). Tamukeyama Hachimangu is thus notable as an early example of the establishment of Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples on the same grounds with the concept of native *kami* as protectors of the (foreign) Buddha. Moreover, the transfer of the *kami* in a palanquin, originally used for royalty, is thought to be the origin of the *mikoshi* used in Shinto festivals.

Description: Tamukeyama Hachimangu is significant as the first *bunsha* (branch shrine) of the Hachiman deity and can best be approached by entering the grounds of Todaiji through the *nandaimon*. Continuing on toward the *daibutsuden*, you may want to pass through the *chumon* (middle gate) and visit the magnificent *daibutsu* or turn off to the right just before the *chumon* toward the Hachimangu. A *torii* marks the entrance to the shrine grounds and the 1,000-foot-long *sando* that leads directly to the two-story *romon*. Tamukeyama Hachimangu is on the quiet eastern side of the approximately 1,600-acre Nara Park. The area stretches from Kofukuji in the west to Tamukeyama and Kasuga Taisha in the east. The entire area is covered with grass, and contains ponds and old-growth forests—not to mention the many ancient structures and thousands of deer.

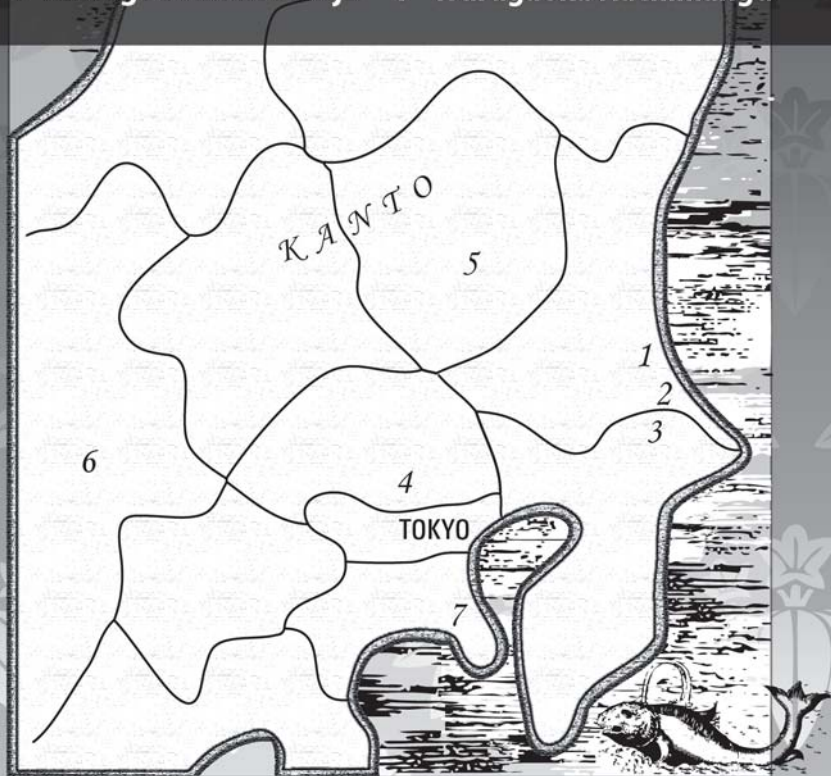
Festivals: Otaue Festival (Planting Festival), 3 February. This rice-planting festival has been observed since ancient times.



KANTO

KANTO

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Aiki Jinja | 5 | Nikko Toshogu |
| 2 | Kashima Jingu | 6 | Suwa Taisha |
| 3 | Katori Jingu | 7 | Tsurugaoka Hachimangu |
| 4 | Kawagoe Hikawa Jinja | | |



Aiki Jinja

MAP 1

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 1944 by Ueshiba Morihei.

ADDRESS: 27-1 Yoshioka, Kasama-shi, Ibaraki 319-0203

TEL/INFORMATION: 0299-45-6071

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Joban Line from Nippori Station to Iwama Station, then 10 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: A total of forty-three deities, including Sarutahiko no okami, Kunitsu ryuo, Kuzuryu daigongen, Ame no Tajikarao no mikoto, Ame no Murakumo kuki samuhara ryuo, Ketsumimiko no okami, Wakumusubi no mikoto, Ryuo, Daigongen, Otengu, and Daibosatsu.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Success in the pursuit of good aikido practice.

BEST TIME TO GO: For the Annual Grand Festival in April.



Aiki Jinja *haiden*

Important physical features: The modest *bonden* of Aiki Jinja was built by Ueshiba Morihei (1883–1969) in 1944; the *haiden* was built in 1962. The shrine was renewed in 2002 by Saito Morihiro, a long-time disciple and caretaker of the shrine after Ueshiba's death. There is not much to the shrine from the standpoint of interesting or historic architecture, except as it relates to Ueshiba (who is known to aikido practitioners as O-sensei, or “great teacher”). The *bonden*, which was called the *okuden*, is a small structure built by a local carpenter, with the larger six-by-three-bay *haiden* directly in front of it. The *haiden* has an *irimoya-zukuri* roof

surfaced in copper sheet, with a small step canopy. Three walls of the *haiden* have removable doors, and the *haiden* doubles as a dojo. There is a simple *shime*-style *torii* located close to the front of the *haiden*. The grounds also contain the Ibaraki-shibu Dojo, where the martial art known as aikido was founded and taught. It is now considered a branch, and the main dojo (called the Honbu Dojo) of the Aikikai Foundation is located in the Shinjuku section of Tokyo, where Ueshiba founded it in 1931. The Aikikai is an organization set up by Ueshiba to promote aikido in Japan and worldwide. The grounds on which the Aiki Jinja and

Ibaraki-shibu Dojo are located are owned by the Aikikai. The burial site of Ueshiba Morihei is in the family grave at Kozanji temple in the town of Tanabe, Wakayama Prefecture, where he was born.

Important spiritual features: There are said to be forty-three *kami* enshrined at Aiki Jinja, collectively called the Aiki no okami, all related to the founder's training and development. Of these, Sarutahiko no okami is possibly the most important and is a divided spirit (*bunrei*) of Tsubaki Okami Yashiro in Mie Prefecture. The former *guji*, Yamamoto Yukitaka (1923–2002), said in his English-language book *Kami no Michi*, “Sarutahiko is the *kami* of bravery and therefore he acts as the guardian *kami* of the Japanese martial arts, particularly the form of self-defense known as aikido.” He recounts how Ueshiba came to the shrine in 1959 and told him that he had “long looked up to” the *kami* as the guardian spirit of aikido and wanted him enshrined at Aiki Jinja. Yamamoto goes on to say that he traveled to Iwama to install the *kami* and visited the shrine regularly over a three-year period to conduct rituals and participate in the Annual Grand Festival and others. He also credits this event with prompting him to start the reconstruction of his own shrine, which was completed in 1968.

Some of the other *kami* enshrined at Aiki Jinja are related to strength, places of importance to Ueshiba, and other influences such as Buddhism. Ame no Tajikarao no mikoto, “heavenly hand-strength,” is the *kami* who pulled Amaterasu Omikami from the Heavenly Rock Cave where she had hidden herself. Ketsumimiko no okami is enshrined at Kumano Hongu Taisha in Wakayama (Tanabe, where Ueshiba was born, is one of the main entry points to the mountains where

the Kumano shrines are located). Other deities, such as Daibosatsu and Daigongen, are not Shinto but Buddhist or Buddhist-related deities. Daibosatsu is usually translated as “great bodhisattva” and does not refer to a specific deity (though Hachiman was the first *kami* to receive this title in Japan). Likewise, Daigongen (“great avatar”) is a name for any Shinto deity that is a manifestation of the Buddha (though the title is most widely known through its application to Tokugawa Ieyasu, who was posthumously referred to as Toshō Daigongen).

The enshrinement of non-Shinto deities may be due to two personal influences, as described by aikido ninth-*dan* Tada Hiroshi (a *dan* is a rank or degree of expertise in martial arts, with tenth-*dan* usually considered the highest). Tada-sensei, who studied under Ueshiba in the 1950s and 1960s, believes that the most important influence on Ueshiba was a monk named Fujimoto Mitsujo, with whom the aikido founder had studied in the town of Tanabe as a child. Another important influence was Deguchi Onisaburo (1871–1948), co-founder of the Omoto religion. It was based on the revelations of Deguchi's mother-in-law, Deguchi Nao (1837–1918), who was spirit-possessed by a *kami* called Ushitora no konjin. Omoto recognizes the existence of many deities from different religions, but holds that they all come from one supreme source. Omoto priests later enshrined the first *kami* at Aiki Jinja. Ueshiba met Onisaburo in 1919, when Ueshiba was thirty-six. He moved to Ayabe, where Omoto was headquartered, and began instructing Omoto members in the art of Daito-ryu jujutsu, which he had learned under Takeda Sokaku (1859–1943) in Hokkaido between 1915 and his move to Ayabe. In addition to jujutsu techniques, Takeda taught the ability to unbalance an opponent's mind

with something he called *aiki*, later changing the name of his art to Daito-ryu aiki jujutsu.

The origin of *aiki* is said to be in an ancient fighting technique called *tegoi*, which is considered the origin of *sumai no sechie* (modern-day sumo). *Tego* was a court entertainment in the Heian period that developed into a fighting technique handed down through the Minamoto clan. *Tego* was practiced by Minamoto no Yoshimitsu (1045–1127), who developed it into the Daito-ryu. Yoshimitsu's second son, Yoshikiyo, received the tradition from his father. Later, Yoshikiyo's grandson Nobuyoshi adopted the name Takeda from a town in Kai Province (present-day Yamanashi Prefecture), and this is the origin of the Takeda lords (also known as the Kai Genji) who ruled the province from the twelfth through the late sixteenth century. The clan is perhaps best known for Takeda Shingen (1521–73), a powerful warlord and master tactician who defeated the forces of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu at the Battle of Mikatagahara. Shingen is credited with introducing the cavalry charge to Japan by changing the role of mounted warriors from archers to lancers. A relative of Shingen named Kunitugu moved to Aizu in present-day Fukushima Prefecture in 1574 and carried on the secret teachings of the Daito-ryu. Takeda Sokaku was the ninth generation after Kunitugu and the first to disseminate the techniques to the general public. But the point of this story is that while Ueshiba's style of worship was primarily Shinto in nature, the spirituality that permeates Aiki Jinja and the art of aikido is based not only on Shinto and the teachings of Ueshiba Morihei, but also on a combination of a spiritual and physical training that has a long history in Japan.

Description: Unlike most of the shrines in this book, Aiki Jinja has neither a full-time priest nor a staff of *miko*. It is as closely associated with the Omoto sect as it is with more conventional shrine Shinto. Nevertheless, the shrine and the town of Iwama are today the “mecca” of aikido practitioners from around the world. Estimates by the Aikikai are 1.2 million practitioners worldwide, with the vast majority outside of Japan. Aiki Jinja is the spiritual center of aikido and those who carried on and disseminated the teachings of the founder. Principal among them are his successors (called *doshu*), beginning with his son Kisshomaru and then his grandson Moriteru (the current head of the Aikikai). The continued existence of Aiki Jinja is also due to the efforts of his many students, especially Saito Morihiro (1928–2002) and his son, Saito Hitohiro. Morihiro was a live-in student (*uchideshi*) from the age of eighteen, and came to be Ueshiba's longest-serving assistant. When the master died in 1969, Morihiro was responsible for maintaining the shrine and the dojo. He also published extensively and founded a system of dojo around the world called the Iwama-ryu. Tensions between Morihiro and the Ueshiba family eventually resulted in a schism after Morihiro passed away in 2002. His son Hitohiro founded a new line called the Iwama Shinshin Aiki Shurenkai, with its headquarters and dojo across the street from Aiki Jinja. Hitohiro teaches the Iwama style inherited from his father.

Festival: Reitaisai (Annual Grand Festival), 29 April. This is the shrine's biggest festival and attracts visitors from around the world. Prayers are conducted by a priest from the Omoto religion, and Ueshiba Moriteru gives an aikido demonstration as an offering to the *kami*.

Kashima Jingu

MAP 2

DATE FOUNDED: According to shrine tradition, founded in 660 B.C. The current *honden* and *haiden* are from 1619. The *romon* is from 1634 and the *okunomiya* from 1605.

ADDRESS: 2306-1 Kyuchu, Kashima-shi, Ibaraki 314-0031

TEL/INFORMATION: 0299-82-1209. A pamphlet in English is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Narita Line to Katori or Sawada Station. Transfer to the JR Kashima Line to Kashima Jingu Station, then about 10 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Takemikazuchi no okami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Improved skill in the martial arts, especially in *kendo*. Also help with new initiatives and safe childbirth.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Surrounded by old-growth forest, the shrine is an excellent place to escape the heat of summer. Other times to visit are for the new leaf growth in spring and the shrine's main festivals in March and September.

Important physical features: The shrine and its grounds are located in Ibaraki, northeast of Tokyo, close to the mouth of the Tonegawa, where it empties into the Pacific Ocean. The imperial court made large land grants to Kashima Jingu as early as the mid-seventh century. Today, it sits on 173 acres of forested land which contains cedar, oak, chinquapin, fir, cypress, and other trees and plants. Because of the variety of birds found here, the grounds have been designated a wild-life protection area. In ancient times, the sea



Kashima Jingu's *honden*

periodically inundated the surrounding area. The soil here is primarily white sand.

The shrine is located on the western edge of the grounds, a 10-minute walk uphill from the train station. After the large stone Kashima-style *torii*, it is a short walk to the vermilion-colored *romon* with *zuijin* warrior figures built in 1634 at the behest of Tokugawa Yorifusa, lord of the Mito branch of the Tokugawa clan. It is said to be one of the three largest in Japan. It is even a shorter walk from there to the *haiden* and *bonden* located to the right of the *sando*. Both buildings were made in 1619 at the behest of the second shogun, Tokugawa Hidetada. They are linked by an intermediary space called an *ishinoma* or *beiden* (offering hall). Often called *gongen-zukuri*, this linked style is the most prevalent shrine type of the Edo period. Unlike many *gongen-zukuri* structures, here the individual rooms do not

share the same roof. The five-by-three-bay *baiden* is in the *irimoya-zukuri* style, with the central part of the roof on the non-gabled side extending as a canopy over the stairs. It is mostly unpainted, except in the frog-leg struts. The three-by-three-bay *bonden* is in *nagare-zukuri* style and elaborately decorated with carvings, polychrome paint, and gold details. The giant cryptomeria tree located behind the *bonden* is believed to be about twelve hundred years old. When this shrine was built, an older shrine that occupied this spot was moved to the far end of the same *sando*, where it still sits. Built in 1605 by Tokugawa Ieyasu, it is now called the *okunomiya*. It sits at the end of the *sando* to the right behind a fence and gate, which is normally left open, so the shrine is easy to see. The *sando* at Kashima runs east to west, and the unusual position of the main shrine on the south side facing north is thought to be because it faced toward the frontier and the clans which fought against expansion of the Yamato state. It is said that the original entrance to the shrine was from Lake Kitaura to the north.

Other interesting physical features include the *kariden*, on the other side of the *sando* from the current *bonden*. This building, also from 1619, was used as the temporary *bonden* when the shrine was rebuilt and is now used only when the shrine is repaired. All these buildings are designated Important Cultural Properties. Farther down the *sando* on the left side is a holding pen for the deer from which Kashima (“deer island”) derives its name. Penned deer may not seem appropriate, as the deer is the familiar of the *kami*, but the problem is that they have a taste for some of the protected species of plants found on the grounds. At the end of the *sando*, the road forks left and right. The left branch is a path and a series of steps lead down to the

Mitarashi Pond, used for *misogi* (purification by water). Anyone is allowed to perform *misogi* on the nearest Saturday to 20 January by making an application to the shrine (limited to 150 people). The pond has the mysterious characteristic of maintaining a steady output of over 114,000 gallons of water per day, whether there is heavy rain or drought. Many people come to draw water here, as it is popular for drinking.

Going back to the fork and taking the right branch past the *okunomiya* leads to the *kaname ishi* (“keystone,” or “pivot stone,” also called the *mimashi ishi*, or “sitting stone”). One account says that this is a stone where the *kami* came to sit. However, another tradition that is shared with the *kaname ishi* of Katori Jingu says that a great catfish (*onamazu*), which lives underground and was thought to cause earthquakes when it wiggled its tail fin, is held down by this stone, placed on it by the *kami*. So arose the custom of erecting *kaname ishi* around the country to ward off earthquakes. During the late Edo period, *namazu-e* (catfish pictures) became very popular as talismans against earthquakes after the Ansei earthquake of 1855 devastated Edo. Many of the prints evoked the protection of the Kashima deity, while others rebuked the deity for allowing the *namazu* to release its destructive force. Though only a small stone is visible on the surface, legend recounts that the second lord of Mito, Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628–1700), once ordered that the stone be uncovered. Workers dug for seven days, finally giving up when no limit could be found to its massive size.

Finally, the shrine’s *homotsuden* (treasure hall) holds a National Treasure, the sword known as the *futsu no mitama no tsurugi*. This is the same name as the legendary sword that is enshrined at Isonokami Jingu in Nara (believed to be the original). The *Kojiki* records

that it was sent from heaven by Takemikazuchi no okami to help Emperor Jinmu overcome resistance on his march from the Kii Peninsula to Yamato in present-day Nara. The sword on display here was produced in the eighth century. It has a nine-foot-long blade (including the hilt), making it the longest and possibly the oldest straight sword (*chokuto*) ever discovered in Japan. Though equated with the *Kojiki* myth, it appears rather to be a purely ceremonial sword offered to the deity. During World War II, it was taken from the *bonden* to be melted down for the military but was saved from destruction by being designated a National Treasure, the only one in Ibaraki Prefecture.

Important spiritual features:

According to the *Kojiki*, Takemikazuchi no okami was created from the blood on the sword of Izanagi when he killed the fire *kami* Kagutsuchi. The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* record that Takemikazuchi came to earth with Futsunushi no kami to receive control of the earth (*kuniyuzuri*) from Okuninushi on behalf of the heavenly grandchild, Ninigi. However, accounts such as the *Izumo fudoki* record that only Futsunushi descended to complete this task. Some scholars believe that the rise of the Nakatomi placed their tutelary *kami*, Takemikazuchi, ahead of the *kami* of the Mononobe (Futsunushi), a warrior clan who kept the royal armory. On the other hand, the Nakatomi/Fujiwara also consider Futsunushi no kami a tutelary god of their clan, and the *kami* is enshrined at nearby Katori Jingu. Some believe Futsunushi to be the *kami* of the *futsu no mitama no tsurugi* sword that is enshrined at Isonokami Jingu in Nara Prefecture, originally a shrine of the Mononobe. Both gods are enshrined at Kasuga Taisha in Nara. This was the Fujiwara clan's most important shrine, and it became one of the nation's most



The *romon* of Kashima Jingu

important shrines as well. It was said that when Takemikazuchi was “invited” to Kasuga, he came riding on a deer and that this is the origin of the deer park there. Takemikazuchi is also credited with sending his sword, *futsu no mitama no tsurugi*, to Emperor Jinmu. Because of his exploits he is naturally considered a martial *kami*, but he is also considered a god of thunder—the meaning of the name itself is “thunderbolt.”

In addition, Takemikazuchi is thought of as a protector against earthquakes, having placed the great *kaname ishi* on the *onamazu* to stop it from wiggling. However, the *Hitachi fudoki*, a “gazette” from the early eighth century recording some of the myths and customs of Hitachi (present-day Ibaraki), mentions the enshrined *kami* as Kashima no ame no okami (or Ame no kaku no kami), and this may be

an indication that local deities were subsumed in the imperial myths. Another theory proposes that the *kami* was brought with the conquering Yamato armies (in which the Nakatomi clan took the lead). This may be the reason for the association with thunder, water, and stone that was part of the worship of the local people. The deity of Kashima was also associated with protection from plague and was a guardian of the roads. There are currently about six hundred Kashima shrines, mostly in the Kanto area of eastern Japan, and about two thousand shrines where Takemikazuchi no okami is worshipped.

Description: Kashima Jingu is one of the most important shrines in eastern Japan and part of a mythical and historical pair with nearby Katori Jingu. It is also one of only sixteen *chokusaisha* shrines that receive envoys from the imperial palace, bearing offerings to the *kami*. It resides within a magnificent forest of sandy soil and mammoth trees. Though shrine tradition claims the same foundation date as the Yamato state (660 B.C., a year referred to as *koki gannen*), the date is itself considered mythical. But it is certain that Kashima is one of the oldest and most prestigious shrines in eastern Japan. It was also the site of one of the early *jinguji*, or Buddhist temples, located on shrine grounds, established in 750. Takemikazuchi no okami is thought of as a god of war and a protector *kami*, and his strong association with the Japanese sword has led many traditional Japanese martial arts to trace their origins to Kashima Jingu. Three such schools—Kashima Shin-ryu, Kashima Shinden Jikishinkage-ryu, and Kashima Shinto-ryu—include Kashima in their name. They are all ancient schools of martial arts based on sword fighting but also incorporating other weapons and techniques of battle. These and other schools look to Kashima Jingu as a

patron. Kashima Shinto-ryu was developed by Tsukahara Bokuden (1489–1571), the son of a priest, and is perhaps most closely identified with the shrine. Kashima Jingu maintains a dojo called the Shinbuden outside the shrine grounds, where teaching and competitions are carried on.

Festivals: Spring Festival, 9 March. This festival celebrates the time from the seventh to ninth centuries when soldiers called *sakimori* were sent on duty to Dazaifu in Kyushu from Hitachi (present-day Ibaraki). They would gather before departure, and people would parade through the streets to see them off. Dancers wear five different-colored strips of cloth, representing five different grains. Groups of fifteen men carrying long oak poles dance around them, touching the poles together while a drummer beats a rhythm with a drumstick in the shape of a phallus (as this is also a fertility festival).

Autumn Festival, 1–2 September. The shrine's *mikoshi* is paraded, and five *dashi* floats decorated with large, historical figures and carrying musicians are pulled through the streets. They are strung with lanterns that are illuminated after sundown. On the first day of the event, thirty-foot-tall “trees” with paper lanterns attached are paraded through the streets, hauled by teams that also steady them with other bamboo poles. Finally, they are brought to the shrine and thrown into a big bonfire. Once every twelve years (the Year of the Horse, 2002, 2014, 2026, etc.) a special event called the Mifune Festival is held on 2 September. The shrine's *mikoshi* is put on a ship which sails out to meet another ship carrying a priest from Katori Jingu. The festival reenacts the arrival of the *kami* of these two shrines and reaffirms the close relation between them.

Katori Jingu

MAP 2

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 643 B.C., according to shrine tradition. The current main shrine and *romon* were built in 1700 at the behest of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi.

ADDRESS: 1697 Katori, Katori-shi, Chiba 287-0017

TEL/INFORMATION: 0478-57-3211. A 30-page booklet in English and Japanese is available for ¥200.

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Narita Line from Tokyo Station to Sawara Station. Then 10 minutes by taxi. Or continue on to Katori Station (one station farther), and then walk about 20 minutes.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Futsunushi no okami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Success in business, safety on the sea, a good marriage, and safe childbirth.

BEST TIMES TO GO: For the cherry blossoms in early April and the autumn foliage in November. Another good time to visit is during the Sawara Festival in July or October.

Important physical features: Katori Jingu is located a little more than a mile past the Onogawa river, which flows through the city of Katori and into the Tonegawa river in Chiba, not far from the Pacific Ocean. It is located near the old city of Sawara (now part of Katori City) that prospered as a shipping hub for Edo and was home to many sailors, storehouses, and wealthy merchants. To the left off the main road from Sawara district stands the shrine's first *torii*, built in 1926. The grounds are covered in tall Japanese cypress and maples that make an excellent setting for the shrine



Katori Jingu *haiden*

buildings, as do the many cherry trees when they are in bloom—especially near the second, vermillion-colored *torii*. The *sando* lined with stone lanterns inclines gradually until the third *torii*.

To the right is an old gate called the *chokushimon* (imperial messenger's gate), constructed in 1781. Continuing on past the *torii* and up some stairs through a modest gate leads to the *romon* with *zuijin* guardian figures. It was constructed in 1700, along with the shrine buildings. The plaque affixed to the *romon* and bearing the name of the shrine was written by Admiral Togo Heihachiro (1848–1934), dubbed the “Nelson of the East” for his naval exploits. Among these was the destruction of the Russian Baltic Fleet, which brought to a close the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 and acted as a catalyst for the Potemkin mutiny and other naval uprisings that began the Russian Revolution. Togo is enshrined as a *kami* in Togo Jinja, located in Tokyo's Harajuku district.

After passing through the *romon*, you come to the imposing *haiden*, which was totally reconstructed in 1940. It has a cypress-

bark gabled roof with a *chidoribafu* (false dormer set at a right angle to the ridgeline) and a *karabafu* (curved bargeboard) in the extended middle section that forms a canopy over the entrance stairs. It can be called “imposing” because, unlike the vermilion color of the *romon*, the *baiden* is painted predominantly in black lacquer. The gold trim, intricate carving, and polychrome, prevalent in shrines of the late-Muromachi through the Edo periods, stand out strikingly on the black base. The only area left in white plaster is above the level of the eaves and in the gables. The *bonden*, which is from 1700, is connected to the *baiden* by an *ishinoma/beiden* in *gongen-zukuri* style. The interiors are also primarily black lacquer with polychroming on the brackets above the tie beams. The *bonden* sports nine *katsuogi*, painted in black, as are the *chigi* and roof ridge. An unusually large *kaerumata* on the gable side is decorated with a polychromed carving of a peacock. The old *baiden*, also from 1700, stands now to the left of the main shrine building and is called the *kitoden* (prayer hall). The *bonden* and *romon* are designated Important Cultural Properties, as are several of the treasures. These include some small ceramic *komainu* statues and a bronze mirror (designated a National Treasure) with “sea animals and grapevines” motif from the Nara period that are on display in the shrine’s treasure hall (entry fee of ¥300).

Important spiritual features: Futsunushi no okami, who is enshrined at Katori Jingu, figures along with Takemikazuchi of Kashima Jingu in one of the central episodes of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*: the story of how Okuninushi was persuaded to turn over the “central land of reed plains” (Japan) to the grandson of Amaterasu, Ninigi no mikoto. As this “persuasion” involved a show of force, Futsunushi is

also considered a *kami* of martial arts. Some scholars consider this *kami* a personification of the sacred sword *fusu no mitama*. Others have come to believe that Takemikazuchi and Futsunushi are one and the same deity. One reason for this is that accounts from the *Izumo fudoki* mention only Futsunushi, and some believe his attributes were transferred to Takemikazuchi at a later date. Both were claimed as tutelary *kami* by the Nakatomi/Fujiwara clan and both are enshrined along with others at Kasuga Taisha, the Fujiwara family shrine in ancient Nara. So important were these *kami* to the Nakatomi that they were ranked higher than their own ancestral *kami*, Ame no koyane. It is also the case that when Kasuga Taisha was elevated in rank, Katori and Kashima were elevated at the same time.

Futsunushi no okami was also called by the name Iwainushi no mikoto (in the *Nihon shoki* only), meaning “master of worship.” *Iwai-nushi* was a term for a priest into whose body a *kami* had entered. This may refer to a priestly house originally charged with the worship of Takemikazuchi that also came to be revered as a *kami*. It is said that Takemikazuchi is a *kami* of the ocean while Futsunushi is a *kami* of rivers. The association comes from the *Hitachi fudoki* of the eighth century. The Tsunomiyahama *torii*, north of the shrine, marks the spot where it is said Futsunushi came up from the Tonegawa river onto the land. A festival that recalls the association with water is held jointly with Kashima Jingu. So close is the relationship between the shrines that Kashima is considered the inner (*naiku*) and Katori the outer shrine (*geku*), implying that they are basically one sacred site.

Description: Katori Jingu has been closely linked to the imperial court since ancient times and is considered a guardian shrine of the nation. This is

probably due to its close identification with the Nakatomi/Fujiwara clan, which provided empresses from the Nara period through the Heian period. The *Engishiki* of the tenth century lists only eleven shrines given the high status of *jingu*. Of these, seven were part of Ise; the other four were Usa and Hakozaiki in Kyushu, together with Kashima and Katori. Along with nearby Kashima Jingu, Katori is currently one of only sixteen *chokusaisha* shrines that receive envoys from the imperial palace (once every six years in the case of Katori and Kashima). It is also the head of four hundred Katori shrines nationwide, most of them concentrated in eastern Japan. Like many important shrines, Katori Jingu once had a regular cycle of rebuilding every twenty years, which ended in 1700.

Katori Jingu is closely associated with the martial arts, especially Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto-ryu. The sword-fighting technique is credited to Iizasa Ienao (1387–1488), who, legend has it, spent one thousand days practicing at Katori Jingu. At that time, Futsunushi no mikoto appeared in a dream and handed him a scroll called *Mokuroku beibo no shinsho*, containing secrets of the martial arts. This included techniques in sword, halberd, spear, and unarmed (jujutsu) combat, which are now considered an Intangible Cultural Property. Iizasa's gravesite is close to Katori Jinja.

The town of Katori, where the shrine is located, contains the district of Sawara, which was once an active commercial port. It was also home to many saké distilleries and soy-sauce brewers during the Edo period. Today the area preserves a touch of that period in its old storehouses and residences. A pleasant day can be spent walking its streets, taking a *sappabune* boat ride on the Onogawa river, or visiting a number of other shrines and temples. Among these, Yasaka Jinja, home of the Gion

Matsuri (also called the Sawara Summer Festival), lies directly on the route from Sawara to Katori Jingu. It is a small shrine in unpainted wood with an intricate carving of a dragon on the sea over the entrance. The area's summer festival starts at Yasaka Jinja and revolves around ten huge *dashi* ornamented floats, pulled through the streets of the town to the accompaniment of flutes and drums. Each float is topped with a huge figure of a *kami*, animal, or mythic figure. In the fall festival (beginning on the second Friday in October), a different group of fourteen floats start out from Suwa Jinja, an old shrine located in the western part of Sawara. Both events are known as the Sawara Festival.

Festivals: Sawara no Taisai (Sawara Festival), held twice a year. Large floats with mammoth historical and mythical figures are paraded through the streets in this historic Edo-style *matsuri*. Summer Festival: held on Friday through Sunday between July 9 and 18; Autumn Festival: held for three days starting the second Friday in October. Although, strictly speaking, these are festivals of the Yasaka and Suwa shrines, respectively, they are included here as being by far the largest festivals in the area where Katori Jingu is located.

Jinkosai, 15 April. A procession of two hundred people in Heian period costume accompany the shrine's *mikoshi*. Once every twelve years, a larger festival, with 3,000 participants, is held.

Katori Jingu Tsunomiyahama *torii*



Narita Shinshoji Temple

ADDRESS: 1 Narita, Narita-shi, Chiba 286-0023

TEL/INFORMATION: 0476-22-2111 (Japanese). A pamphlet in English is available.

BEST TIMES TO GO: From New Year's Eve and over the next three days when the temple attracts close to three million visitors. Another good time is for the plum blossoms in mid-February. In addition, the Goma fire ritual, a central rite of the Shingon sect of esoteric Buddhism, is performed between five and eight times a day. It starts at 5:30 or 6 A.M., depending on the season.

Description: On the way to Katori Station on the Narita Line, get off at Narita Station and follow the signs to Naritatan Shinshoji temple. It would be remiss to speak of this part of Japan without mention of its most famous temple, Narita-san Shinshoji.

Founded in 940, Naritatan Shinshoji is one of the most famous temples in eastern Japan, attracting the second-greatest number of New Year's visitors after Meiji Jingu, which consistently takes the number-one spot. The story of its creation is that the temple was ordered built by Emperor Suzaku (r. 930–46) to house a statue of Fudo Myo-o carved by Kobo Daishi about 800. Fudo Myo-o is a fierce-looking deity usually wreathed in flames with a sword and rope in his hands. The sword cuts through passions and false knowledge, and the rope is used to draw beings to enlightenment. A deity of Indian origins, it came to occupy the central role in the *shugendo* religion of mountain ascetics as well as several Buddhist sects.

History records that in 939 Taira no Masakado seized control of the provincial capital at Hitachi and took over the eight provinces of Kanto, declaring himself *shinno* ("new emperor"). The government in Kyoto sent an

expeditionary force to stop him, but he was killed by his cousin Taira no Sadamori, thus ending the rebellion. Temple lore records that during the uprising the priest Kancho was dispatched from Kyoto under secret orders from Emperor Suzaku to pray to Fudo Myo-o to stop the revolt. He brought with him the Fudo Myo-o from Takaosan Jingoji and performed the Goma fire ritual until the rebellion was suppressed on the fourteenth day of the second month. Preparing to return to Kyoto, Kancho found that the statue had become so heavy it could not be moved. Thus it was that Emperor Suzaku ordered a temple to be built around the miraculous statue.

Though none of the present structures is nearly as old as the foundation, five structures on the grounds are designated Important Cultural Properties. Among these are the *niomon* gate dating from 1830, housing a pair of fierce *nio* (deva kings); the shakado hall from 1858, formally the main hall of the temple; the *komyodo* hall from 1701, and one of the earliest main halls on the grounds; and the eighty-three-foot, three-story pagoda, dating from 1712. There is a forty-acre park connected to the temple, with several ponds, numerous plum trees (flowering apricot), and Japanese maples. Tea ceremonies are held free of charge on weekends from mid- to late November.

Festivals: Narita Taiko Matsuri (Drum Festival), first weekend in April. A relatively new event that has become the Kanto's largest taiko drum festival. Hundreds of drummers come from around Japan to participate.

Narita Gion Matsuri (Narita Gion Festival), held on a Friday, Saturday, and Sunday early in July. It features portable shrines as well as decorated festival carts with mammoth figures like those seen in the Sawara Matsuri.

Kawagoe Hikawa

MAP 3

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 541 during the reign of Emperor Kinmei (r. 539–71), according to shrine tradition. The current *honden* is from 1849.

ADDRESS: 2-11-3 Miyashita-machi, Kawagoe-shi, Saitama 350-0052

TEL/INFORMATION: 049-224-0589. A variety of pamphlets in English about places of interest are available from the Kawagoe Station Tourism Information Center located just outside Kawagoe Station, or call 049-222-5556.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Kawagoe Line from Omiya Station to JR Kawagoe Station, then about 40 minutes on foot. Or take the Tobu Tojo Line from Ikebukuro Station to Tobu Kawagoe Station, then about 40 minutes on foot. There are also several buses that go from the various train stations to the Hikawa Jinja-mae or Miyashita-cho bus stop.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Susano-o no mikoto, Kushiinadahime no mikoto, Onamuchi no mikoto, Ashinazuchi no mikoto, and Tenazuchi no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: To find love and marriage, the well-being of the family, and prosperity.

BEST TIME TO GO: In mid-October for the Kawagoe Matsuri.

Important physical features: The most important physical feature of this otherwise modest shrine is the elaborately carved *bonden* dating from 1849. Construction of the approximately thirteen-by-eight-foot structure was begun in 1842 by the lord of Kawagoe Castle, Matsudaira Naritsune.



The *honden* of Kawagoe Hikawa Jinja

The Matsudaira were the clan from which the Tokugawa emerged, and a decorative style similar in a sense to that of the Toshogu shrines is seen in the construction of this *bonden*. The unpainted building features elaborate Zen-style bracket complexes (*zenshubyo tokyo*) under the eaves and the veranda. But the main feature of the shrine is the extensive carving on the exterior panels and on structural elements such as the shrimp-like rainbow beams, the bracket heads, and just about everywhere one looks. The panels are of two types—there are large panels that form the exterior walls of the shrine, and small panels under the veranda. The large panels depict scenes from the lives of several members of the Minamoto clan—Yoriyoshi, Yoshiie, Yoritomo, and Ushiwakamaru (the childhood name of Yoshitsune). A scene of the Hojo-e at Tsurugaoka Hachimangu takes up the entire three panels at the rear of the shrine. The nine small panels under the veranda relate to the elaborate *dashi* floats in the Kawagoe Hikawa Matsuri. Each panel is

carved from a single piece of wood by Shimamura Genzo and Iida Iwajiro in a style known as *edobori* (meaning simply “Edo carving”).

The *bonden* is covered in an *irimoya-zukuri* roof with *chidoribafu* and a *karabafu* that forms a small stair canopy. The roof is surfaced in copper tiles. An additional flat-roof extension has been added under the eaves. It is somewhat awkward, but provides much-needed protection for the unfinished wood. The overall appearance of the *bonden* is very much like that of a large *mikoshi* or *dasbi*, with a small, ladderlike, removable wooden stair providing entry from the stone base. Interestingly, Edward S. Morse (1838–1925), who spent three years in Japan teaching at the newly established Tokyo University and studying brachiopods, visited the shrine in 1882 and immediately recognized its importance. Morse is best known as the “father of Japanese anthropology” for his discovery of the Jomon-period shell mounds at Omori in Tokyo (it was Morse who named the period from 12,000 to 400 B.C. “Jomon”). But he was also the author of a book on Japanese architecture called *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings*.

Unlike the *bonden*, the *baiden* is a simple *irimoya-zukuri* building with a copper-plate roof built in 1943. It is notable in that the floor is barely raised, probably to keep it lower than the *bonden*, and it is properly called a *beibaiden* because it contains a one-bay section that protrudes past the rear wall and acts as a *beiden*. The floor in this section is two steps higher than the *baiden*, and the entire back wall of the *beiden* is glass, giving a clear view of the *bonden*. The red *myojin torii* to the right of the shrine is notable for its fifty-foot height; it is one of the tallest wooden *torii* in Japan. A modern wedding hall of “European” taste, belonging to the shrine, encroaches on the *torii*’s space while making for an inter-



Left side of the elaborately carved *bonden*

esting contrast. Other notable features of the grounds are several trees said to be more than six hundred years old. Finally, mention should be made of Yasaka Jinja, located to the left of the main shrine. It enshrines Gozu Tenno and was built in 1637. Originally located on the grounds of Edo Castle, it was moved to Hikawa Jinja in 1656. It is painted in red with some polychroming and sports the hollyhock mark of the Tokugawa.

Important spiritual features: Kawagoe Hikawa Jinja is considered the tutelary *kami* of the city. It is a *bunrei* (“divided spirit”) of Omiya Hikawa Jinja, the oldest Hikawa shrine, also located in Saitama. However, two of the kami enshrined here, Ashinazuchi no mikoto and Tenazuchi no mikoto, are not enshrined in the *bonden* at Omiya. These are the parents of Kushiinadahime no mikoto, whom Susano-o saved from the eight-headed serpent *yamata no orochi* and then married. So Kawagoe has a family grouping of grandparents, parents, and grandchild (Onamuchi no mikoto). This is why Kawagoe Hikawa Jinja is said to be such a strong protector of the fam-

ily and a good place to pray for a match leading to marriage. The shrine has the unique custom of handing out *enmusubi-dama*, which are stones taken from in front of the *bonden* and wrapped in linen by the shrine's *miko* as talismans to bring about a good love match (the meaning of *enmusubi*). Twenty-five stones are given away each day starting at eight in the morning (and they are usually gone within a short time). For more details on the *kami* enshrined here, please see the entry for Izumo Taisha and the introduction of this book.

Description: Hikawa Jinja and the entire city of Kawagoe have a great deal to offer visitors. The town of Kawagoe is in Saitama and is one of those old castle towns that have managed to preserve and continue to honor something of their past glory. Most such towns in the Kanto part of eastern Japan were commercially and culturally connected to the shogun's capital of Edo. Several, such as Kawagoe and Katori in Chiba (where Katori Jingu is located), continue to call themselves by the nickname Koedo, or "little Edo." Katori City has particularly strong similarities with Kawagoe. Both towns have old merchant or warehouse streets, both have several famous shrines and temples, and both have large, Edo period-style festivals. The Kawagoe Matsuri follows along the lines of Edo's famous Tenka Matsuri, as does the Sawara Festival of Katori City. (The Tenka Matsuri was itself based on the famous Gion Matsuri of Kyoto.) The origin of the Kawagoe Matsuri is credited to Matsudaira Nobutsuna in 1648. Apparently he was concerned that a city like Kawagoe, with its size and illustrious history, had no great festival.

Kawagoe came into its own when a castle was built there in 1457. Ota Doshin and his son Dokan built it together with a number of oth-



A detail of the back panel showing the virtuosity of the *edabori* carvers

ers (including Edo Castle) for their overlords, the Uesugi clan. The town served as protector of Edo and the entryway to the north. Hojo Ujitsuna (1487–1541) took control of Edo in 1524 and of Kawagoe in 1537. The Uesugi counterattacked twenty years later and were roundly defeated by a much smaller force at the Battle of Kawagoe in 1546. Part of the castle called the *bonmaru goten* still exists and is one of the attractions of the city. It was a residence within the castle grounds, built in 1848 by Matsudaira Naritsune. Unfortunately, all that is left is the magnificent *karabafu*-covered entrance. Even so, it is one of the oldest structures in the city. The reason is because the "Great Kawagoe Conflagration" of 1893 wiped out much of the city and led to the building of the *kura-zukuri* merchant houses that are the pride of the city today. The fireproof, two-story, black stucco buildings are the centerpieces of the street known as Ichibangai. Standing close by is the roughly fifty-three-foot *toki no kane* bell tower that was originally built in the mid-seventeenth century as a time-keeping bell. It was rebuilt after the fire of 1893, and is one of the tallest wooden bell towers in Japan. These

days it is rung only at 6 A.M., noon, 3 P.M., and 6 P.M. A brief walk takes you to Kashiya Yokocho ("confectionary row"), featuring old-style confectionary and rice cracker shops.

Kawagoe had a close connection to the Tokugawa in the form of Kita-in temple and its head abbot, Tenkai. He was the most influential member of the Tendai sect in the early Edo period and the religious figure closest to Tokugawa Ieyasu. He was responsible for creating Sanno Ichijitsu Shinto expressly for enshrining Ieyasu as Tosho Daigongen at Nikko. Kita-in (the "north temple") was founded in 830 as part of Muryojuji temple. When Tenkai became head abbot in 1599, he made Kita-in the main temple of a complex that included Naka-in and Minami-in (middle and south temples, respectively). In 1633 a Toshogu shrine was also built on the grounds, but the whole complex burned down in 1638. Tokugawa Iemitsu ordered reconstruction the same year, and it was completed in 1640. To aid in the rebuilding, Iemitsu had three buildings (thought to be from Edo Castle) dismantled and moved to Kita-in. The buildings—the *kyakuden*, *shoin*, and *kuri*—now stand to the right of the main hall around a courtyard and are designated National Treasures. They are magnificent examples of *shoin*-style residences from the seventeenth century, with *tokonoma* alcoves, staggered shelves, coffered ceilings painted with flowers, as well as paintings on sliding doors and folding screens by Kano Tan'yu. Iemitsu was probably born in one of the inner rooms of the single-story *kyakuden*. The *shoin* was occupied by his influential nurse and protector, Kasuga no Tsubone. It is believed that her intervention caused him to be appointed as shogun over his brother Tadanaga. The castle at Edo has not survived, and so the only remaining rooms from there are now in Kita-in. There is also an excellent

garden around these buildings, said to have been designed by Kobori Enshu.

In fact, there are so many interesting structures and so much history at this temple that it is impossible to detail everything here. Worthy of mention is the two-story *taboto* pagoda from 1639, which is close to the *sanmon* gate of 1632. Another important structure, up a hill to the left of the main hall of Kita-in, is the Senba Toshogu shrine, originally founded in 1633 and rebuilt in 1640. When Ieyasu's spirit was moved from Kunozaan Toshogu to Nikko Toshogu a year after his death in 1616, it made a four-day stop at Kita-in, where rites were held by Tenkai. This shrine has its own, two-story *romon* gate, which is no longer used. Unlike the usual *gongen-zukuri* style of Toshogu shrines, the *haiden* and *beiden* are not directly attached to the *nagare-zukuri bonden*. The structures are, however, typically polychromed, ornamented with sculptures and metal fittings, and covered in *dobuki-ita* copper tile roofs. Stone lanterns surround the buildings, a typical form of tribute at Toshogu shrines.

Finally, a brief word about the *gohyaku rakan* ("five hundred worthy ones") of Kita-in. *Rakan* were devout monks who reached enlightenment after hearing the words of the Buddha. The tradition comes from India, entering the culture of China and Japan first through texts and then in art. The custom developed of placing sets of sixteen or eighteen *rakan* at temple gates as guardians. The devotional practice of carving five hundred *rakan* also arose, possibly influenced by Chan monks from China. At Kita-in there are actually 538 in all, free-standing stone figures carved by a monk named Shijo between 1782 and 1825. They are one of the most celebrated *rakan* groups in Japan. Each figure is unique, and the best are animated with deep thought, speech, or laughter. Each is no more than three feet



A "fox" dances to the rhythm of drum and flute aboard a *dashi* in the Kawagoe Festival

tall, but all stand, sit, or lie on pedestals that increase their height. Among them are also depictions of Sakyamuni, Monju, Amida, and a number of other Buddhist deities.

Festival: Kawagoe Matsuri, third Saturday and Sunday in October. One of the great festivals of eastern Japan, with a history that dates back to the seventeenth century. Twenty-nine magnificent large *dashi* floats, most with retractable life-size figures on top, are paraded through the streets each year. The *dashi* carry musicians playing *kanda-bayashi* music on drums, gongs, and flutes, with animated dancers dressed as animals and mythical figures. The *dashi* feature elaborate carving and large tapestries, and they are adorned with lanterns after sundown. When two *dashi* meet, a "battle" occurs, in which musicians and performers try to outdo each other. The contest heats up at night, when six to eight *dashi* face off at an intersection (called the *bikkawase*). The festival, based on the old Edo Tenka Matsuri of Kanda Myojin and Hie Jinja, is designated an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property. Shrine priests also offer tours inside the fence surrounding the *bonden* on one day during the Kawagoe Matsuri. This is a unique opportunity to see the *bonden* up close, with all its important decorative art. Even for those who cannot understand Japanese, it is well worth queuing up for and it's free.

Nikko Toshogu

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 1617. Most of the current buildings were reconstructed at the behest of Tokugawa Iemitsu in 1636.

ADDRESS: 2301 Sannai, Nikko-shi, Tochigi 321-1431

TEL/INFORMATION: 0288-54-0560. Open from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. daily (April to October to 4 P.M.). Separate admission fees are charged to enter the buildings; a single ¥1,300 day pass to all buildings is also available, as is a ¥900 pass to enter Toshogu, Rinnoji, and Futarasan. A 22-page color book with photos captioned in English is available for ¥1,000 from the *Taiyuin*. Assistance in English is available at the train station or on the road between the station and shrine at the Kyodo Center Tourist Information counter. Tel. 0288-53-3795, from 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M.

HOW TO GET THERE: Tobu Nikko Line limited express from Tobu Asakusa, JR Shinjuku, or Omiya stations, to Tobu Nikko Station. Then 30 minutes on foot or take the bus in front of the station to the Shinkyo bus stop.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Tokugawa Ieyasu, posthumously known as Tosho Daigongen.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection from danger, and good fortune and prosperity.

BEST TIMES TO GO: The natural environment of the shrine as well as the entire area can be enjoyed year-round. Especially well known for the fall colors.

Important physical features: Tokugawa Ieyasu ordered that he should be enshrined north of Edo at Nikko after his death so that he could continue to protect the nation. His son Hidetada erected the "small

MAP 5



The *haiden* of Nikko Toshogu

shrine” that Ieyasu described, but it grew to become one of the most elaborate shrine/temple complexes in Japan, due to the efforts of his grandson Iemitsu and the influential Tendai Buddhist monk Tenkai (1536–1643). The work on Nikko Toshogu as we know it today started in 1634 and took fifteen thousand artisans to complete the project in time for the twentieth anniversary of Ieyasu’s death in 1636. It represents the greatest expression of power and wealth of any group of structures in Japan.

The “Shrines and Temples of Nikko” were registered as a World Heritage Site in 1999. The main area is approximately 125 acres, with another 922 acres registered as a protected buffer. There are forty-two buildings associated with Nikko Toshogu; twenty-three buildings of Futarasan Jinja; sixteen buildings of the temple Rinnoji; and twenty-two buildings of Iemitsu’s mausoleum, Taiyuin. Though not the oldest of this group, Nikko Toshogu is the main destination of most tourists and the reason why the entire site enjoys the prestige that it does today. The majority of its structures were built

between 1617 and 1636. The shrine is unusual in that it also contains the remains of the person enshrined—Tokugawa Ieyasu—in the *okumiya* behind the main building. It is not unprecedented, but for the most part Shinto views death as unclean and shuns graves on the site of a shrine. Since this was a Shinto-Buddhist complex, its role as mausoleum is not so surprising. Before being brought here, Ieyasu’s remains were interred for the first year after his death at Kunozan near Sunpu Castle in present-day Shizuoka Prefecture, where he spent his last years.

The main shrine building is constructed in *gongen-zukuri* that combines the *bonden*, *baiden*, and an intermediary space called the *ishimoma*, or *beiden*, under an I-shaped roof. Though the name of the style comes from this shrine (Ieyasu was posthumously called Toshō Daigongen, or “great avatar illuminating the east”), a similar style called *yatsumune* (“eight-ridgepole”) already existed. It too was connected with Shinto-Buddhist syncretic religious practice, but nowhere else is it as elaborate, decorative, and gold-encrusted as here. It also incorporates the Buddhist-influenced structuring of a *bonden* divided into *gejin* (outer sanctuary), *naijin* (inner sanctuary), *nainaijin* (inner inner sanctuary), and an enclosed space within the *nainaijin* for the *goshintai*. The shrine was preceded by the Tai-tokuin Reibyo, built as a mausoleum for the second shogun, Hidetada, at Zojoji temple in Tokyo, which established the style and motifs that were soon afterward deployed by the same artisans at Nikko.

The main shrine sits atop a terrace that is reached by climbing a series of staircases and passing through several elaborate gates. The most ornamented and best known is the *yomeimon* gate that stands at the top of the last staircase. The thirty-six-foot-tall gate



The *yomeimon* of Toshogu

includes more than five hundred sculptures and two *zuijin* guardian figures dressed in gold and white. In fact, of all the unique qualities of this extraordinary gate, one that stands out is this unusual color scheme. Where most such *romon* are unpainted or predominantly vermillion, the brilliance of the color here is most striking. The white paint is *gofun* made from oyster shells. It looks very much like plaster after it has weathered. Another interesting feature is the presence of twelve round and intricately carved pillars, also in white. On the back right-hand side of the gate is the famous *mayoke no sakabashira* (“inverted amulet pillar”). This pillar is the same as the others, but it is turned upside down. This “mistake” is actually a talisman meant as a prayer for long life. The Japanese believed that perfection implied finality, so they often incorporated some imperfection in a design to give a sense of continuation. The gate also features flowers and animals—real and imaginary—as well as people in symbolic settings or morality tales. It is an incredible tour de force that vividly expresses the power of the Tokugawa.

There are other delightful carvings in almost every area of the shrine. One such group of eight sculptured panels on the *shinkyusba* (“sacred stables”) depicts the life of a family of monkeys and features the world-famous

“see no evil, speak no evil, hear no evil.” The original idea is based on the Daoist belief that a small insect called *sanshi* lived inside the body and saw all the bad deeds that a person committed. Once a year, on the day of the monkey, it would leave the sleeping host at night and report to the “Master in Heaven” (*tentei*), who would then punish the person for their sins. In order to keep the *sanshi* from leaving the body people would stay awake all night. The practice was common from the Heian period, and in the Edo period developed into the image of the three innocuous monkeys. In fact, the entire shrine is alive with polychromed carvings—said to total more than five thousand in all. The *karamon* gate and the *kairo* surrounding the main shrine are typical of the overwhelming amount of decoration found here. The *kairo* is resplendent with flowing water, clouds, numerous patterns, fruits and vegetables, and flora and fauna. The *karamon* gate is beautifully decorated with black dragons flying up and down white pillars, while twenty-seven Confucian “Paragons of Filial Piety” and the Daoist “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove” parade above the entrance. At the center sits the legendary Chinese emperor Shun holding morning audience. Though much smaller than the *yomeimon* gate, the *karamon* is considered of an even higher level of craft.

One of the more simple yet most highly prized sculptures sits on a beam near the entrance to the *okumiya* mausoleum behind the main shrine buildings. This is the famous “sleeping cat” (*nemuri neko*) of the sculptor Hidari Jingoro. The story goes that if the cat awakes, the sparrows nearby will be eaten. The depiction of their tranquil coexistence is said to represent the peace enjoyed by the nation when both subject and ruler know their places. Hidari Jingoro is an enigmatic figure but seems to have been an itinerant carpenter and sculptor

renowned for his ability. He is thought to have lived in the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries and is credited with sculptures and relief carvings throughout Japan—including many for Toshogu shrines.

Important spiritual features:

Tokugawa Ieyasu, posthumously titled Toshō Daigongen, is the spirit enshrined at Nikkō Toshogu. The practice of enshrining the spirit of a deceased human as a *kami* has a very long history in Japan. Any number of emperors, warriors, scholars, and priests have been deified, as for example Ieyasu's predecessor and ally-turned-rival, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was enshrined by his own order in Toyokuni Jinja. However, worship of Hideyoshi never developed into a widespread cult the way that of Ieyasu did, due to the failure of his clan to maintain power.

Nikkō Toshogu is perhaps the best existing example of the Shinto-Buddhist religious complex that was common in Japan from the Heian period until the enforced separation of religions under the Meiji government. Combinatory practice at Nikkō goes all the way back to the eighth century. A monk named Shōdō is recorded as the founder of Shihonryūji in 766. He also founded Chuzenji in 784 near the base of Mount Nantai. At that time the mountain was called Futara (Fudara), which Shōdō saw as a symbol of the earthly mountain paradise of the thousand-armed Kannon known as Potalaka in Sanskrit. Indeed, the name Futara may be a shortened form of Fudarakusan (Japanese for Potalaka). The Chinese characters for Futara can also be read as Nikkō, and it is this later reading that prevailed (though different Chinese characters are used to write Nikkō today). Shōdō established worship on the mountain. He also established Futarasan Jinja in 767 to enshrine Onamuchi, Tagorihime,

and their son Ajisukitakahikone—*kami* of the Izumo lineage. Mount Nantai is the *shin-taizan* (holy mountain) of Futarasan. In other words, Shōdō's first act was to establish a temple to worship Buddha, and his second act was to establish a shrine to worship the *kami*. In 848 the Tendai monk Ennin came to Nikkō by order of Emperor Ninmei and established the *sanbutsudo* and other structures. Nikkō came under the purview of the Tendai Buddhist sect from that time until the Meiji period.

It is within the context of the Tendai influence that we turn to the death of Ieyasu in 1616 and the struggle between the “pure Shinto” of Yoshida or Yuitsu (“one-and-only”) Shinto, and the *shinbutsu shugo* of Sanno Shinto, or—as it came to be tailored for the occasion—Sanno Ichijitsu Shinto. Buddhism believed in the concept of *hoben* (“skillful means”), and Tendai utilized a range of measures to bring enlightenment to all people. The idea was that the historical Buddha had led people of all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds to the “one real teaching” (*ichijitsu*) through the use of provisional, or tentative, means (*gon*). In this way *kami*, who were considered by Buddhists to be provisional deities, came to be called *gongen*. This concept was basically the same for Shingon (the other influential sect of the Heian period), whose *kami* worship was labeled Ryōbu Shinto (“dual Shinto”). Shingon equated Amaterasu with the Dainichi (“great sun”) Buddha, and the inner and outer shrines of Ise Jingu with the Womb Mandala and the Diamond Mandala. While this is a vast simplification of a complex theology, the point is that these and other syncretic Shinto doctrines—such as *honji-suijaku*—were methods of aligning the two traditions, in order to lead to the Buddhist concept of enlightenment. To accomplish this required imperial, and later shōgunal, patronage. Around the time of

Ieyasu's death, the monk Tenkai (1536–1643) devised the doctrine of Ichijitsu Shinto based on the Sanno Shinto of Mount Hiei. According to this doctrine, Ieyasu is a manifestation of the Buddha in the form of Tosho Daigongen.

The purpose of the doctrine was three-fold. One goal was to bolster the Tokugawa regime—in other words, purely political. Whereas many Buddhist doctrines implicitly or explicitly supported the primacy of the emperor, it was the first time that a religious doctrine was devised to sanctify the primacy of a shogun. A second goal was to counter the rising tide of anti-Buddhist doctrines that sought to disassociate Shinto from Buddhism. The chief proponents of this were Yoshida Shinto and those who believed that Buddhism was a foreign religion and that only the emperor (as opposed to the shogun), who was descended from the *kami* Amaterasu, had the divine right to rule. The final goal of Ichijitsu Shinto was to establish Tendai Buddhism near the new center of power in Edo. This was necessitated by the devastation of the Tendai head temple, Enryakuji, on Mount Hiei by Oda Nobunaga in 1571. Tenkai accomplished the move by establishing Kaneiji in Tokyo to protect Edo Castle, installing a royal prince in Rinnoji to create a *monzeki* (a temple where a member of the royalty resides), and giving it authority over the five Tendai *monzeki* in Kyoto, as well as Enryakuji itself.

But it was Tenkai's close relations with Ieyasu, his son Hidetada, and his grandson Iemitsu that won the day for Sanno Ichijitsu Shinto. (The Yoshida clan had close relationship to the rival Toyotomi.) It seems Ieyasu gave instructions that he be enshrined in Nikko as a *kami* so that “first, may the leaves and twigs of my descendants bloom forever; second, may the seeds of the Buddha's teachings never cease; and, third, may the realm be forever protected from the misfortunes of war.” Thus the new

Tokugawa dynasty came to have its own cult, with an Amaterasu-like sun deity in Tosho Daigongen and its own Ise at Nikko Toshogu.

Description: The complex of temples and shrines in this location actually began in the eighth century with a monk named Shodo Shonin and the temple he founded, called Shihonryuji. That name was changed to Manganji and then to Rinnoji, which is how it is known today. The area is rightly famous for its natural beauty and long before Ieyasu was enshrined at Toshogu, Nikko was an important center of *shugendo* mountain asceticism. The origin of the shrine-and-temple complex is the area around Mount Nantai. Together with Mounts Nyoho and Taro, it became one of the three holy mountains of Nikko. While Nyoho and Taro are two of the tallest peaks in a mountainous area, Nantai—at over eight thousand feet—stands out as a Fuji-like volcano beside the largest lake in the region, Chuzenji. It may have been the distinctive landscape that first attracted Shodo to this place (the current location of the Nikko complex is about six miles east). Close to the lake is the famous *kegon no taki*, which at approximately 318 feet is one of Japan's tallest waterfalls. Lake Chuzenji is more than 4,000 feet above sea level, while central Nikko is only about 700. The lake feeds the Daiya River, which flows along the southern border of the shrine-temple complex toward the center of the city. The entire area, totaling over 280,000 acres spread over three prefectures, is now part of Nikko National Park, created in 1934. It is one of the most popular scenic resorts in Japan.

The area that is usually thought of as Nikko includes far too much to properly enjoy in a single day, and far too much to adequately describe in this brief entry. Ideally, one would take in Mount Nantai and Lake Chuzenji,



The Taiyūin of the Rinnoji temple

making time to visit the temple Yakushi-do on a promontory in the lake. Then a stop at another temple, Chuzenji, located on the shore named Utagahama, where the Tachiki Kannon—carved from a single Judas tree by Shodo Shonin—is housed. You may want to climb Mount Nantai (the ascent takes about three hours, and climbing season is from 5 May to 25 October) or take the Akechidaira Ropeway to the observation point, which, at roughly 4,800 feet, affords a view of *kegon no taki* as well as other waterfalls and rivers located between the mountain and Nikko Toshogu. To the east of the shrine there is the world-famous Nikko Suginamiki (Nikko Cedar Road), designated by the *Guinness Book of World Records* the “longest avenue in the world.” Twenty-two miles long, it is actually made up of three roads that converge near Nikko, named Nikko Kaido, Reiheishi Kaido, and Aizu Nishi Kaido. The avenue is lined with more than thirteen thousand cedars, with an average height of eighty-nine feet. Cedars are often seen at the approach to a shrine, and Matsudaira Masatsuna, a retainer of the Tokugawa, had these planted as an offering to the memory of Ieyasu. The trees were planted over a twenty-year period from around 1625, and there were originally about two hundred thousand.

A shorter visit would start at the Shinkyō bridge that crosses the Daiya River, directly

in front of the entrance to the grounds of the shrine/temple complex. Legend has it that when Shodo Shonin prayed for help to cross the Daiya, the water god Jinja Daio appeared and tossed two great snakes across the river, forming a bridge over which the monk passed. The entrance to the grounds is just a short distance from the bridge. You first climb a rugged set of stairs and then turn left past the *otabisbo*, where the *mikoshi* is placed during shrine festivals. Continuing up the slope, you pass by the southern side of the *sanbutsudo* of the temple Rinnoji, then turn right at the corner to proceed along the broad, tree-lined avenue to Toshogu. The *sanbutsudo* (“hall of three Buddhas”) houses three large, gilded wooden statues: the thousand-armed Kannon, Amida Buddha, and the horse-headed Kannon, each sitting on a gilded lotus. The temple also has an excellent stroll garden.

Heading down the avenue, you come to a shallow flight of stairs and the first *torii* of Toshogu. This magnificent stone *torii* built in 1618 stands thirty feet tall and has a twenty-two-foot span between the uprights. It is considered one of the three largest stone *torii* in Japan and shows that even in the seventeenth century Japanese engineers were able to produce large-scale earthquake-proof structures. You will notice two joints in the crossbeams that allow them to slip and absorb shock without breaking. A short walk leads to another staircase, and you may realize that you have been climbing upward ever since you entered the grounds. At the top of these stairs is a *niomon* called the *omotemon* (front gate), with two fierce guardian *nio* statues standing either side of the entrance. But didn’t we just pass under a *torii*? Aren’t we in Shinto space, and isn’t the *nio* a Buddhist figure? Even more interesting, the guardian figures were removed to Rinnoji Taiyūin by the Meiji gov-

ernment, but they managed to find their way back in 1897. What's more, just to the front left of the *omotemon* stands a five-story pagoda. The 120-foot-tall pagoda was donated in 1648 and burned down in 1815, but was rebuilt just three years later, in 1818. When the Meiji government came to power in 1868, it busied itself with destroying Buddhist buildings and sculptures on Shinto ground—but not here.

Continuing through the *niomon* will take us to the *yomeimon* gate, the *shaden*, the *okumiya*, and any number of treasures. But before closing, let us go back through the *torii* and a sharp right turn down the road that leads to Futarasan Jinja. The shrine is much older than Toshogu, having been founded in the mid-eighth century. The *bonden* is from 1619 and was constructed at the behest of Tokugawa Hidetada. It is a magnificent structure with an *irimoya-zukuri* roof with a *chidoribafu* (false dormer) and step canopy with *kara-bafu*. The complex roof of black-lacquered copper tiles and lots of gold trim—usually a hallmark of the Toshogu shrines—is more typically found on a *baiden*. The inside is divided into a *naiku* (inner room) and a *geku* (outer room), and there is a distinct Buddhist flavor to this shrine as well. Although naturally less impressive than its Toshogu neighbor, it is a splendid shrine in its own right.

Finally comes the nearby Taiyūin mausoleum of the temple Rinnoji, which is the resting place of Ieyasu's grandson—the third shogun, Iemitsu (1604–51). It is no less powerful and impressive a display of applied arts in the early Edo period than the shrine of Ieyasu. Notable elements include the wild and extravagant paintings of lions and *komainu* by the famous Kano Tan'yū and his brother Eishin that prance dramatically across the walls of the *baiden*. Iemitsu (given the posthumous name Taiyūin) is well known for his

final *sakoku* edicts of 1635–39, which decreed that Japanese were not to leave the country on pain of death, and enforced the ban on Christianity and contact with foreign countries. Europeans first came to Japan in numbers in the sixteenth century, yet suspicion and mistrust were already surfacing when Toyotomi Hideyoshi ordered the crucifixion of a number of missionaries and converts in 1597. Under Iemitsu restrictive edicts and brutal enforcement decisively closed the door between Japan and the West until Commodore Perry reopened it in 1854. While Iemitsu repressed the spread of Christianity, his largesse to temples and shrines throughout the country was quite generous. But the greatest benefaction he reserved for his father (the Taitokuin of Zojoji) and for his grandfather and himself at Nikko.

Festivals: Spring Grand Festival, 17–18 May. On the 17th, a *mikoshi* is carried from Toshogu to Futarasan Jinja, and a ceremony is held there. *Yabusame* archery on horseback is also performed. On the 18th the *mikoshi* is moved to the *otabisho* (where dance and music performances are held), and then back to Toshogu accompanied in both directions by a procession of 1,000 people dressed as warriors of the Edo period. This is a reenactment of the removal of Ieyasu's remains from their first temporary resting place at Kunozan Toshogu on Mount Kuno to Nikko. The festival is a magnificent spectacle that ranks with the Aoi Matsuri and the Jidai Matsuri of Kyoto.

Yayoi Festival, 13–17 April. This is a festival of Futarasan Jinja, begun in the eighth century, which heralds the beginning of spring. The highlight is on the last day, 17 April, when thirteen floats in the shape of houses, covered with cherry blossoms and other flowers, gather at the shrine accompanied by music.

Suwa Taisha

MAP 6

DATE FOUNDED: The foundation date is unclear, but probably before 690.

ADDRESS: 1 Aza Miyayama, Oaza Nakasu, Suwa-shi, Nagano 392-0015

TEL/INFORMATION: 0266-52-1919 (Honmiya). A one-page information sheet in English is available for free and a 12-page brochure for ¥200.

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Chuo Honsen Line to Chino Station, then by bus to Kami-sha-mae bus stop or about 10 minutes by taxi (to the Honmiya), or get off at Shimosuwa Station and walk 10 minutes to the Akimiya and another 20 minutes to the Harumiya.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Takeminakata no kami and Yasakatome no kami. Also Yae kotoshironushi no kami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection against danger, the well-being of the family, and safety on the roadways.

BEST TIMES TO GO: To catch a glimpse of the ice of Lake Suwa lifting and cracking (a phenomenon called *omiwatari*), it is best to visit in February. Also, for the fall color around mid-October



The Honmiya of Suwa Taisha Kamisha

was placed, which the *kami* could descend into. Latter, worship halls (*baiden*) were built from which priests and worshippers could call on the *kami*. Only three large shrines preserve the practice of direct mountain worship (with no *bonden*): Omiwa Jinja in Nara, Kanasana Jinja in Saitama, and Suwa Taisha.

Despite the lack of a *bonden*, the other unique feature of Suwa Taisha is its division into four separate shrines and locations. Suwa's four main shrines are grouped into two upper (Honmiya and Maemiya) and two lower (Akimiya and Harumiya). The upper shrines are also called Kamisha, and the lower shrines Shimosha. These are not geographical descriptions—the upper shrines are south of the lower shrines—but relate to the Honmiya being the original place of worship. They are rather far apart, with the lower shrines on the northeast corner of Lake Suwa and the upper about six miles south of the southeastern corner of the lake. The shrines within each grouping are also separated by some twenty minutes' walking distance.

Important physical features: The most important physical feature of the upper shrine is the fact that there is no *bonden* to enshrine the *kami*. Instead, there are only *baiden* in front of Mount Moriya, which serves as the *shintai* (“*kami*-body mountain”) of the Kamisha. In ancient times direct worship of a mountain was common, but after the advent of Buddhism the custom developed of enshrining the *kami* in a *bonden* at the foot of the mountain. Inside this sanctuary (*bonden*) an object called the *goshintai*

The current buildings of the Honmiya were reconstructed in 1838 after a building from 1617 was moved to Okoto Suwa Jinja, where it stands today. The older polychromed structures were burned down in 1582. It is similar in the construction of its worship hall to the Akimiya and Harumiya. Each shrine has a one-bay gable-roofed *romon*-style entrance structure called a *beibaiden*, flanked by two wings called the *saiyu kata baiden*. The entrance sports a *karabafu*, and the structure looks very much like a *romon* except that its floor is raised several steps above the ground. The Harumiya and Akimiya, finished in 1780 and 1781, have almost identical two-story structures resplendent with carvings and were built by carpenters of the famous Shibamiya and Tatekawa families. The Honmiya, also built by the Tatekawa, is only one story tall, and access is from the left and right sides. The three shrines also have *kaguraden*. Those of Honmiya and Akimiya are quite large, and Akimiya's sports a large *shimenawa* rope, reminiscent of Izumo Taisha. It is flanked by two huge bronze *komainu*. The Harumiya has a stone *torii* from 1656 and a delicate covered bridge that sits about a hundred feet outside of that. Built in the Muromachi period and reconstructed in the 1730s over a small stream, it is now flanked by asphalt-covered roads, looking a bit out of place.

Only the Maemiya (of the upper shrine) is completely different. It has a three-by-four-bay structure standing behind a simple four-leg gate and wooden fence. The shrine was built in 1932 with wood from a dismantled building of Ise Jingu. Two other important structures here are the Jinkenro ("ten-bay corridor") and the Uchimitama-dono ("inner spirit hall"). They stand side by side on the way to the main shrine. The Jinkenro houses the *mikosbi* when it is brought from the Honmiya.



The Maemiya of the Kamisha (upper shrine)

Important spiritual features:

The *kami* enshrined at the Honmiya of Suwa Taisha, Takeminakata no kami, is mentioned in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* in relation to the "land transfer" myth (*kuni-yuzuri*)—one of the most important episodes in the "age of the gods." (The story of how governance of the world was taken from the descendants of Susano-o and given to those of Amaterasu is covered in the entry for Izumo Taisha.) The aspect of interest here is how Takeminakata, a son of Okuninushi, opposed the land transfer and engaged in a duel with Takemikazuchi, who had been sent to gain Okuninushi's consent. Takeminakata was defeated and driven away to Suwa with his wife, Yasakatome. Because there are four shrines, the issue of which *kami* is worshipped from which *baiden* is a little difficult to grasp. Briefly, Takeminakata is worshipped from the Honmiya, Yasakatome at the Maemiya, and both are worshipped at the Harumiya and Akimiya (along with Takeminakata's brother Yae Kotoshironushi in recent times). The *kami* are also known collectively as Suwa Okami. The lower shrines represent the seasonal movement of the *kami* between the Akimiya (fall shrine) and Harumiya (spring shrine),

where their position as *kami* of wind and rain is related to planting and harvesting. In the case of the upper shrines, the *kami* is embodied in the mountain (*shintaitazan*), while in the lower shrines a sacred tree (*shinboku*) in each takes this role. This is why there is no *bonden* (though the main structure of the Maemiya is said to be a *bonden*, complicating matters further). It is very difficult to form a clear picture, but the unifying aspect is the worship of nature itself. Wind, rain, and other such forces were as important to crop growth as the grain itself. And the shrine locations around Lake Suwa form a protective ring.

The *kami* is further identified with the dragon and snake (often one and the same in ancient symbolism). From at least the middle Jomon period, the people living around Lake Suwa were producing distinctive pottery known as Katsusaka-style, decorated with snakes and other motifs. The snake depicted is the *mamushi* (Japanese pit viper), a particularly poisonous type found at higher elevations throughout Japan and common in the Suwa area. Though the connection is not certain, snake imagery existed in religious practices prior to the founding of the shrine. As the *kami* of Suwa is of the Susano-o/Izumo lineage, the shrine probably began with the migration of Izumo tribes to eastern Japan. The Kanto area has numerous old shrines dedicated to Susano-o and his line. It is typical of Shinto that *kami* from one area become superimposed on the beliefs of an entirely different area to create new deities and new traditions. Such may have been the case here.

As with most other shrines, Suwa was also the site of both Buddhist and Shinto practice from about the eighth century. *Jinguji* (Buddhist temples on Shinto grounds) were established at the *ichinomiya* (principal shrines) of provinces throughout the country (Suwa was the *ichinomiya* of Shinano Province, present day Nagano Prefecture). Until the Meiji period,

Suwa flourished as a large shrine-temple complex, with four major temples and numerous sub-temples. On the side of the mountain was the Fugen-do hall dedicated to Fugen Bosatsu, who is said to be a protector of those who practice the Buddhist precepts. In the doctrine of *bonji-suijaku* he was considered the *bonji* (original ground) of the *kami* of Suwa. He is usually depicted riding on an elephant with six tusks, as he is described in the Lotus Sutra. A large sculpture of him was housed in the Fugen-do, next to which stood a five-story pagoda. These and the *tetto* ("iron pagoda," although it was actually made of stone), where the temple monks made a yearly offering of the Lotus Sutra to the *kami*, stood between the Honmiya and Maemiya. The practice was based on the legend of an Indian monk who discovered the main scriptures of the Shingon school inside an iron pagoda, in a city in India. At Suwa the sutra was offered to the *kami*, who was believed to take the form of a giant white serpent. The ritual was among the main ceremonies from the medieval to Meiji periods.

The *kami* of Suwa was once called Suwa Daimyoin ("great bright deity"). *Myojin* was originally a term from the *Nihon shoki* used to refer to eminent shrines or *kami*. In the medieval period the term *daimyoin* was often related to *shinbutsu shugyo* forms of *kami* worship. The preeminence of the Suwa deity was promoted by the *oshi*, itinerant priests who traveled through the provinces. One of the devices they used was called *kajiki-men* ("permit for eating venison"). It gave religious approval for hunting four-legged animals, against Shinto and Buddhist precepts prohibiting the taking of life. It was also in recognition of the ancient Jomon hunting culture of the mountain-dwelling people of Suwa (deer heads are still offered to the *kami* during the Ontosai Festival).



Harumiya (left) and the *kaguraden* of the Akimiya, both of the Shimosha (lower shrine)

One of the most important traditions particular to this shrine that survives from the era of Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806) is the *onbashira* (sacred pillar). In a festival that occurs once every six years, in the years of the Monkey and the Tiger (2016, 2022, etc.), sixteen tall trees (four for each shrine), more than fifty feet in length and ten feet in circumference, are cut down and dragged from the mountain. Weighing up to seven tons each, they are erected on the grounds of each shrine. Many long ropes made of straw are attached to the logs for the thousands of people who will pull them to their destination. In addition, long poles called *medodeko* are attached to the front and back of the logs in a standing “V” shape, which eighteen or so men will ride as the log is dragged. Along the way the logs must cross rivers (*kawagoshi*), be pulled through twisting and rising terrain, and, at one point, go plummeting down a hundred-foot slope at a thirty-five-degree angle with men trying desperately to hang on. This so-called *kiotoshi* (literally, “dropping trees”) is nothing short of death-defying and makes the Onbashira Matsuri one of the wildest festivals in Japan. In

fact a number of people have died during this event.

The logs are finally erected at the four corners of their respective shrines, where they will stand for six years, until the next festival is held to renew them. It is said that the trees come down from the mountain to become places for *kami* to descend. Though the exact origin is not known, shrine tradition holds that the ritual has been carried out more or less the same way for twelve hundred years. At the end of the Onbashira Matsuri comes the rebuilding of *goboden* (sanctuary) that stand next to the Honmiya and behind the Harumiya and Akimiya. These are simple three-by-three-bay buildings with thatched roofs, *chigi*, and *katsuogi*. In another complication, they are said to house *goshintai* and *kami* (just like *bonden*). Two identical buildings stand side by side on each site. The older one (twelve years old) is rebuilt after the Onbashira and the *kami* are transferred to the adjacent building in a ceremony held in the dark of night.

Description: Suwa Taisha is the main shrine of approximately six thousand (or as many as ten thou-

sand) Suwa shrines throughout the country. The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* record that Takeminakata made his home in Suwa, after his defeat at the hands of Takemikazuchi and the decision to transfer the land to the heavenly *kami*. The first written reference to the shrine comes from the *Nihon shoki*, which records that in the fifth year of the reign of Empress Jito (r. 686–97) an emissary was sent to pray at the shrine. This entry explains the foundation date, “before 690,” given above.

Given its four distant locations, Suwa Taisha is not as easy to visit as many other shrines. The Kamisha Honmiya is separated from the Maemiya by about 1.5 miles; the Shimosha Harumiya and Akimiya are also about 1.5 miles from each other and about 6 miles north of the upper shrines. The difficulty is compensated, however, by the richness of the surrounding scenery, including mountains, the magnificent trees everywhere one looks, and the ten-mile circumference Lake Suwa. At about 2,500 feet above sea level and surrounded by mountains in the 4,000 to 4,500-foot range, the lake freezes over for several months of the year. An interesting phenomenon occurs at that time. After the lake entirely freezes over, warm springs beneath the surface cause sudden cracks and rising ice that create a ridge on the surface. The phenomenon is traditionally held to be the result of Takeminakata no kami of the upper shrines crossing the lake to visit Yasakatome no kami at the lower shrine. Although both *kami* are also normally worshipped at both the upper and lower shrines, legend has it that the couple once had a fight and Yasakatome moved to the lower shrine. This *omiwatari* (“god’s crossing”) is also reported to the *kami* of Yatsurugi Jinja in Suwa City, where the priest interprets the cracking to predict the quality of the rice crop and weather, etc., for the coming year.



Perilous slide down a slope during the *kiotashi* of the Onbashira Festival

Unfortunately, in recent times warmer weather has often kept the lake from freezing and therefore interrupted the *omiwatari*.

Festivals: Onbashira Matsuri. Held every six years (for instance, 2016, 2022, etc.). Upper shrines: 2–4 April (taking the logs down from the mountain) and 2–4 May (erecting the pillars on the shrine grounds). Lower shrines: 9–11 April and 8–10 May. This festival has been held since at least the ninth century. It is one of the wildest and most dangerous in all Japan.

Ofune Matsuri (Boat Festival), Lower shrines, 1 August. A festival held to celebrate the return of the *kami* to the Akimiya from the Harumiya, where it has resided from the beginning of February to the end of July. One part of the celebration involves pulling a large “boat” made of Japanese brushwood, with figures of an old man and woman aboard, from one shrine to the other. It symbolizes the movement of the *kami*, which return to the Harumiya on 1 February in a much more sedate procession.

Tsurugaoka Hachimangu

MAP 7

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 1063 in Zaimokuza in present-day Kamakura. Moved to its present location, a short distance away, in 1180. The current buildings date from 1828.

ADDRESS: 2-1-31 Yukinoshita, Kamakura-shi, Kanagawa 248-8588

TEL/INFORMATION: 0467-22-0315. A single-page description in English is available. Entrance to the treasure hall is ¥200.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Yokosuka Line or Shonan-Shinjuku Line to Kamakura Station. Then 10 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Hondawake no mikoto (Hachiman okami, revered as Emperor Ojin), Himekami, and Okinagatarashihime no mikoto (Jingu Kogo).

PRAYERS OFFERED: For the well-being of the family, success in business, and protection from danger.

BEST TIMES TO GO: In spring for the cherry blossoms, autumn for the changing colors, or July for the lotus that bloom in the pond at the entrance to the shrine.

Important physical features:

Tsurugaoka Hachimangu was built as the focal point of Kamakura. It was moved from its original location near the waterfront of Zaimokuza to elevated land at the base of Mount Kitayama in 1180, commanding a view of the city all the way down to Sagami Bay. The main thoroughfare of the city, Wakamiya-oji, runs arrow-straight for about one mile from Yuigahama beach, moving due northeast and terminating at Hachimangu. Originally it was built a hundred feet wide with ten-foot



The grounds of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu showing the *maiden* and *roman*

moats on both sides. The city was laid out according to the same *feng shui* principles that guided the layout of Kyoto—mountains to the north, a river flowing from the northeast to the south (Namerikawa), a body of water to the south (Sagami Bay), and a highway to the west (Koto Kaido).

The first *torii*, thirty feet tall, was made of granite in 1668, and stands about fifteen hundred feet from the bay along this main thoroughfare. The second *torii* straddles the road at about the same distance from the entrance to the shrine grounds. It is about twenty-seven feet tall, painted vermilion, and guarded by two large *komainu*. From this point there is a slightly elevated walkway down the center of the road called the *dankazura*. It is lined with about three hundred cherry trees and marks the formal approach to the shrine. The elevated section once extended all the way down to the first *torii*, but the part up to the second *torii* was flattened in the Meiji period. The

third *torii*, at the entrance to the grounds, is also large and vermilion-colored. Just beyond it are three short bridges, crossing a small canal that connects ponds to the right and left. The curved “drum” bridge in the center is no longer used, but is flanked on both sides by flat bridges for pedestrian use. Originally, there was only one curved and one flat bridge. The Genpei ponds were created by Yoritomo’s wife and are full of symbolism. The pond to the right (*gen*) is the larger of the two and stands for the Minamoto clan. It contains three islands, and the number three, pronounced *san*, symbolizes or creation. The left pond (*pei*) represents the Taira, the mortal enemy of the Minamoto, and has four islands (the number four [*shi*] symbolizes death). Originally the right pond was filled with white lotus and the left with red, reflecting the colors of the respective clans.

From there it is another six or seven hundred feet along a tree-lined path to the center of an open plaza that contains a *kagura* dance stage called a *maiden*. This lower area of the shrine grounds once housed a bell tower, a *daito* (two-story pagoda) and a number of other structures. Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, like most of the older Hachiman shrines, reflected the *shinbutsu shugo* mix of Buddhism and Shinto that prevailed from the Heian through the Edo periods. The area was entered through a *niomon* that housed two large “deva kings” (*nio*), typical of Buddhist temples. They were removed during the Meiji period and are now housed in Jufukuji, less than a quarter of a mile to the west of Hachimangu. That temple, like the many others that give Kamakura its distinct flavor, is well worth a visit. Hojo Masako founded it to pray for the spirit of Yoritomo sometime after the shogun’s death in 1199. It is the oldest Zen temple in Kamakura.

About fifty feet beyond the *maiden* dance

stage begins a long and broad stone staircase that leads to the main gate of the shrine. To the left of the stairs stood a magnificent *Ginkgo biloba*, said to be more than a thousand years old. Tragically, in March 2010, the tree suddenly snapped at the root and toppled over. It is from the top of this staircase that one gets an idea of how splendid the view must have been in Yoritomo’s time. This vermilion three-bay *romon* gate has become the de facto face of the shrine. It is visible from a great distance as one approaches the shrine. Rebuilt in 1828 by the eleventh shogun, Tokugawa Ienari, it houses two warrior figures that date from 1624. The main shrine, just past the entrance, is not in the *bachiman-zukuri* style. The present buildings, also built by Ienari, are of the *gongen-zukuri* type that was the mainstay of Tokugawa shrine construction. All the structures here, from the *maiden* to the *bonden*, are painted in vermilion. However, it is impossible to step back and view the main shrine, due to a corridor that extends from both sides of the *romon* and wraps around the shrine. It contains the shrine’s *homotsuden* (treasure hall), where many important and exquisite works associated with the Minamoto clan are exhibited.

Important spiritual features: Tsurugaoka Hachimangu is a *bunrei* (divided spirit) of Iwashimizu Hachimangu in Kyoto. The *kami* were enshrined here by Minamoto no Yoriyoshi in 1063 on his return from a campaign to chastise the rebellious Abe clan in Aomori. It took place in secret, without the consent of Iwashimizu. Yoriyoshi’s son Yoshiie, who was known as Hachiman Taro, later repaired the shrine and continued the family devotion to Hachiman as Emperor Ojin. It was not until Minamoto no Yoritomo arrived to found the city of Kamakura a hundred years

later that the *kami* was enshrined by a priest from Iwashimizu.

The origin of the association of Hachiman with Emperor Ojin is not clear, but it was mentioned in the *Hachimangu Mirokuji engi* in the mid-ninth century and again in a Heian-period document from the late ninth century. Prior to that, Hachiman was called Daibosatsu ("Great Bodhisattva") and "Great Ancestor," revealing both the deity's Buddhist identification and his function as protector of the nation. The Minamoto, in particular, revered Hachiman as Emperor Ojin and considered the *kami* a guardian of the clan. In a prayer made in 1046, Yoriyoshi's father, Minamoto no Yorinobu (968–1048), emphasized his own descent from Ojin and referred to the latter as *buo* ("martial emperor"). The Minamoto called on Hachiman for protection and success on the battlefield but did not see Hachiman as a belligerent *kami*. The idea of Hachiman as a "god of war" is partly due to such epics as the *Heiji monogatari* and *Heike monogatari*, which popularized and exaggerated the image. There is another aspect of the deity, however, as can be seen in the identification of Hachiman as Daibosatsu and therefore a compassionate deity. For example, the Hojo-e ("rite for releasing of life") is a festival of Buddhist origin celebrated in Hachiman shrines in which animals and fish are released back into the wild. It was begun at Usa in Kyushu in 720 and first performed at Tsurugaoka in 1188.

Kyushu is the original seat of Hachiman belief, and he was the first *kami* to be revered as both a martial deity and a bodhisattva. The joint recognition of the *kami* by both Shinto and Buddhism is perhaps the real source of its great spiritual power. That recognition became stronger when the *kami* was called on to assist the casting of the great bronze Buddha of Todaiji in the mid-ninth century. By the

thirteenth century, the *kami* of Kasuga (the family shrine of the Fujiwara), the *kami* of Ise (the family shrine of the emperor), and Hachiman were visualized as consulting together to support imperial rule and protect the country. Hachiman's establishment at Tsurugaoka represents the final phase of growth from his origins in Kyushu to wider dissemination throughout Japan.

Description: Tsurugaoka Hachimangu was (and still is) a defining aspect of Kamakura as a city, as well as the central shrine of the Kamakura *bakufu*. Hachiman belief spread rapidly among the warrior clans of the Minamoto and their rivals, the Taira. The image of the victorious Yoritomo and the defeated Taira no Tokitada both praying to Hachiman during the Genpei War (as depicted in the *Heike monogatari*) eloquently attests to this fact. The young Yoritomo had been sent into exile in Izu after his father, Minamoto no Yoshitomo, was killed at the hands of the Taira in the Heiji Uprising (Heiji no ran). He was put under the care of the Taira retainers, the Hojo. As an adult, he raised an army against the Taira but was at first defeated and forced to seek refuge at shrines in eastern Japan, such as Hakone Jinja and Mishima Taisha. When he was finally victorious, he rewarded all the shrines that had given him shelter, as well as building many new ones. But his main focus was on Hachiman and the Buddhist Kannon. As recorded in the *Azuma kagami* ("Mirror of the East"), a thirteenth-century account of the reign of the Minamoto, Yoritomo revered both the *kami* and the Buddhist law. It is said that he recited the entire Lotus Sutra eight hundred times, and that he not only carried prayer beads into battle but also kept, in the topknot of his hair, a tiny statue of the Sho Kannon (Goddess of Mercy)

that was given to him by his wet nurse when he was three years old.

Both Taira and Minamoto were honorary names bestowed on offspring of emperors who were ineligible for the throne. The Minamoto, also known as the Seiwa Genji, were descended from a grandson of Emperor Seiwa (r. 858–76). But their place in Japanese history dates from the time when Minamoto no Mitsunaka (912–97), closely aligned with the powerful Fujiwara, was sent to put down a rebellion by the Taira of eastern Japan. In this way began the most famous of all military rivalries—that of the Heike (Taira) and the Genji (Minamoto). It initiated the age of powerful warlords and the first “tent government” (*bakufu*), in 1192, which effectively ended control of the country by the imperial court. The Taira too laid claim to royal blood, even older than that of the Minamoto. The Taira traced their line to Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806). The clan was actually responsible for the first government by samurai rule, but the title of shogun was never bestowed on them. Instead, Taira no Kiyomori put his grandchild Emperor Antoku on the throne in 1180. Though he had done no more than the Fujiwara clan throughout the Heian period, the brother of the deposed Emperor Takakura (r. 1168–80) called on the Genji to remove the child-emperor, triggering the Genpei War. The Minamoto (and the Taira) were thus responsible for ushering in what is usually referred to as the medieval period.

As to Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, there are also several auxiliary shrines to be considered. One is close to the left side of the main shrine. A small red *torii* marks the entrance to a series of steps up a tiny hill called Maruyama. At the top is Maruyama Inari Jinja, the oldest building on the grounds and dating from the Muromachi period (1336–1573). Its foundation is said to predate the main shrine. Descending the stone steps and turning to the right of the main



The *romon* of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu

shrine leads to two other shrines of note: Wakamiya Jinja and Shirahata Jinja. Wakamiya is dedicated to Emperor Nintoku (313–99), the son of Emperor Ojin. It occupies the original location of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, after it was moved from the Zaimokuza shore, but it burned down in 1191 and was rebuilt at the top of the stairs. Wakamiya is also in the *gon-gen-zukuri* style, having been rebuilt by the Tokugawa in 1624. A little beyond this is Shirahata Jinja (the name *shirabata* means “white banner,” and white was the color of the Minamoto banner). It was built by Yoritomo’s wife, Hojo Masako, in 1200. The shrine is entirely in black lacquer with the crest of the Minamoto family (the *sasarindo*—a combination of five bamboo leaves and three gentian flowers) prominently displayed. As the family shrine of the Minamoto enshrining Yoritomo and his second son, Sanetomo, it once housed a statue of Yoritomo that Toyotomi Hideyoshi is supposed to have touched on the shoulder while speaking of his admiration. Yoritomo’s wife, Hojo Masako, was the daughter of a powerful

branch of the Taira in the Izu region. She married him sometime before 1180, while he was living in exile in her father's domain. When he died prematurely in 1199, Masako's father, Hojo Tokimasa, became the power behind the shogunate. A series of incidents brought about the extinction of the Minamoto line in 1219, and the Hojo clan, who had helped to bring the Minamoto to power, came to control the country until the end of the Kamakura period.

One other auxiliary shrine of note is the Hata-age Benzaiten shrine located on the largest island in the pond on the right of the entrance to the main shrine. Though it was destroyed as a result of the enforced separation of Shinto and Buddhism in the Meiji period, it

Yabusame mounted archery

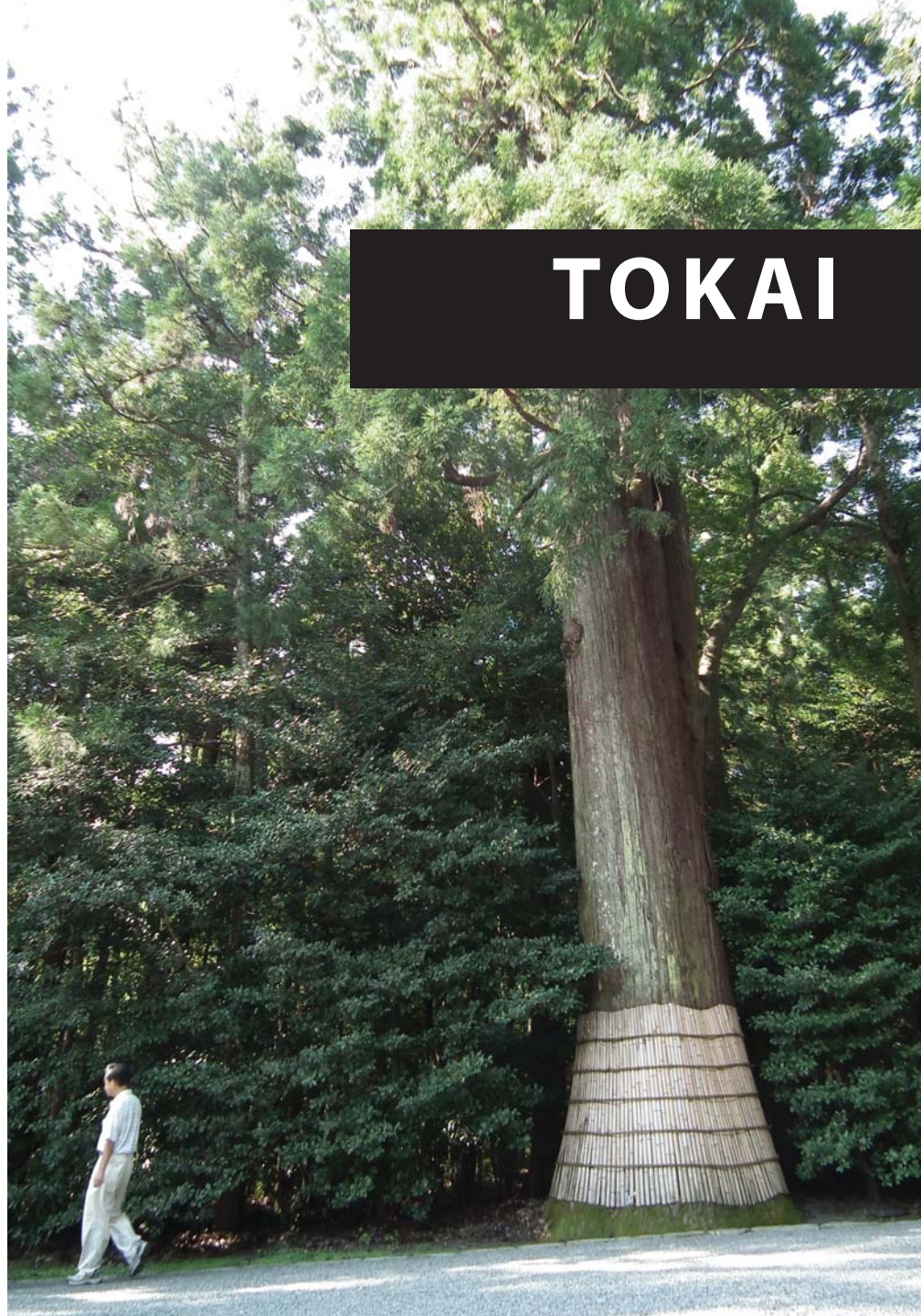


was rebuilt in 1956 (the current shrine is from 1980). The name Hata-age ("flag raising") was added to imply a new beginning or a new venture. The name honors the Minamoto clan, who raised their white banners when they went off to war, and also Hachiman, whose name can be read as *hachi bata* or *yabata*, both meaning "eight banners." The shrine housed a statue of Benzaiten from 1266, which is now exhibited in the Kamakura Museum to the right of the main shrine, along with other precious objects.

Festivals: New Year, 31 December to 3 January. Tsurugaoka Hachimangu had the third-largest number of visitors of any shrine in 2009, with more than 2.5 million over the three-day period. A good many people stand for hours in the cold of New Year's Eve for the chance to offer a prayer before the *baiden* at the very beginning of the new year.

Kamakura Festival, second through third Sunday in April. Though not a shrine festival, many events are held during this one-week period. Highlights include a parade of hundreds of people in Kamakura-period dress, classical dance performances, and mounted horseback archery (*yabusame*) on the final day. Twenty mounted archers race down an eight-hundred-foot-long path, attempting at full gallop to hit three small targets, while upward of five thousand spectators cheer them on. Tsurugaoka Hachimangu is known for displays of this ancient tradition.

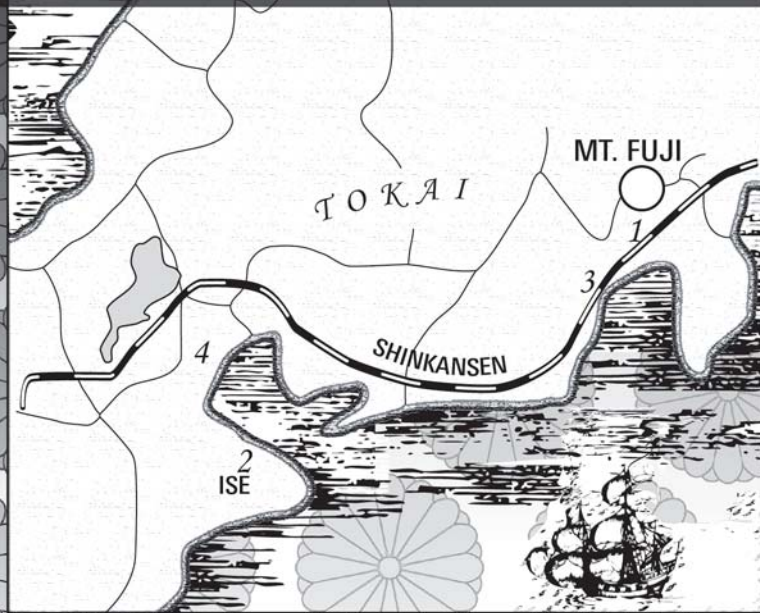
Annual Grand Festival, 14–16 September. Many events are held during this festival, including a parade of *mikoshi*, tea ceremony, and judo exhibition matches. Hachimangu's famous horseback archery (*yabusame*) is performed on the last day of the event.

A large, ancient cedar tree (Sugi) stands prominently in a lush green forest. The tree's trunk is exceptionally thick and textured with dark brown bark. The lower portion of the trunk is wrapped in a protective layer of light-colored, woven thatch or bamboo strips, which is secured with horizontal bands. This wrapping likely serves to protect the tree from pests or environmental damage. To the left of the tree, a person in a light blue shirt and khaki pants is walking on a gravel path, providing a sense of scale to the massive tree. The background is filled with dense green foliage and other trees, creating a serene and natural setting. A black rectangular box with the word 'TOKAI' in white capital letters is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image.

TOKAI

TOKAI

- 1 Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha
- 2 Ise Jingu
- 3 Kunozan Toshogu
- 4 Tsubaki Okami Yashiro



Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha and the Sengen Shrines of Mount Fuji

DATE FOUNDED: Founded during the reign of Emperor Suinin (r. 29 B.C.–A.D. 70), according to shrine tradition, and moved to the present location in 806. The current buildings are from 1604.

ADDRESS: 1-1 Miya-cho, Fujinomiya-shi, Shizuoka 418-0067

TEL/INFORMATION: 0544-27-2002. An 8-page color brochure in English is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Minobu Line from Fuji Station to Fujinomiya Station, then 10 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Asama no okami (also called Sengen no okami), manifested as Konohana no sakuyahime no mikoto. Enshrined in the *aidono* are Ninigi no mikoto and Oyamazumi no kami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Safety from volcanic eruptions, safety from fires, and safe childbirth.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Early April to see the blossoming of about five hundred cherry trees. To visit the *okumiya* on the top of Mount Fuji, the official climbing season is from 1 July (*okumiya* opens on 11 July) to 26 August.

Important physical features: Obviously, the most important physical feature of Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha is Mount Fuji itself. On a clear day, from anywhere in the area, you have only to look over your shoulder and the sight of Mount Fuji fills the sky. The mountain is considered sacred and is the most highly revered mountain in a country full of revered mountains. The main shrine sits near



The *haiden* and *honden* of Fuji Hongu Sengen Taisha, with Mt. Fuji in the background

the southwest side of the mountain, while the *okumiya* (inner, or far, shrine) sits close to the crater at the top of the mountain, on property given to the shrine by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1606. The grounds of the *okumiya* include everything above the eighth station of the mountain (eleven thousand feet). At the end of the trail that leads to the shrine is a *torii*, a *baiden*, and a *beiden*. The actual “kami body” (*goshintai*) of the *okumiya* is the mountain itself; therefore there is no *bonden*. During the Muromachi period (1333–1573), climbing the mountain as a form of devotion was practiced by *shugenja*, and a temple named Dainichiji was built near the top in 1149.

Fujisan Hongu Sengen sits on about fourteen acres of forested land with a small pond and garden to the right side. The pond is called the *wakutama ike* (“gushing jewels pond”) and is mentioned in a poem from the late tenth century. It is fed by an underground spring generated by the melted snow of the mountain. A path that curves from the front



The *okumiyama* on the top of Mt. Fuji

right, passing around the rear of the shrine to the back left, called *sakura no baba* (literally, “cherry riding ground”), is lined with some of the shrine’s five hundred cherry trees. It is used for a horseback archery (*yabusame*) festival in May and for the fall festival in November.

The shrine building itself is a very unusual structure called *sengen-zukuri*, or *asama-zukuri*—a style named for this shrine—that was built in 1604 at the behest of Tokugawa Ieyasu. He had sought the assistance of the *kami* of Asama before the Battle of Sekigahara (1600), vowing to rebuild the shrine if he was victorious. The *Azuma kagami* from the Kamakura period mentions a shrine building called Fuji Asama in 1223, but no details about how it looked at the time are known. There were a number of reconstructions before the present unique form emerged. The shrine is basically a one-story building, but with a sort of “crow’s nest” second story above the *bonden*, about eighteen by twelve feet, with a *nagare*-style gable roof covered in cypress bark. The roof of this second-story structure has *chigi* and five *katsugi*. A veranda surrounds the structure, supported by bracket complexes and with a staircase leading from the veranda down to a sort of open portico on the side of the extended roof. The front side of the second-story structure can be completely opened, and the portico floor is level with and

appears to sit on the ridgepole of the first-floor roof. The effect is of a small shrine sitting on top of a larger building. The overall height from ground level to the second-story roof is about forty-six feet. The entire upper and lower sections of the building are painted in vermilion lacquer.

Outside the unusual second floor, the ninety-seven-square-yard structure is constructed in a style typical of *gongen-zukuri* buildings, in which the *bonden*, *heiden*, and *haiden* are connected under one complex roof structure. It suggests a strong connection with Buddhism, as was the case with all the Toshogu shrines constructed from the early Edo period. But this structure dates from much earlier than the first Toshogu shrines. Within the *bonden*, verandas and changes in floor level define the transitions from outer (*gejin*) to inner space (*naijin*), where the *goshintai* of the *kami* is kept. The interior is decorated with paintings by the Kano school. From the west side of the *bonden* a staircase leads to the second story, which is apparently never used. The Tokugawa were the only ones to build such two-story shrines, and several Asama/Sengen shrines exist with similar structures, most located near Mount Fuji (Asama and Sengen are different readings of the same Chinese characters). The Taitokuin Reibyo, which was the shrine and mausoleum built by Tokugawa Iemitsu for his father, Hidetada, in Edo in 1632, also had a two-story *bonden*. Unfortunately it no longer exists. In Shizuoka Sengen Jinja, whose structures were also built at the behest of Tokugawa Ieyasu (rebuilt in 1804), there is a second story over the *haiden*.

Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha also boasts a two-story, three-bay *romon* gate with carved *zuijin* figures to the south of the *haiden* and built around the same time, in the early 1600s. The gate is about forty-two feet tall by twenty-

three feet wide and has a cypress-bark roof. There is nothing particularly novel about this gate except that the rough date of its construction is verified by an inscription on the back of the sculptures (1614). An open corridor (*kairo*) with cedar bark roof extends from both sides of the *romon* and forms a fence extending all the way around the *bonden*, creating a courtyard in front of the *baiden*. This is a newer replacement of an older structure. Though major repairs and changes were carried out in the Meiji period (for example, a five-story pagoda was removed), some of the structures destroyed by earthquakes were not replaced. The existing buildings are designated Important Cultural Properties.

Important spiritual features: Fujisan Sengen is recorded as being moved to its present location from the foot of the mountain in 806 by Sakanoue no Tamuramaro (758–811), who became Japan's second shogun when he was given that title by Emperor Kanmu. Considering that Mount Fuji was an active volcano for most of the time that Japan was being populated, it is a wonder that there is little association with the more violent *kami* of the Shinto pantheon. Recorded eruptions number seventeen since A.D. 781, most of them from the ninth to eleventh centuries, but with the most recent in 1707 lasting several weeks. While the founding of a shrine here seems related to just such a period of explosive activity, the enshrined *kami* is none other than the female deity Konohana no sakuyahime (also called Konohanasakuya), a model of femininity, marital fidelity, and motherhood, praised for her great beauty. She is mentioned in the *Kojiki* as the wife of the “heavenly grandchild” Ninigi and daughter of Oyamatsumi no mikoto (a mountain *kami*), but there is nothing specifically to identify her with Mount Fuji.

How she came to be a deity of the moun-

tain is a bit of a puzzle, but this seems to have occurred in the Edo period. She was said to be of great beauty, and Mount Fuji was likewise revered for its beauty. Then there is the story of how, when she first met Ninigi, she became pregnant with his child after only one night. Ninigi refused to believe it was his child and accused her of adultery with an earthly *kami*. At this she became affronted and enraged. She swore that if the child were not his, it would not live. Then she made a hut, entered it, and sealed it. When the time came for giving birth, she set fire to the hut and as it burned gave birth to three sons, Hoderi, Hosuseri, and Hoori, thus proving her courage and her assertion that the children were born of a heavenly *kami*. So here is another possible association, for Fuji was a burning house if ever there was one, and who better to worship than a *kami* who could survive a fiery ordeal. Fuji had always been held in awe for its terrible power and awesome beauty. Nevertheless it is a mystery how this native *kami* of Kyushu (for that is where she met and married Ninigi) was enshrined in a mountain at the western edge of the Kanto plain.

Then too there is the name of the shrine, Sengen. This is an alternate reading of “Asama,” which was originally written with characters meaning “morning cloud” or possibly “mountain spouting fire.” Mountains are often cloud-covered in the morning and Japan is full of volcanoes, hence the name Asama is used for mountains in many places. The *kami* of the mountain was called Asama Daimyojin from the early ninth century. There is no agreement on when or why the mountain acquired the name Fuji. The Chinese characters used today mean “wealthy gentleman” and are only the latest in a series of different characters used simply to express the sound “fuji.”

By the end of the Heian period, faith in



Fuji Sengen mandala

kami was influenced by Buddhist and *shugendō* practice, which took mountain worship to another level entirely. Legend has it that the nominal founder of *shugendō*, En no Gyoja, climbed (or flew to) Mount Fuji in A.D. 700, and shrine documents record that many had followed suit by the late Heian period. But it was not until a man named Matsudai Shonin climbed the mountain and established the temple Dainichiji in 1149 that worship of the mountain became a true cult. He brought worship of Dainichi Nyorai to the mountain and established a number of temples in the Murayama area on the southwestern slope in present-day Fujinomiya City. In the early fourteenth century, a *shugenja* named Raison began regular ascetic practice and encouraged people to climb Mount Fuji. His base was also in the area on the southwestern side of the mountain. Murayama Shugendō was influential up to the seventeenth century. Raison is not only credited with establishing the pattern of mountain climbing and worship at various points along the way to the summit, but also with including common people in austerities normally conducted solely by the *shugenja*.

By the Edo period, three religious leaders, Hasegawa Kakugyo (ca. 1541–1646) and two of his successors, Jikigyo Miroku (1671–1733) and Murakami Kosei (1682–1759),

were active on the mountain. Kakugyo was an ascetic who received an oracle from En no Gyoja to seek out the deity Fuji Sengen Dainichi. He found a cave on the north side of the mountain and conducted austerities there. The cave came to be called *bitoana* (“man hole”) and Kakugyo, who was little known in his time, became the guiding light of a new Fuji cult. It is around this time that Konohana no sakuya became associated with Mount Fuji. This may have been related to the teachings of Kakugyo, who saw Fuji as the center of the cosmos, and giving birth to all life. Confraternities known as *fujiko* were active from the early Edo period and were able to mobilize large groups of pilgrims. As travel became safer under the Tokugawa regime and traffic from Edo increased, these confraternities became responsible for a surge of pilgrims to Fuji. They also caused the building of miniature Fuji mounds around the country, which followers could venerate at their leisure. The confraternities involved a system of *osbi* (guides) who were responsible for leading worshippers to shrines, arranging payment, finding lodging, and basically facilitating the whole business of pilgrimage. These confraternities were stripped of their Buddhist and *shugendō* heritage to be turned into Shinto religious sects in the Meiji period, and a number still continue today. The name “Fuji” appeared in many places, and many Sengen shrines were founded, especially in eastern Japan. Today Fujisan Hongu Sengen stands at the head of over thirteen hundred Fuji and Asama shrines throughout Japan.

Description: The approach to Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha begins at a large red *torii*, with the mountain as a backdrop. Landscaped grounds with a small bridge and *kagami ike* (mirror pond) lead to the *romon* gate and the entrance to the grounds

proper. For all the history, beauty, and importance of the shrine itself, when walking on the *sando* it is the sight of the mountain that dominates the mind, just as it dominates the view. Worship of Mount Fuji is probably far more ancient than any of the shrines or temples associated with it. At over twelve thousand feet, it is Japan's highest peak, and at an early stage in the formation of the country it took on the conical, snow-capped shape for which it has become famous. These days, Mount Fuji is a major tourist attraction, and up to 400,000 people climb the mountain each year. For many, the goal is to see the sunrise from the top of the mountain. It is a difficult trek that must be made throughout the night in order to arrive in time. When the sun does appear, many Japanese—whether religious or not—will fold their hands and bow their heads in prayer. But this is not quite the same as a religious pilgrimage that might involve fasting, ablutions, prayer, and making a trek of the mountain from the southwest, beginning from the main shrine and ending at the *okumiya* on the mountain.

Today there are five routes up the mountain: Fujinomiya, Gotenba, Subashiri, Kawaguchiko, and Fujiyoshida. Worshippers from Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen Jinja in Yamanashi approach the mountain from the northeast, beginning at the shrine and ending at the summit. Other forms of pilgrimage include circumnavigating the crater (*obachi meguri*) and its “eight sacred peaks.” Fuji's *ko* are still active, and many worshippers climb the mountain out of a deeply held belief in the spiritual (though purely secular motives are these days probably just as common). Besides Fujisan Hongu and Kitaguchi Hongu, thousands of temples and shrines ring the base of the mountain, and many “new religions,” several of which grew out of Fuji confraternities, have their headquarters located nearby.



Haider and two-story haider

Whatever the direction of approach or history of the particular shrine, it is the spiritual presence of the mountain that continues to motivate pilgrimage to Mount Fuji. For many it has symbolic power as representative of the country and what it means to be Japanese.

Festivals: Yabusame Sai (Horseback Archery Festival), 4–6 May. The main event of this festival is the horseback archery held on the 5th. There is also a procession of sixty horses and people dressed in samurai costume. According to shrine records, the festival derives from a visit by Minamoto no Yoritomo in 1193.

Reisai (Annual Autumn Festival), 3–5 November. This is the biggest festival of the year, with large wheeled *dasbi* floats carrying musicians who play drums and bamboo flutes. It is the largest festival in this part of Shizuoka.

Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen Jinja

DATE FOUNDED: During the reign of Emperor Keiko (A.D. 71–130) at the behest of Yamato Takeru, according to shrine tradition.

ADDRESS: 5558 Kamiyoshida, Fujiyoshida-shi, Yamanashi 403-0005

TEL/INFORMATION: 0555-22-0221

HOW TO GET THERE: Fuji Kyuko Railway to Fujiyoshida Station, then 20 minutes on foot or 5 minutes by Fujikyū Yamanashi bus to Sengen Jinja-mae bus stop.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Konohanasakuyahime no mikoto, also called Asama no okami (Sengen no okami), Ninigi no mikoto, Oyamatsumi no mikoto.

Description: The approach to the shrine is truly magnificent, in the midst of tall cedars and rows of moss-covered *ishidoro* (stone lanterns). In some ways, this shrine is more famous than Fujisan Hongu in that it is the traditional starting point for the most popular route up Mount Fuji when starting from the east. These days, many take a bus to the fifth station to begin the trek. The shift of population growth from the Kyoto area to the Kanto area during the Edo period also increased the number of pilgrims coming from the east. At sixty feet tall, this shrine's *torii* is said to be the largest wooden *torii* in Japan. Vermillion lacquered and in the *ryōbu* (*yotsuashi*) style, it stands at the end of the long *sando*. Shrine tradition dictates that it is rebuilt every sixty years, each time a little larger than the last. The current shrine building dates from 1615 and is designated an Important Cultural Property. It is a *gongen-zukuri* structure, with a polychromed surface and many elaborate carvings reminiscent of the Toshogu style. The shrine preserves several particularly magnificent *shinboku* (sacred trees) said to be over a thousand years old.

Festival: Yoshida no Himatsuri (Yoshida Fire Festival), 26 August. To signal the end of the Mount Fuji climb-

ing season torches are lit throughout the town of Fujiyoshida and huge torches are paraded, along with *mikoshi* shaped like a red Mount Fuji.

Shizuoka Sengen Jinja

DATE FOUNDED: The shrine consists of two parts. According to tradition, Kanbe Jinja was founded during the reign of Emperor Sujin (r. 97–30 B.C.), Otoshimioya Jinja during the reign of Emperor Ōjin (r. 270–310), and Sengen (Asama) Jinja in 901 as a branch of Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha.

ADDRESS: 102-1 Miyagasaki-cho, Aoi-ku, Shizuoka-shi, Shizuoka 420-0868

TEL/INFORMATION: 054-245-1820

HOW TO GET THERE: JR Shinkansen to Shizuoka Station, then by Shizutetsu bus (Ikegaya Nakahara route) to the Akatorii bus stop.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Onamuchi no mikoto (Kanbe Jinja), Konohanasakuyahime no mikoto (Asama Jinja), Otoshimioya no mikoto (Otoshimioya Jinja).

Description: The shrine called Shizuoka Sengen Jinja is actually a combination of three shrines within the same grounds. Kanbe Jinja and Asama Jinja are situated side by side under the same roof, surrounded by a roofed fence, with one entrance gate for each shrine. They stand in front of a small hill that is the southernmost tip of a tree-covered mountain ridge (between 300 and 650 feet tall). Standing in front of the *bonden* is a single, magnificent *baiden* in the two-story *sengen* style. This building is characterized by a simple gabled (*kirizuma-zukuri*) roof with a *chidorihafu* false dormer, plus a three-by-two-bay upper story with hip-and-gable (*irimoya-zukuri*) roof. Both roofs

are covered with copper tile (*dobuki-ita*) that imitates the look of rounded *bongawara* tile. The building is lacquered in red and lavishly decorated, polychromed, and gilded. A *romon* with *zuijin* figures is likewise decorated with carvings and gilding. A *kairo* connects *romon* to *baiden*, creating a courtyard in which sits a carved and gilded (but unpainted) *buden*, with an *irimoya* roof and *karabafu*.

In fact, there is much more to the shrine complex than this magnificent group of structures. All in all there are twenty-six designated Important Cultural Properties on the grounds, all of which were rebuilt at the behest of the Tokugawa shoguns between 1804 and about 1864. There are some excellent examples of late-Edo-period shrine construction, which carried on the grand style that began in the sixteenth century. Of special interest are the Hayama Jinja, a *nagare-zukuri* structure in black lacquer with extensive carving and gilding; Sukunahikona Jinja with its carvings of the Chinese zodiac and elaborate polychroming; and Yachihoko Jinja, much larger but in a similar style. All these buildings display the work of the Shitennoji or Tachikawa-ryu tradition of *wayo* (Japanese-style) carpentry that was employed extensively on shrines and other structures throughout the Edo period.

Yamamiya Sengen Jinja

DATE FOUNDED: During the reign of Emperor Keiko (A.D. 71–130) at the behest of Yamato Takeru, according to shrine tradition.

ADDRESS: 740 Yamamiya, Fujinomiya-shi, Shizuoka 418-0111 (no phone)

ENSHRINED KAMI: Konohanasakuyahime no mikoto, Asama no okami (Sengen no okami).

Description: Although both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* attribute Yamato Takeru's deliverance from a burning field to the sacred sword *kusanagi no tsurugi*, shrine tradition says that he prayed to Asama no okami and that it was this deity that saved him. As a result, the origin of Asama worship is said to be here at Yamamiya Sengen Jinja. It is recorded that the deities of Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha were moved to the present location from the Yamamiya shrine in 806. The shrine here has no *bonden*, but only an altar in the forest.

Murayama Sengen Jinja

DATE FOUNDED: Seventh or eighth century.

ADDRESS: 1151 Murayama, Fujinomiya-shi, Shizuoka 418-0012

ENSHRINED KAMI: Oyamatsumi no mikoto, Konohanasakuyahime no mikoto.

Description: Murayama Sengen was once the premier shrine and training ground for Fuji Shugendo practitioners. Founder Matsudai Shonin was important in the spread of pilgrimage on Mount Fuji, and he established the temple Dainichiji near its summit in the mid-twelfth century. He was followed by Raison, a *shugendo* monk who established a community at Murayama (in present-day Fujinomiya) and who encouraged pilgrimage by laymen. Murayama Shugendo became a large and influential sect of *shugendo* practice. It established the climbing routes and patterns of practice on Mount Fuji. But the sect lost influence in the sixteenth century due to its being on the wrong side of Oda Nobunaga's quest for national supremacy, and also because of the patronage of Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha by later shoguns.

Another factor was Hasegawa Kakugyo (also known as Kakugyo Tobutsu), an ascetic who took to the *bitoana* cavern on the western side of Mount Fuji after receiving a vision from En no Gyoja. While practicing asceticism in the *bitoana*, he received a vision from the deity of Mount Fuji, Sengen Dainichi, and established the early-modern cult of Fuji on the north-eastern side of the mountain in the sixteenth century. Murayama, although now a Sengen shrine, has always been as much Buddhist and *shugendo* as it has been Shinto. According to tradition, the deities enshrined here were brought by En no Gyoja, and a building on the grounds still enshrines Dainichi Nyorai. The shrine stands sixteen hundred feet above sea level at the southern foot of Mount Fuji. Huge cedar and ginkgo trees fill the grounds, and many are protected species.

Taiseikiji

DATE FOUNDED: In 1290 by Nikko, a principal disciple of Nichiren.

ADDRESS: 2057 Kamijo, Fujinomiya-shi, Shizuoka 418-0116

Description: This site is not specifically related to Sengen worship, nor is it even a shrine. Taiseikiji (Taho Fuji Dainichirenge-zan Taiseikiji) is the head of the Nichiren Shoshu sect of Japanese Buddhism. Nichiren introduced his brand of Buddhism in the Kamakura period, and it became one of the largest sects. The vast grounds are known for such historically significant buildings as the five-story pagoda built in 1749, the *samon* gate from 1717, the *somon* (also called *kuronomon*, or “black gate”), originally from 1522 (current structure from 1880), and the *mieido* image hall constructed in 1632.

Ise Jingu

DATE FOUNDED: The traditional date for the founding of the Naiku (inner shrine) is given as 4 B.C., during the reign of Emperor Suinin (r. 29 B.C. to A.D. 70). The first shrine buildings that resembled the present type are thought to date from the reign of Empress Jito (r. A.D. 686–97). The founding of the Geku (outer shrine) is given as 478 during the reign of Emperor Yuryaku (r. A.D. 456–79).

ADDRESS: 1 Ujitachi-cho, Ise-shi, Mie 516-0023

TEL/INFORMATION: 0596-24-1111. A description of the shrine is available in English. The Ise City Tourist Information offices at Ujiyamada Station, in front of the Geku and at other locations, have maps and brochures in English. Also, contact them for information on volunteer guides at info@ise-kanko.jp.

HOW TO GET THERE: From Nagoya by Kintetsu Line limited express to Ujiyamada Station or JR Sangu Line to Ise-shi Station (to start from the Geku), then on foot for 5 to 10 minutes. From Osaka take the Kintetsu limited express to Ujiyamada Station. A bus leaves for the Naiku from in front of the Geku and from both stations.

ENSHRINED KAMI: In the *Naiku*: Amaterasu Omikami. In the Geku: Toyouke omikami. A large number of *kami* are enshrined at auxiliary shrines on the grounds of both shrines.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Prayers offered for the health of the imperial family and for the nation.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Spring and autumn are best for experiencing the colors of the changing seasons. The year 2013 will be the time of the sixty-second rebuilding (*shikinen sengu*)—the relocation and rebuilding of Ise Jingu that occurs once every twenty years.



The *shoden* of the Naiku of Ise Jingu (left), and one of two treasure houses (right)

Important physical features: The most important feature of Ise Jingu is that it is the only shrine that has been rebuilt in the same style every twenty years (other than the period from about 1434 to 1585). This has taken place ever since its first rebuilding by Empress Jito (r. 686–97) more than thirteen hundred years ago. The twenty-year rebuilding applies to the Naiku, Geku, and another 14 of the 125 buildings on the shrine grounds, plus the Uji Bridge and the *torii* leading to the shrine. Another forty-three structures are rebuilt every forty years; otherwise repairs or rebuilding are carried out as needed. The massive undertaking requires years of preparation, especially in terms of the twelve thousand or so cypress logs required for the reconstruction. Most of these logs are required to be around two hundred years old and at least twenty-three inches in diameter. The wood for the

four *munamochi-bashira* (ridge-support pillars) required for the *bonden* of the Geku and Naiku must be about 4.6 feet in diameter, which means upwards of four hundred years old. (The *bonden* are properly called the *shoden* at Ise Jingu.) No reused material can be utilized in important structures (other than the *torii* at Uji Bridge, which come from the pillars of the old Naiku and Geku). About two-thirds of the wood from the dismantled buildings is sent to shrines around the country that request material. The renovation includes not only the buildings, but also sixteen hundred objects, such as jewelry, swords, saddles, and clothing and myriad treasures (*onshozoku shinpo*), which are painstakingly reproduced and offered to the deities. The current buildings date from 1993 and represent the sixty-first rebuilding. The sixty-second rebuilding will be completed in October 2013.

The rebuilding takes a large number of



The *shōden* of the Geku

carpenters, but not all of them are trained to the same high standard. At the top of the craft is the *miyadaiku*, a carpenter specializing in the construction of temples, shrines, teahouses, and culturally sensitive structures requiring traditional techniques and a very high level of proficiency. Such buildings as those at Ise are constructed under the strictest conditions, using no nails and no machined wood on the interior. Power tools are used in, for instance, transportation and some exterior applications. The number of *miyadaiku* left in Japan is decreasing, and only the largest of construction companies have the means to undertake projects of this scale.

The architectural style of both the Geku and Naiku is known as *shinmei-zukuri* and is one of the oldest styles of shrine architecture. More properly, Ise's *bonden* are called *yuiitsu* ("only one") *shinmei-zukuri*, to distinguish them from the *shinmei* structures of other shrines. Because this style of architecture is closely related to the original form of rice granaries, it is unlikely that it was first employed at Ise. But the style has certainly been abstracted, perfected, and brought to its highest level of

craft here, and its relation to the rice granary shows a strong link between sustenance and the sacred. The structure is a simple wooden box three bays wide by two bays deep (about thirty-six by eighteen feet, not including the veranda), and about thirty-three feet to the ridge. It is made entirely of cypress boards with no windows. The gabled roofline is straight—without the upturned ends or multiple gables of Buddhist-influenced architecture. However, the veranda and several details said to be a development from the eighth century or earlier are influenced by temple architecture. Such details include gold-plated ornamental caps on the ends of wooden posts, and thirty-three *suedama* (thirty-one for the Geku) around the top of the veranda railing. These *suedama* are essentially the same as the *nyoi-shu* orb held in the hand of the Buddha and usually displayed on the top peak of temples. In form, this is usually a round ball surrounded with a flame motif that comes to a peak at the top. In Japan, the Buddhist imagery was mixed with Shinto myths of the "wish-fulfilling jewel" and the "tide-raising, tide-ebbing jewels" attained from the *kami* of the sea. In Japanese,

the character *tama* has multiple meanings, including “soul”/“spirit,” “jewel,” “ball,” and “jade.” The *tamagaki* fence that surrounds most shrines includes this character in its name as well.

The roofs of both the Geku and Naiku are thatched with *Miscanthus sinensis*, called *kaya* in Japanese, with the thatching thicker at the edge of the roof than at the ridge. Another distinctive feature of the roof is the *chigi*. The *chigi* are the bargeboards that extend beyond the roofline to form a “V” shape above the roof. In most other shrine architecture that employs *chigi*, they are ornamental and sit on top of the ridgepole rather than penetrating the roof. This creates an “X” form above the roof, the position of which may be somewhere other than the very ends of the ridgepole. Two of the few differences between the Geku and Naiku are the cut of the *chigi* (vertical versus horizontal) and the number of *katsuogi*: nine at the Geku, ten at the Naiku. Both buildings are raised on stilts about eight feet high, with a central entrance on the non-gabled side approached by a wooden staircase that is approximately the same width as the entry (one bay wide), covered with a simple flat roof. However, the Naiku is built on an elevated plateau reached by a stone staircase, whereas the Geku is built on flat ground. Another distinctive feature of this building type is the thick exterior pillars supporting the ridgepole at both gable ends. All the pillars are buried directly in the ground, unlike later styles in which a stone base was used under the pillar.

There is also a central pillar under the floor that serves a purely symbolic and sacred purpose. This “heart pillar” (*shin no mibashira*) is the only thing left on the “dormant” site (*kodenchi*) when the old shrine is dismantled. The dormant site is located adjacent to the “active” site where the new shrine is built above the *shin no mibashira* (which is kept

totally concealed throughout the process). This approximately seven-foot-tall pillar is covered by a small wooden hut (*oiya*) and stands alone in the field of white gravel until the new building is built above it (the pillar is also renewed periodically). There is a theory that it is related to Izanagi and Izanami, considered a symbolic remnant either of the “pillar of heaven” on which they descended to earth or of the jeweled spear that they used to coagulate the land of Japan out of formless brine. But the shrine does not support such ideas.

Preparation for the rebuilding begins eight years beforehand with the Yamaguchi Festival (literally *yama no iriguchi*, meaning “mountain entrance”) to pray for the safe harvesting and transportation of the trees. Although the ceremony is held during the daytime, a number of priests and carpenters enter the forest under the cover of night to cut down the trees that will be used to make the heart pillars. One month later a special ceremony is held for cutting the trees that will be used to make the enclosures for the *shintai* of each shrine. Called the Misoma Hajimesai, it involves three men cutting the sixty-five-foot, three-hundred-year-old trees with axes from three sides simultaneously. The largest of the more than thirty preparatory ceremonies is probably the Okihiki Gyoji, when the cut trees are transported to the shrine. Though they make most of the trip from forests in Nagano and Gifu in trailer trucks, the last part of the journey is made by river (to the Naiku) and through the streets of Ise. This event draws over 170,000 participants and observers. The main ceremony is the Sengyo, when the *goshintai* is transferred from the old shrine to the newly completed one. This is done in the middle of the night, and the shrine priests transfer all the sacred objects under the cover of a large silk drape (*kingai*) so that no one may look upon them.

Another striking feature of Ise is the ancient forest that surrounds it. The shrine stands in 13,600 acres of forest, of which about 230 acres immediately around each of the buildings have been left untouched since the shrine was founded. From the remaining area, timber to rebuild the shrines was cut until the late fourteenth century, when the number of old trees became insufficient. For the first time since then, about twenty percent of the wood for the sixty-second rebuilding will be taken from the forest of Ise. Other trees in the area have already been designated as future candidates for shrine rebuilding, two hundred years from now.

Important spiritual features: The Naiku of Ise Jingu enshrines Amaterasu Omikami and it is the ancestral shrine of the imperial line. Ise Jingu is more properly called simply “Jingu.” This is where the sacred mirror (*yata no kagami*), the *goshintai* of Amaterasu and one of the three sacred regalia of the emperor (*sanshu no jingi*), is kept. By tradition, this is the mirror that was used to lure Amaterasu from the Heavenly Rock Cave and that she gave to Ninigi when he descended to earth, saying, “When you look upon this mirror, let it be as if you were looking upon me.” Amaterasu has been called by many other names, and some of those that were commonly used in the past, such as Tensho Daijin, do not imply any gender, while others imply a male deity, even though the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* identify her as female. There are many shrines devoted to Amateru sun deities, some of which are male. But it gradually came to be accepted that Amaterasu is a female deity.

Some or all of the sacred regalia were once housed in the imperial palace. But the story goes that Emperor Sujin (r. 97–30 B.C.) was so overwhelmed by the presence of these objects that he ordered the sacred sword (*kusanagi*) and the divine mirror removed to separate loca-

tions. The mirror was first moved to Kasanui in Yamato. Then during the reign of Emperor Suinin (r. 29 B.C.–A.D. 70) it was entrusted to Princess Yamatohime, who wandered in search of a place to enshrine it until she received an oracle from Amaterasu that the goddess wanted to settle in the land of Ise. However, another interpretation sees this as a metaphor for a military campaign to capture the ports of Ise.

So the shrine now known as the Naiku was built here and the princess, who was a daughter of the emperor, became the first *saio*, or shrine priestess. The early *saio* were always chosen by divination from among the daughters of the emperor and appointed for the rest of his lifetime. These young women were unmarried virgins who maintained ritual purity, performed rites, and offered prayers to Amaterasu, essentially as a proxy for the emperor. Japan had a tradition of female shamans, and the appointment of female *saio* may be seen as an extension of that. There is also a theory that this was in fact the beginning of the loss of religious power for women. That theory posits that Emperor Sujin and his successor Suinin actually lived in the fourth century (rather than their mythological dates between the end of the old and beginning of the new millennium), and that they began something of a religious revolution when they sent the female goddess and the female shaman to Ise Jingu, away from the center of power in Yamato. They then enshrined the male land deity Omononushi no okami at Omiwa and placed his worship in the care of a male priest. The theory goes that this was the beginning of the direct reception of oracles by emperors and the end of the spiritual primacy of the female shaman. If true, it was probably due in part to the growing position of warrior clans and events on the Korean peninsula. Both Korea and China placed great importance on male rulers, descended from heaven or from sun deities.



The Uji Bridge over the Isuzugawa, rebuilt every 20 years

Female shamanism was gradually removed from political influence, though it survived especially in the Hachiman cult until the eighth century. The scholar Akima Toshio believes that the image of Amaterasu was formed out of a complex melding of the ancient image of a female water deity, the first *saito* Yamatohime, and ancient solar deities such as Sarutahiko. He makes a strong case that native deities of the coastal clans around Ise provided the basis for the worship of Amaterasu, who came to be regarded as the ancestor of the imperial house.

The legend of the foundation of the outer shrine recounts that Emperor Yuryaku (r. A.D. 456–79) established the Geku sometime after he moved the capital to Hase, on the western slope of the mountains separating Yamato from Ise to the east. Although neither the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, nor *Kogoshui* make mention of it, the officially accepted legend is that the Geku was founded in A.D. 477 after Emperor Yuryaku received an oracle in a dream from Amaterasu stating that she wished to have Toyoukehime (Toyouke omikami) enshrined near her, to serve her meals. As mentioned above, there is also a theory that Amaterasu is a native *kami* of the Ise area who was co-opted by the

Yamato emperors. According to one theory, a shrine that already existed in Ise when the Naiku was founded became the Geku. Throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, legends reaffirming the legitimacy of the Yamato emperors and the clans that supported them were being created. It is speculated that during the reign of Yuryaku, Yamato was still a loose collection of clans. When Yuryaku died and a number of princes disputed the succession, Emperor Keitai (r. 507–31), a distant descendant of Nintoku, was brought in from a northern clan by powerful chieftains after the brief and tumultuous reigns of five emperors in twenty-eight years. This may have prompted the legend of Jinmu (a ruler who was not native to Yamato) as the first emperor and direct descendant of Ninigi, grandson of Amaterasu.

Exactly why the myth cycle involving the descent of Ninigi was placed in Kyushu rather than Yamato is unknown, but that area's importance to the trade route to Asia increased with the importation of metal and metalworking for armaments. It is also clear that the importance to Yamato of conquered rivals-turned-allies, such as the clans of Kyushu, Izumo, Kibi, and

others, was honored and respected by melding their somewhat altered mythologies with those of the ruling clans. It is thought that during the reign of Emperor Kinmei (r. 539–71), the first known “histories” of the realm—the *Teiki* (“Imperial Records”) and *Kuji* (“Ancient Tales”)—were compiled. Although these writings no longer exist, they were at least in part the basis for the *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihon shoki* (720) and all these works were utilized to firmly establish the links between imperial and allied clans and their genealogies. They also established the descent of the rulers from heavenly ancestors and linked them to their respective shrines. These writings were probably influenced by Korean and Chinese myths, which viewed the ruler as an heir of heaven. Thus, the consolidation of the country and of the principal mythologies was taking shape in tandem.

Description: It is beyond the scope of this book to do more than touch on the vast subject of Ise Jingu. There is no question that this is one of the most important shrines in Japan and, as the exclusive shrine of the emperor, also the most aloof. Besides being the home of the chief *kami* of the Shinto pantheon, its buildings are considered to be in one of the most authentic and purely native Japanese styles, preserved as such through the custom of *shikinen sengu*. This twenty-year cycle, believed to have started in the seventh century, is itself the focus of much of the mystique of Ise Jingu.

When visiting this complex of 125 shrines, the prescribed route is first to visit the Geku, which is easily accessed from Ise-shi train station. Here, as at the Naiku (formally called the Kotajingu), one first crosses a river by way of the Hiyokehashi bridge. The Geku is properly called Toyouke Daijingu and enshrines Toyouke omikami, the *kami* of food, clothing, and shel-

ter. The *Kojiki* records that this *kami* was sent by Amaterasu to descend to earth with Ninigi. It is considered that Toyouke serves the sacred meal to Amaterasu; therefore offerings of food are not made by the priests of the Naiku as they are at every other shrine in Japan. The Geku has always been an integral yet subordinate part of Ise. An attempt to balance or even reverse this position was made by the hereditary priests of the outer shrine, the Watarai clan, from the late thirteenth century. This was a time of dispute between the outer and inner shrines, and there was great upheaval in the imperial court caused by the political and social turmoil of the late Kamakura period. As new forms of Buddhism such as Nichiren, Zen, and Pure Land vied with older sects for prominence, priestly Shinto lineages began to develop doctrines that claimed some measure of independence from Buddhism. The Geku became the center of one such school of thought which later was called Watarai Shinto. As with many doctrines that developed two centuries later, Watarai Shinto attempted to define “true” *kami* worship while rectifying beliefs in Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and yin/yang (*onmyodo*). The Watarai also established the practice of pilgrimage to Ise (though there had been some instances of pilgrimage prior to the thirteenth century).

In times past, the three-mile walk from the outer to the inner shrine passed through Furuichi and Uji Nakanokiri-cho, a thriving area of inns and brothels that catered to pilgrims. Today there are restaurants and shops that cater to pilgrims and tourists alike. This includes Oharai-machi and a section known as Okage-yokocho—an area of reconstructed Edo-period shops—both close to the entrance to the Naiku. Although all the grounds between the outer and inner shrines are part of Ise, arrival at the Naiku is defined as the river Isuzugawa and the 335-foot-long, 27-foot-wide Uji Bridge.

Twenty-four-foot wooden *torii* stand at either end of this traditional wooden bridge, which is included in the *shikinen sengu* rebuilding cycle. Other than the railing, the bridge is constructed by boat carpenters who are practiced in fitting together the boards that form the floor of the bridge so as to be resistant to water damage. This is a demanding task, considering that about one hundred million people will cross the bridge and wear away two and a half inches of its six-inch thickness over the course of its twenty-year lifespan. Crossing a body of water, no matter how small, is considered a form of purification in relation to entering a shrine or a temple. It is also symbolic of passing from the profane to the sacred world.

After crossing Uji Bridge, you turn right toward the Naiku and shortly thereafter encounter a *temizusba*, for ablutions. But walking farther on down this path past another large *torii* and down some stone steps brings you to a spot along the banks of the Isuzugawa called the *mitarashi*, where pilgrims traditionally performed ablutions in the river. Returning from the riverside and continuing on the path to the Naiku, you will pass under another large *torii*, then continue until another set of stone steps finally leads up to the front of the outermost of four fences surrounding the Naiku. It may be a good idea to bring along a book that contains pictures of the Naiku, because the only part that you will actually be able to see is the tip of the roof. This has disappointed many a visitor over the centuries, but it is not all that different from other shrines where the *bonden* is almost entirely concealed behind the *baiden* and fences.

Along the way to this point one passes a number of buildings such as the *saikan* (purification hall), where priests purify themselves before conducting rites; the *anzaisho*, or hall for visitors from the imperial household; the *imibiyaden*, where the food offered to the

kami is prepared; and stalls for horses offered to the *kami* by the imperial household. As I mentioned, there are a large number of subsidiary shrines on the grounds that can be visited. Going back from the Naiku and around the left side, you can find the Aramatsuri no miya and the *gebeiden*. The *gebeiden* (outer treasury) is a smaller version of the main shrine, minus the veranda, stairs, and heart pillar. Usually the *baiden* stands in front of the *bonden*, but at Ise the *kaguraden* which is far to the left of the *bonden* serves this purpose. This is because only the emperor was traditionally allowed to worship at Ise (although this was only done by proxy until Emperor Meiji became the first to worship at Ise since Empress Jito in the seventh century). However, near the end of the Kamakura period, when the throne split between the Northern and Southern Courts, imperial support for Ise came to a halt. The need to gain alternative sources of finance led to the establishment of private offerings and pilgrimages run by a class of priest known as *onsbi* who offered prayers at Ise for worshippers for a fee. By the Edo period (1603–1867), pilgrimage confraternities called *iseko* were organized throughout Japan. A phenomenon of mass pilgrimage called *okage mairi* saw millions taking to the highways, particularly in auspicious years that conformed to a sixty-year cycle. It was an era when pilgrimage combined both worship and entertainment. While Ise was not the only destination, it was the only one that attracted such massive movements.

Another aspect of Ise is its connection with Buddhism. The religion was introduced to Japan during the mid-sixth century and began to flourish in the seventh century. At first this caused a conflict between those who believed accepting “foreign gods” would offend the native *kami* and those who thought Japan should follow the religion that had already

been adopted across Asia. The conflict was resolved—after a battle and reordering of clan hierarchy—with the adoption of Buddhism and the continued worship of the native gods. Thus the melding of the two religions was well under way by the eighth century. The concept of *bonji-suijaku* (original essence and manifest trace) began in the ninth century and was established doctrine by the early tenth century. *Kami* were seen as manifest traces of the Buddha, and each was identified as an avatar of an original Buddha essence. Known generally as *shinbutsu shugo*, such doctrines became the mainstream of religion in Japan. Modern scholarship views Japanese religion from the Heian to the Meiji period as a mesh of exoteric and esoteric beliefs and rituals, combining Buddhism and *kami* with *onmyodo* and Confucian, Daoist, and Indian influences, in various configurations at independent cultic sites around the country.

Shrines run by monks, where Buddhist rites were performed for the *kami* (*miyadera*), dominated the list of the *nijunisha* (all but one of the twenty-two shrines receiving offerings from the imperial house) throughout the Heian period. Buddhist monks were also largely responsible for creating doctrine explaining the position of the *kami* of Japan and for creating the foundation stories of shrines. Thus it was that Amaterasu became associated with the Dainichi Nyorai, or the Great Sun Buddha, and the Naiku of Ise with the “Womb Mandala,” while the Geku was associated with the “diamond realm.” This syncretic belief, which came to be known as Ryobu Shinto, was primarily the result of doctrines created by the Shingon and Tendai sects of Buddhism. The identification of Dainichi with Amaterasu was a welcome development in the eyes of some, as it placed Japan at the center of the universe and Ise at the center of Japan. Such concepts were

discarded in the Meiji period, when Ise was placed firmly under control of the central government and made the centerpiece of the new State Shinto. Since the end of World War II, Ise Jingu has been a religious corporation in terms of the law, independent of government financial support. However, a system of selling Ise amulets at Shinto shrines around the country, instituted under the Meiji government, is still maintained (in modified form) by the Association of Shinto Shrines (Jinja Honcho).

At most shrines, the *bonden* is hidden behind one or two fences. Ise has four such fences (possibly five in its early days), and worshippers must offer their prayers from outside the third of them. No one but the *guji*, priests of the level of *negi*, and the emperor are allowed to enter the inner shrine grounds; the rest of the imperial family prays from outside the inner fence. The only exception is during the twenty-year rebuilding, when workers and official photographers are allowed to enter. This occurs after the new structure is completed, but before the *goshintai* of Amaterasu is enshrined. All are required to wear white (carpenters also have blue garb for ceremonies). In one of the last ceremonies before the transfer of the *goshintai* to the new site, called the Oshiraishimochi Gyoji, white pebbles are deposited around the new *shoden* by worshippers. This is also the only time when, for about six months, the two *bonden*—old and new—exist side by side. It is also possible to enter up to the second fence of the old Naiku at this time, with permission and proper dress.

Festival: Kagura Festival, 28–30 April and 22–24 September. Performances of ancient *kagura* dance and music, Noh, *shigin* (chanted poetry), and displays of flower arrangement can be seen in the garden of the Naiku. Admission is free.

Kunozan Toshogu

MAP 3

DATE FOUNDED: 1616. Current buildings from 1617.

ADDRESS: 390 Negoya, Suruga-ku, Shizuoka-shi, Shizuoka 420-8011

TEL/INFORMATION: 054-237-2438. A two-page explanation of the shrine is available in English for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: From JR Shizuoka Station, take the bus for Nihondaira to the last stop. Buses are infrequent, and the last one leaves Shizuoka Station in the early afternoon. Then board a cable car for a 5-minute ride to the shrine (¥550 one way or ¥1,000 round trip). Alternatively, take the bus to Kunozan Yamashita, walk 20 minutes, and climb the long stairway up the side of Mount Kuno. The entry fee is ¥500 (¥800 including the museum). The shrine is open from 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M., and from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. between October and March.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Tosho Daigongen (Tokugawa Ieyasu).

PRAYERS OFFERED: Beckoning good fortune, protection from danger, and prosperity in business.

BEST TIMES TO GO: The shrine is located high above the shore of Suruga Bay. Best to visit for the cherry blossoms in early April, or for the strawberry-picking season along the coast below Mount Kuno between January and the beginning of May.



The *haiden* of Kunozan Toshogu

to rest after his death in 1616 at the age of seventy-five. It is a mausoleum-shrine, and though Ieyasu's remains were moved to Nikko, the original stone mausoleum still remains. (Actually, it is not clear if Ieyasu, buried in a box in a sitting position, was dug up and moved or not.) Kunozan Toshogu was built by order of his son Hidetada in 1617, and as one would expect of the powerful Tokugawa, the shrine is magnificent. It is still considered one of the most beautiful of the over five hundred Toshogu shrines around the country. The complex contains thirteen structures arrayed on the terraced top of Mount Kuno, overlooking Suruga Bay and the western side of the Izu Peninsula. They include a two-story *romon* gate that contains *zuijin* guardian figures on the front and golden *komairin* on the back, a drum tower (*koro*), a *kaguraden* dance stage, a treasure house, a *karamon* (Chinese-style gate), a small Hie shrine, a small stable, the stone mausoleum (*gobyosho*), and the *bon-den/haiden* combination in the *gongen* style. The *bon-den* is composed of an outer, lower

Important physical features:

This is the oldest example of a Toshogu shrine, the most famous of which is Nikko Toshogu, constructed in 1617 and rebuilt in 1636. Tokugawa Ieyasu is laid to rest there; however, Kunozan is where he was first laid

area called the *gejin*, an inner area called the *naijin*, and an inner *naijin* called the *nainaijin*. This is roughly the same configuration as Nikko Toshogu. Kunozan, in fact, has a feel very similar to that of its larger and better-known relative. The site is reached by a flight of 1,159 stone steps (*omotesando ishidan*) that zigzags up the side of the mountain. It can also be reached by ropeway from Nihondaira, an area about a thousand feet above sea level that is considered one of the best scenic spots in Japan, with an excellent view of Mount Fuji. For ¥500 you can also try picking tea leaves here, between April and early October.

Important spiritual features: Kunozan is the original place of interment of the deified spirit of Tokugawa Ieyasu, known posthumously as Tosho Daigongen, one of the most significant figures in Japanese history. His remains were originally interred here as per his wish and then removed to Nikko Toshogu a year after his death. However, the divided spirit is still enshrined here, and the shrine therefore retains pride of place as the first of the Toshogu shrines. Tokugawa Ieyasu was born in Okazaki Castle in present-day Aichi Prefecture, and he spent much of his youth in the area around present-day Shizuoka City. He returned to the town in 1605 and resided in Sunpu Castle, where he ruled from behind the throne until his death in 1616. His interment became a battleground for influence between Shinto cults. He was first interred here as a *daimyojin* under Yoshida Shinto rites, then at Nikko under Sanno Ichijitsu Shinto by a monk of the Tendai sect, Tenkai. The cult was formed specifically in order to deify Ieyasu as a protector deity of the country. Tenkai also wrote the *Toshosha engi* of 1636 and the *Tosho daigongen engi* of 1640, both at the behest of the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu. They constitute the story of the



One section of the stairs leading to Kunozan Toshogu

founding of the Nikko Toshogu shrine and of Ieyasu's deification. (For more details, please see the entries for Nikko and Ueno Toshogu.)

Description: Kunozan is a small mountain about nine hundred feet above sea level that rises up from the shore of Suruga Bay not far from the remains of Sunpu Castle. During the reign of Emperor Suiko (r. 592–628) a shrine was founded on this mountain, and a temple named Kunoji was built here in A.D. 600. In 1568, Kuno Castle was built at the top of the mountain by warlord Takeda Shingen, a rival of Tokugawa Ieyasu. When Ieyasu and Oda Nobunaga destroyed the Takeda clan at the battle of Nagashino in 1575, Ieyasu took the castle. When he died in 1616, it was his will to be interred here first, and then to have a small shrine built in Nikko, north of Edo, where his spirit could continue to watch over the country as the tutelary *kami* of Japan (*yashima no chinju*). His son Hidetada (r. 1605–23) respected his wishes and built the Kunozan shrine and Nikko Toshogu a year later. Ieyasu's grandson Iemitsu greatly expanded Nikko in 1634–36 into the World Heritage Site that we see today, and also had a five-story pagoda built in Kunozan.



The magnificent *gongen-zukuri* shrine of Kunozan Toshogu

Unfortunately, the hundred-foot-tall tower did not survive the destruction of the Meiji period, and only the pillar bases remain. Still, the many buildings that did survive preserve the spirit of the original shrine. The *gongen-zukuri* main building in particular is a splendid example of the elaborately carved and polychromed style that came to be associated with the Tokugawa. The buildings are refurbished every fifty years (the last time being in 2008). This is a painstaking task that requires several years to finish. All the old lacquer is removed and any rotted wood repaired before being recoated. The shrine will have a special refurbishing to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary in 2016. The distinguishing feature of the Toshogu brand of *gongen-zukuri* (a building style similar to one that existed from earlier times referred to as *yatsumune-zukuri*) is the elaborate wealth of carvings, paintings, and polychromed and gilded surfaces. Toshogu shrines are truly eye candy, unmatched by even the most elaborate Buddhist temples. Another example was the mausoleum Taitokuin, built by Iemitsu

to enshrine the spirit of his father, Hidetada. It was built in the shadow of the temple Zojoji in Edo in 1632, but was totally destroyed in World War II. However, an extensive survey was carried out in 1934, and we do have photos, drawings, a reconstructed scale model that was commissioned for the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, and two gates that now reside at Fudoji temple in Saitama, close to the Seibu Lions baseball stadium. While Nikko far surpasses all other Toshogu shrines, Kunozan is where the incredible legacy of this type of shrine began. Small wonder that thirteen of its structures have been designated Important Cultural Properties.

Incidentally, another related Toshogu shrine is Serada Toshogu in Oita City in present-day Gunma Prefecture. This is the ancestral home of the Nitta branch of the Minamoto from which the Tokugawa claimed descent. When Nikko was renovated, Iemitsu had the original one-bay *bonden*, the *baiden*, and other structures built by his father, Hidetada, moved to Serada where they stand today. The buildings of Kunozan face northeast toward Nikko, and

it is said that by design, Kunozan, Mount Fuji, Nikko, and Serada all lie on a single axis.

There is also a museum at Kunozan that houses about two thousand objects, including a number of objects belonging to Tokugawa Ieyasu. They include a sword designated a National Treasure and the oldest surviving clock in Japan brought from the West (an older one was given to another warlord by Francis Xavier in 1551, but it no longer exists). The clock was a gift from King Phillip III of Spain in return for gifts sent to him through Rodrigo de Vivero, who was stranded in Japan after a shipwreck off present-day Chiba in 1609. It shows a strong Moorish influence in its domed top. Grateful for the hospitality his governor of the Philippines had received, the king sent the clock to Ieyasu as a gift. Missionaries taught the Japanese how to make mechanical clocks, although sundials and water clocks were known from ancient times. Buddhist monks had traditionally been timekeepers of sorts, using burning incense to count the hours, then ringing a great bell on the temple grounds to announce the time. The bell towers were built in shrines like Kunozan as well, but when the Meiji government dictated the separation of Shinto and Buddhism, they were converted into drum towers.

The site on which Kunozan Toshogu stands is as splendid as the buildings, and it is easy to see why it made the perfect site for a castle. The sixteen acres on Mount Kuno have a commanding view of the coastline, which would have helped to keep enemies from scaling the steep rock face to mount an attack. One can well understand why Tokugawa Ieyasu chose to make his own this former stronghold of a once-implacable enemy.

Festival: Reitaisai, 17 April.

Tsubaki Okami Yashiro

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 3 B.C. according to shrine tradition. The present buildings date from 1968.

ADDRESS: 1871 Yamamoto-cho, Suzuka-shi, Mie 519-0315

TEL/INFORMATION: 059-371-1515. A brief description in English is available.

HOW TO GET THERE: From Kintetsu Nagoya Station, take the Kintetsu Nagoya Line to Yokkaichi Station, then 50 minutes by bus (one bus every 2 hours). Also every hour by "C" bus from Kasado Station on the JR Kansai Line.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Sarutahiko no okami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: For guidance, success in business, new growth, good fortune and safety on the roadways.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Spring and autumn are best, for the cherry blossoms and the fall colors.

Important physical features:

Tsubaki Okami Yashiro is located in Mie Prefecture, about thirty miles southwest of the city of Nagoya. The overall setting in a forest of cedars at the base of Mount Nyudogatake forms a perfect environment for worship of Sarutahiko—a powerful giant and one of the *kunisukami*, or earthly *kami*. The shrine is approached by a long *sando* passing through the tall trees. After the first *torii* there is a building called the *shishido*, or "lion hall," where *oharai* purification is performed for automobiles. Continuing down the *sando*, just to the left is the place where shrine tradition states that Ninigi no mikoto first came down to earth, to be guided by Sarutahiko. Farther down the *sando*, to the left of the third *torii*, is the place

MAP 4



Tsubaki Okami Yashiro *torii* and *haiden*

said to be the grave of Sarutahiko. At the end of the *sando* is the unpainted *gebaiden*; the *naibaiden* and *bonden* are behind that. The building style is *shinmei-zukuri* with *chigi* and *katsuogi* on all the roofs, which are surfaced in copper. Elsewhere there is evidence of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism in the shrine to the right of the *sando* called the Jizo-do. It houses three Jizo statues, one of which wears a priest's hat (*kanmuri*). (Sarutahiko was also identified with the Buddhist deity Jizo.) To the right of the *sando* and second in importance to the main shrine is Tsubaki Gishi Jinja, dedicated to Ame no Uzume, the wife of Sarutahiko. It is painted in red, as is the *ryobu torii* that stands in front of it. Most of the shrine's structures were rebuilt in 1968. There is also a *chasbitsu* (teahouse) called *reisbo-an*, donated by the founder of Panasonic, Matsushita Konosuke. An important place related to the form of Shinto practiced at Tsubaki is the *kinryu myojin no taki* (Kinryu Myojin's waterfall), located to the right of the shrine and accessed from inside the *gebaiden*; this is where *misogi* (purification by water) is held. There is a *misogi shubo kai*, a group that meets every month to perform this ritual.

Important spiritual features: Sarutahiko no okami (“monkey rice field prince”) is an earthly *kami* and a deity who guards the roads. This is the *kami* who went out to the “eight crossroads of heaven” and blocked the progress of the heavenly grandchild Ninigi when he was on his way to assume rule of the land. The imposing sight of this giant *kami* made Ninigi's advance guard dizzy. Sarutahiko is described in the *Kojiki* as having a nose seven hands long, a red face, and white whiskers. He stood more than seven feet tall, his eyes were like mirrors, and light shone from his eyes and posterior because of the fire burning within. Ninigi then sent Ame no Uzume to inquire of this giant. She confronted the *kami* with her breasts bared and demanded to know why he was blocking the path. The giant said he had heard that the heavenly grandchild was coming to earth, and came to act as his guide.

Thus, with the help of Ame no Uzume, Sarutahiko guided Ninigi to Mount Takachiho. It was Ame no Uzume whose erotic dance had made all the *kami* roar with laughter and enticed Amaterasu out of the Heavenly Rock Cave. She descended to earth with Ninigi and was later wed to Sarutahiko. She was the ancestral *kami* of the Sarume clan of sacred dancers, one of the five clans that surrounded the imperial throne. The name derived from her husband, Sarutahiko. The Sarume is the only important “*kami* clan” mentioned in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* to have a female ancestral deity other than that of the emperor. The clan was charged with performing sacred dances for the gods called *saru mai* (monkey dances). The Sarume also had the honor of taking part in the festival of tasting the first rice of the harvest by the emperor (Niinameasai). These Sarume were also called *mikanagi* (sacred maidens), and as such served as *miko* (spirit mediums) and are considered the origin of today's shrine maidens.

Sarutahiko and Ame no Uzume, as a quintessential male-female fertility pair, are also identified with various folk deities including *dosojin* (earth ancestor deity). The *dosojin* is more a group of *kami* than a single deity: the Chinese characters can also be read as *sae no kami* (preventative deity) and are also related to *sai no kami* (deity of happiness). All of these deities have a fertility or protective aspect and were found as roadside sculptures, often in male-female pairs. Their function was to protect the village from harm and bring good fortune. Textual reference is made to such figures from the Heian period, and stone sculptures from as early as the seventh century still exist. Overall, these various folk *kami* are identified with agriculture, especially rice growing.

Sarutahiko is thought by some scholars to be a primitive solar deity with influences from other parts of Asia. For example, there is an Indonesian myth about a monkey who gets his hand caught in the mouth of a large clam. A similar myth from Okinawa recounts how a *kenmon* (a monkey-like monster with a red face) has his hand caught in the mouth of a giant clam and almost drowns. Sarutahiko is said to have drowned in the same manner in the upper reaches of the Isuzu River in Ise.

Some scholars have postulated that Sarutahiko and Ame no Uzume were originally local gods of the Ise area who were incorporated into the myths of the imperial lineage. Sarutahiko is the principal deity of Tsubaki Nakato Jinja, also in Suzuka and also an *ichinomiya*, or principal shrine, for Ise Province (part of present-day Mie Prefecture). He is also the deity of Sarutahiko Jinja, located close to the Naiku of Ise Jingu. Sarutahiko was an ancestral *kami* of the Uji no Tsuchigimi clan, also called the Isobe (“beach guild”). He was considered a *kami* of the sun and of the sea. While the manner in which Buddhism

absorbed and transformed native *kami* is well understood, the manner in which local cults were subsumed in the myths of the emerging ruling class is still the subject of much interesting research and speculation.

Description: According to tradition, the shrine was founded in 3 B.C. by Yamatohime no mikoto, who also founded Ise Jingu. Originally it was called Chiwaki Okami Yashiro, which was later changed by Emperor Nintoku (r. 313–99) to Tsubaki Okami Yashiro. It is also said that the shrine has been in the Yamamoto family for ninety-seven generations. The shrine is best known (outside Japan) for the pioneering work of its ninety-sixth head priest, Yamamoto Yukitaka, who, together with his son, Yamamoto Yukiyasu, established a branch shrine in California in 1987. In 2001 it moved to the state of Washington and is now called the Tsubaki Grand Shrine of America, headed by Negi Lawrence Koichi Barrish. In his 1987 book in English *Kami no Michi: The Way of the Kami*, Yamamoto Yukitaka details his struggles as a conscript in New Guinea during World War II, the untimely death of his elder brother—who was the heir to the priesthood—and his efforts to rebuild the shrine and its finances.

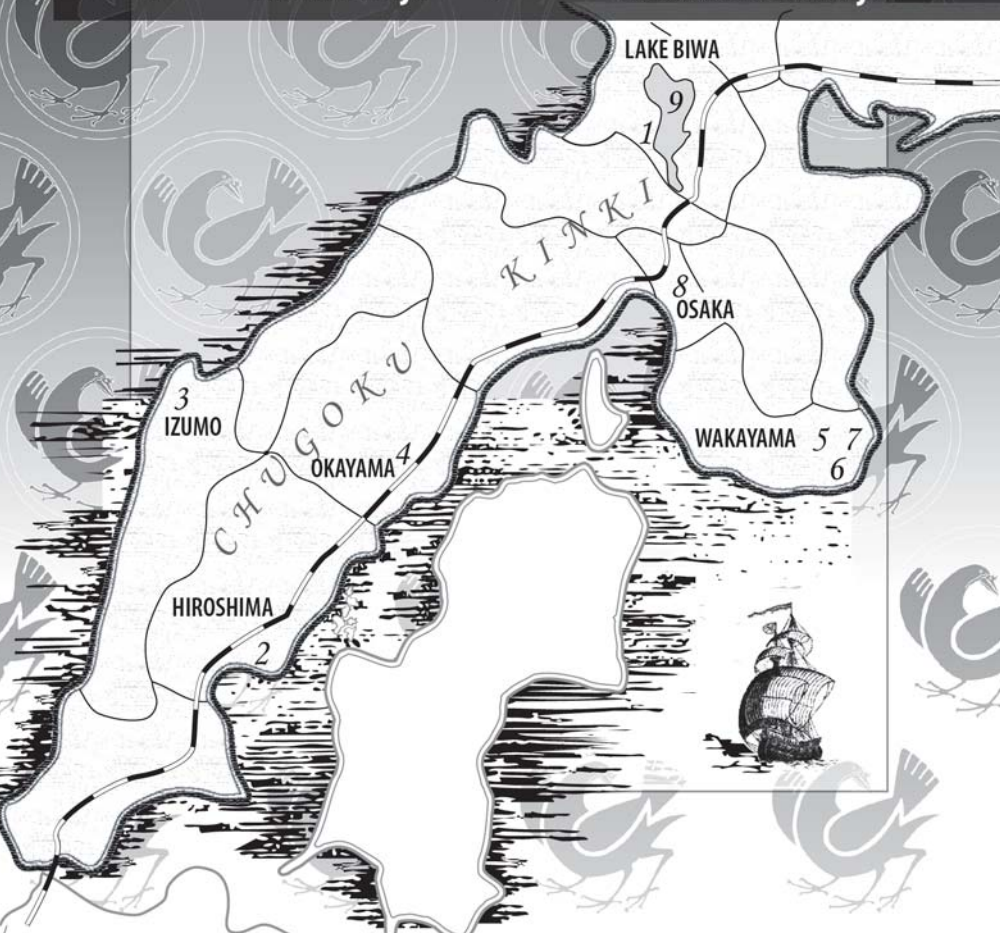
Festivals: Shunki Taisai (Spring Festival), 11–12 April. The spring festival has a Noh performance on the first day and a performance of Iwato mai by a school of traditional dance on the second day. Once every three years, the Shishimai lion dance is performed between 1 February and the end of April. The rite is said to date from an order by Emperor Shomu, and the lion's head is thought to have been carved by Kibi no Makibi (695–771) from *tsubaki* (camellia) wood.

CHUGOKU
AND
KINKI

CHUGOKU AND KINKI

- 1 Hiyoshi Taisha
- 2 Itsukushima Jinja
- 3 Izumo Taisha
- 4 Kibitsu Jinja

- 5 Kumano Hongu Taisha
- 6 Kumano Hayatama Taisha
- 7 Kumano Nachi Taisha
- 8 Sumiyoshi Taisha
- 9 Tsukubusuma Jinja



Hiyoshi Taisha (Hie Taisha)

MAP 1

DATE FOUNDED: The foundation date is not clear, but worship was conducted at the site from at least the seventh century. Expanded by the founder of the Tendai Buddhist sect, Saicho (767–822), from around 806. Many of the current buildings are from the late sixteenth century.

ADDRESS: 5-1-1 Sakamoto, Otsu-shi, Shiga 520-0113

TEL/INFORMATION: 077-578-0009

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Ishiyama-Sakamoto Line to Keihan Sakamoto Station. From there it's about 10 minutes on foot. Also the JR Kosei Line to Hieizan Sakamoto Station and then about 20 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Onamuchi (Omononushi) no kami and Oyamakui (Oyamagui) no kami, and others, collectively known as Hiei Sanno ("mountain king of Hiei").

PRAYERS OFFERED: Divine protection, especially in the years of danger (*yakudoshi*), and the well-being of the family.

BEST TIME TO GO: The fall season around November, when the shrine's renowned maples are at their best.

Important physical features: Hiyoshi Taisha is approached from the eastern slope of Mount Hiei, facing Lake Biwa. The train brings you to the town of Sakamoto, which has since the Heian period been the temple town (*monzen-machi*) that developed along with the religious complex of Mount Hiei. You encounter the first large *torii* about 10 minutes from the station. Continuing through the *torii* brings you to a red *torii* to the right and the entrance to the grounds. From here you cross a bridge and shortly after encounter the *sanno torii*, which



Haiden and *honden* of Hiyoshi's Nishi Hongu originated from this shrine. Its appearance is unusual in that it has a gable-shaped structure set above the upper horizontal lintel.

The grounds of Hiyoshi Taisha are divided into the Nishi Hongu and Higashi Hongu (western and eastern compounds), located about three hundred yards apart and each with an almost identical *honden*, *haiden*, and *romon*. If you continue straight down the road from the *sanno torii*, you come to the *romon* gate of the western compound, built in 1595. After passing through you encounter an open-sided *haiden*, also dating to 1595, then the *honden* with its *hie-zukuri* style. This is a five-by-three-bay structure with an *irimoya-zukuri* roof that is truncated on the back side and surfaced in cypress bark. It has no *chigi* or *katsuogi*. The interior has a three-by-two-bay core called a *moya* and a one-bay corridor called a *bisashi*. The latter is slightly lower in height and surrounds the *moya* on the front and sides. The walls are made of horizontal wooden boards, and a veranda encircles the entire building. The roof on the front side is greatly extended to cover the stairs in the center. Its corners curve



The *sanno torii* of Hiyoshi Taisha

upward to form peaks, while those at the back are cut at a diagonal, giving the building its distinctive look. The general impression of this building, constructed in 1586, is as much temple as shrine except for the fact that there are wooden *komainu* sitting on the veranda. It is also unusual in that a fence does not surround it, as is the case with most *bonden*. To the right of this group is Usagu and to the right of that Shirayamagu.

A short walk from here leads to the eastern compound, which was rebuilt in 1595, after the entire site was burned down in 1571. Unlike Nishi Hongu it contains two shrines within the area behind the *romon*: Jugegu and then the main shrine. The *bonden* of both compounds are designated National Treasures. But there are two additional shrines belonging to Higashi Hongu; the Sannomiyagu (1599) and Ushioyu (1595) on the 1,200-foot hill called Mount Hachioji. An arduous walk uphill takes you to them, beginning at a rough stairway to the left of the *romon*. They are built on stilts (*kake-zukuri*) on the side of the mountain. The layout is very unusual, with the entrances to the two shrines directly facing one another. A stone staircase passes between them, at the top of which is a huge boulder called the “golden rock” (*kogane no iwa*) because it is said to shine like gold in the sun. It is here that the origins of worship at Hiyoshi Taisha are found.

Important spiritual features:

Emperor Tenji invited the *kami* of Omiya, Onamuchi (Omononushi) no kami, to be enshrined at Omiya on Mount Hiei in 668, in order to protect the capital that he briefly moved to nearby Otsu. From that time, Omiya, now commonly known as the western shrine, became the most important site on the mountain. But the *Kojiki* names the *kami* of Mount Hiei as Oyamakui, “the great mountain peg” and the *kami* who “holds the humming arrow.” He is the same *kami* that is enshrined in Matsuo Taisha in Kyoto. At Hiyoshi Taisha he is enshrined in the eastern shrine.

In 788 the monk Saicho founded a temple on the upper slope of the mountain, and in 794 Emperor Kanmu moved to his new capital of Heian-kyo (present-day Kyoto) just to the southwest of the mountain. Kanmu sent Saicho as part of a mission to China around 804, from where he brought back Tiantai (Tendai) Buddhism. Saicho’s first task was rebuilding his temple, which he named Enryakuji, on the top of Mount Hiei; his second task was building new shrines for the *kami* on the eastern slope of the mountain. Over time, the court allowed Saicho support for monks whose sole purpose was to pray for the *kami* of Mount Hiei. Enryakuji thus came to hold sway over the shrine/temple complex that was to become one of the most influential in Japan. After Saicho’s death, Ennin and his successors increased the number of shrines first to seven, and then to twenty-one, by inviting more and more *kami*.

The cosmology of the mountain took a thousand years to develop and is complex, to say the least. Very briefly, the two main shrines came to be included in a group of seven, then two more groups of seven shrines were added for a total of twenty-one. Over time, it came to comprise 108 lower and 108 upper shrines. Of the first seven, the three most important were

called the *sansei* (Onamuchi, Oyamakui, and Hachiman), enshrined in Nishi hongu (old name: Omiya), Higashi hongu (old name: Ninomiya), and Usagu (old name: Shoshin-shi). They were equated with the three main Buddhist deities of Enryakuji (Shakyamuni, Yakushi Nyorai, and Amida). However, at some point the identity of Oyamakui was obscured, and he came to be worshipped as Kuni no Tokotachi. After the Meiji period, the identity of Oyamakui as the original *kami* worshipped at Hie was reestablished, but the cosmology of the mountain was turned upside down, with the removal from the shrine of any Buddhist past. The renaming and reordering of the *kami* included restoring Oyamakui's prominence over Onamuchi. Today, worship at Hie is a combination of its pre- and post-Meiji history; Tamayori hime is worshipped at Usagu while Kukuri hime is enshrined next door at Shirayamagu, Oyamakui again at Ushioogu, and Kamotamayorihime at Sannomiyagu. After the end of World War II the shrine was renamed Hiyoshi Taisha, an alternative reading of the Chinese characters for its previous name, Hie.

The historical significance of worship at Hiyoshi Taisha is its combinatory character, called Sanno Shinto. From an early date, Buddhism sought to incorporate belief in *kami* into its theology and practice. Both Saicho and Kukai, the founder of Shingon Buddhism, worshipped native *kami* alongside Buddhas, adding impetus to the creation of a Japan-specific Buddhist theology. Saicho called the Hie *kami* "Sanno" ("mountain king"), giving the *kami* the same name as that of the deity who protected the head temple of the Tiantai (J: Tendai) sect in China. This reflected the already established concept that the Buddha tamed the violent native deities and turned them into protectors of the Dharma. The monkey is said to be a familiar of Sanno.

From at least the seventh century, emperors derived their right to rule from the belief in their descent from *kami*, especially the sun goddess Amaterasu. Buddhism promised protection of the emperor in exchange for reverence. It added new strength to the emperor's position as embodiment of the state with new theology, rituals, temples, and a well-educated clergy. It enlightened native *kami* and made them protectors of the Dharma. In this way, Buddhism subsumed the native deities and became one of the principal vehicles through which worship of *kami* flourished. Within Tendai teaching there was the dual idea of the transcendental Buddha and the historical Buddha, who was an ordinary man become god. This was defined as "original essence" (*bonji*) and "manifest trace" (*suijaku*). The concept considers the two as one, while arguing for the superiority of the essence. Through various means and over several centuries, the unity of Buddha and *kami* (*shinbutsu shugo*) came to be defined in a similar way: as Buddhist essence and *kami* trace called *bonji-suijaku*. In this way *kami* were considered avatars (*gongen*) of the Buddha.

By the medieval period, combinatory doctrine was the mainstream of Japanese religion. Sanno Shinto was later used as the basis for Sanno Ichijitsu Shinto ("mountain-king one-reality Shinto"), promoted by the monk Tenkai (1536–1643). This form of Sanno Shinto was specifically tailored to enshrine Tokugawa Ieyasu as a *kami*. Thus Nikko Toshogu shrine was built north of Edo and Ieyasu given the title of *daigongen*. On Mount Hiei itself, one such Toshogu shrine was built by Tenkai in 1623 and stands a few minutes walk from the main grounds.

Description: Hiyoshi Taisha is also referred to as Hie or Hiei or Hiesha, in reference to Mount Hiei, on which

it is located. In former times Enryakuji/Hie comprised a massive complex of temples and shrines that was one of the largest in the world. It was conceived, constructed, and operated by the monks of Mount Hiei until the forced separation of Buddhism and Shinto in early Meiji. Hiyoshi Taisha now stands at the head of about 3,800 Hie, Hiyoshi, and Sanno shrines throughout the country.

It is said that in the eighth century Saicho's devout Buddhist father prayed to the *kami* of Mount Hiei for a son. When his prayers were answered, he built a small shrine at the foot of the mountain and dedicated it to the *kami*. His son came to the mountain as a Buddhist priest and began to worship here before the new capital of Heiankyo (Kyoto) was founded in 794. It was therefore fortuitous that the complex came to be regarded as a protector of the city because of its location in the northeast, known as the *kimon*, or "demon gate" through which evil was thought to enter. Hiyoshi Taisha in turn was believed to protect Enryakuji, as well as the city of Kyoto.

During the medieval heyday, Hie's shrines numbered over one hundred while Enryakuji's temples numbered in the thousands. By the tenth century, troubles had arisen in the country and friction between rival temples led to the establishment of armies of warrior-monks (*sobei*). Armed conflicts increased, as did temple burning. When the warring clans of Taira and Minamoto fought in the twelfth century, they enlisted the support of these temple armies. (The famous protector of Yoshitsune, Benkei, was one of the Hiei warrior monks.) During the period of feudal warfare from the thirteenth to the early seventeenth centuries, the line between politics, economics, and religion was constantly blurred. The monks of Hiei were in the thick of these battles and were famous for bearing the *mikoshi* of Hie down

into the city to press their cause, rocking them violently from side to side to display the fearful anger of the gods. Then in 1571 the warlord Oda Nobunaga did away with the warrior-monks once and for all. The whole complex was burned to the ground and its inhabitants slaughtered. In all some 25,000 died, while all of the buildings in the temple-shrine complex were destroyed. The fire obliterated much of Hie's history, and its vast collection of documents was lost in the ashes. For this reason, the main sources about its past are the *Yotenki* of the thirteenth century, and the *Keiran shu-yoshu* and *Sange joryakki* (both by *kike* monks) of the fourteenth century. The writings of a priest who survived the destruction of the shrines, Hafuribe Yukimaru (1512–92), are also important. He was a descendent of the original priestly lineage and was largely responsible for rebuilding the shrine and recording its rituals and history in works such as *The Secret Record of the Shinto of Hie Shrine*. Though the complex was restored, it did not return to its former glory, and friction between the monks of Enryakuji and the priests of Hie grew until the whole relationship was violently and destructively severed in the early Meiji period. Nonetheless, the legacy of Hiyoshi Taisha and Enryakuji remains in over a thousand years of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism.

Festival: Sanno Festival, first Sunday in March through 15 April. An ancient festival dating back 1,300 years, with very complex rites that climax in events held 12–15 April. On the 13th a battle of sorts is reenacted, with armored warriors rocking the *mikoshi*, which are hauled away by semi-naked bearers. During the festival, Buddhist monks from Enryakuji chant a *sutra* for the *kami*. On the 14th *mikoshi* are taken aboard boats onto Lake Biwa, where other boats bring them offerings.

Itsukushima Jinja

MAP 2

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 593, according to shrine tradition. The present layout dates from 1168. The current structures are from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. The *torii* was rebuilt in 1875.

ADDRESS: 1-1 Miyajima-cho, Hatsukaichi-shi, Hiroshima 739-0588

TEL/INFORMATION: 0829-44-2020. English information is available from the ferry terminal on Miyajima. Contact the Miyajima Tourist Association at 0829-44-0066 for information on a free guided tour (August through March). Shrine opens from 6:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. with seasonal variations. Admission is ¥300.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Sanyo Honsen Line to Miyajima-guchi Station and walk a few minutes to the Miyajima-guchi Pier. A 10-minute ferry ride leaves you at Miyajima Port, a 10-minute walk from the shrine.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Ichikishimahime no mikoto, Tagorihime no mikoto, and Tagitsu-hime no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Safety at sea and success in business.

BEST TIMES TO GO: At high tide, when the *torii* and the buildings appear to float on the water. Or when the tide is out, you can walk all the way up to the *torii*. The island is famous for the autumn color and the cherry blossoms in early April.

Important physical features: The shrine is arguably Japan's most famous World Heritage Site. Though all of the structures have been repaired many times in their history each time great care was taken to rebuild to the previous style, which has preserved the twelfth-century character of the site. Of the seventeen structures, six are National



Itsukushima Jinja

Treasures (including the corridors) and eleven are Important Cultural Properties. Probably the most important physical feature of this shrine, however, is its location on Miyajima, a mountainous island about nineteen miles in circumference and considered one of the most scenic spots in Japan. Its tallest peak, Mount Misen, is about 1,755 feet above sea level and is covered with ancient forest. You can hike or take a ropeway to the top. The shrine itself is built entirely over a small inlet, with long covered corridors crisscrossing the shallow waters, leading from the main buildings to a number of auxiliary shrines and stages. Overall, the shrine consists of thirty-seven inner and nineteen outer shrine structures and is considered an outstanding example of the *shinden-zukuri* style of architecture that was prevalent in the Heian period. The famous fifty-foot-tall *ryobu*-style *otorii* ("great *torii*"), standing in the bay about five hundred feet in front of the shrine, is painted in bright vermillion, as are most of the structures. Although some sort of shrine existed here from the sixth century,

Itsukushima Jinja began to take on its present form when the warlord Taira no Kiyomori (1118–81) dedicated the main shrine around 1168. The *bonden* was reconstructed in 1571 by another famous warlord, Mori Motonari. Interestingly, Motonari had previously violated the sanctity of the island by waging war there against his implacable enemy, Sue Takafusa, in 1555. The site of the castle he built, Miyao, is now a park on Yougai Hill.

Itsukushima's *bonden* is an eight-by-four-bay structure with a *kirizuma* roof surfaced in cypress bark. The walls are white stucco, and all the woodwork is painted with vermilion lacquer in a special fifteen-coat process. An unusually long *mitsumune-zukuri baiden* is attached by a one-by-one-bay *beiden* to the equally long *bonden*. In front of the *baiden* is the large, ten-by-three-bay *baraiden* sitting perpendicular to the *beiden*. It has an *irimoya-zukuri* roof, also surfaced in cypress bark, with the center section above the entrance cut and raised above the remaining sections on the left and right. There is a small, uncovered *bugaku* stage in front of the *baraiden*.

Corridors thirteen feet wide extend out from the sides of the *baraiden*, leading to the Noh stages and auxiliary shrines. One of these is the Marodo Jinja, enshrining the five male deities that were produced at the same time as the three female deities of the main shrine. All together, these *kami* are called the *gonan sanjoshin* ("five male/three female deities"), and they are the children created by the "trial by pledge" (*ukei*) between Susano-o and Amaterasu. One of the female deities, Ichikishimahime, is associated with Benzaiten. Since the separation of Shinto and Buddhism Benzaiten worship has been centered at nearby Daiganji.

The World Heritage Site takes in about fourteen percent of the island, including the shrine structures plus the *otorii*, the five-story pagoda

of 1407 originally dedicated to the Yakushi Buddha of medicine, and the Senjokaku ("one-thousand-tatami-mat hall"), also known as Toyokuni Jinja and now enshrining Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Kiyomasa Kato. This is a mammoth structure built at the behest of Hideyoshi as a sutra-chanting hall. It is actually only 857 tatami mats in size (one mat is about eighteen square feet), and it was left unfinished when Hideyoshi died. It was converted to a Shinto shrine during the Meiji period, when a large number of temples on the island were destroyed. Of those that survived, two that are of great age and importance are worth mentioning.

To the right of the shrine is the Shingon temple Daiganji from 1203, considered one of the three most famous places dedicated to Benzaiten (the other two are on Chikubushima and Enoshima). Also to the right of the shrine and a little farther on, at the foot of Mount Misen, is another, older Shingon temple, Daisho-in, said to have been founded by Kobo Daishi in 806. Among its numerous buildings is a prayer hall founded by Emperor Toba (r. 1107–23). The temple is famous for its connection to Tibetan Buddhism, and the Dalai Lama came here in 2006 as part of an eight-day tantric empowerment event. At that time, he consecrated the Maitreya Bodhisattva sculpture, which is one of a number of ancient wooden sculptures in the temple. This is also where the trail up to Mount Misen begins. Kobo Daishi began a style of meditation known as *gumonji-bo* ("morning star" meditation), which he undertook for a hundred days on Mount Misen, and he also lit a *kiezu no hi* ("eternal fire"). This same fire was used to light the Eternal Flame at Hiroshima Peace Park in modern times.

Important spiritual features: Itsukushima Jinja enshrines the *sanjoshin* ("three female deities"), the same deities

enshrined at Munakata Taisha in Fukuoka. According to shrine tradition, Itsukushima was founded in 593 by a man named Saeki Kuramoto. The shrine's name is a derivation of *kami o itsuki matsuru shima*, meaning "island dedicated to the gods" (Itsukushima was also the name of the island until about 1950). It is said that after Taira no Kiyomori was placed in charge of Aki Province (part of present-day Hiroshima), he often visited the existing shrine and once had a dream of an old monk who told him that if he established a new shrine here, he would achieve control of the country. He ordered the construction and Itsukushima was considered the family shrine of the Taira from around that time. Indeed, Taira no Kiyomori is known not only for building the shrine, but also for dedicating to the *kami* thirty-three scrolls of the Lotus, Amida, and Heart Sutras (called the *beike nokyo*), handwritten and decorated with silver, gold, and mother-of-pearl by himself and other members of his clan. You can see some of these and other valuable items at the shrine's treasure house for an entrance fee of ¥300.

Description: Miyajima is one of Japan's most popular tourist attractions. The view of the *torii* and the bay at the entrance to the island is considered one of the three most beautiful in Japan (along with Amanohashidate and Matsushima Bay). The buildings and layout of Itsukushima Jinja are an exquisite example of Heian-period palace architecture (*shinden-zukuri*), made even more splendid by nighttime illumination. Itsukushima is unmatched in its extensive open corridors, and the lightness of its appearance is remarkable compared to its large scale. But it is the situation of the buildings over the bay of Miyajima that really makes the shrine unique among religious sites in Japan. The view from

the top of Mount Misen is also quite lovely. A trail to the top from behind the shrine passes through Momijidani ("Maple Tree Valley") Park on the way to the Miyajima ropeway. Other trails are equally beautiful and less crowded. With its many ancient shrines, temples, and fantastic scenic beauty, you should give yourself plenty of time to enjoy Miyajima. There are a number of hotels, all located close to the road along the shore. The island is home to about eighteen-hundred people (and a large number of deer), but there are no maternity wards or graveyards because both blood and death are considered by Shinto as defilements.

Festivals: Kangensai (Ancient Court Music Festival), late July or early August. More than eight hundred years ago, the patron of Miyajima, Taira no Kiyomori, brought the Heian custom of enjoying court music performed on boats (*kangen*) to the island. Thus began the festival dedicated to the *kami* of Itsukushima. Now ranked as one of the finest floating festivals in Japan, the event features three colorful boats decorated beautifully with lanterns and curtains and containing a *mikoshi*, priests, and musicians. They are joined by hundreds of lantern-bearing fishing boats as they proceed through the *torii* in the bay.

Chinka-sai, 31 December. A short ceremony that is a prelude to the New Year Hatsumode. Huge torches are lit as a prayer for safety in the coming year. Begins at 5 P.M.

Fireworks Festival, mid-August (date varies). Not a Shinto festival, but worth seeing nevertheless. Held right on the bay in front of Itsukushima Jinja. A spectacular display of fireworks forms a backdrop to the *torii* in Miyajima Bay.

Izumo Taisha (Izumo Oyashiro)

MAP 3

DATE FOUNDED: Foundation date unknown but recorded in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* as being in the “age of the gods” (sometime prior to 660 B.C.). The current *honden* was built in 1744.

ADDRESS: 195 Taisha-cho, Kizuki Higashi, Izumo-shi, Shimane 699-0701

TEL/INFORMATION: 085-353-3100

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Ichibata Line to Izumo Taisha-mae Station, then 5 minutes on foot. From Izumo-shi Station on the JR Sanin Line, buses depart from bus stop number 1 every 30 minutes.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Okuninushi no okami (also called Onamuchi among other names and identified with Daikoku sama).

PRAYERS OFFERED: To find love and marriage, success in business or farming, good health, and recovery from illness.

BEST TIME TO GO: Many people visit at the time of the Kamiari Matsuri in October or November, when tradition has it that all the *kami* of Japan gather at Izumo.

Important physical features: Perhaps the most impressive feature of Izumo is its size and the visual impression it gives of rough power that is completely atypical of most shrine architecture. It exudes masculine power, like the hunting lodge of some mountain giant, in contrast to the refined delicacy of Ise Jingu. It is the finest example of *taisha-zukuri* (“grand shrine style”), which takes its name from this *honden* and is considered one of the oldest styles of shrine architecture.

The first taste of size and strength actually comes from the *baiden*, a massive structure



Izumo Taisha *honden*

built in 1959 that stands well in front of the *baiden*. The large, sweeping, copper-clad roof of the *baiden* is accentuated by another smaller roof that juts out of the right front side of the open portico structure. Though the building is only five by five bays, the large round columns and wooden-board wall construction faithfully reflect the powerful appearance of the *honden* behind it. This expression of power is accentuated by the huge three-ton straw *shimenawa* that dangles from the rafters over your head as you walk up to the offering box. There is a custom here of making a wish and throwing a coin up into the *shimenawa* (if it sticks, your wish will be granted). Judging by photos, the previous *baiden* was of a totally different style, with a hip-and-gable roof and an *irimoya-bafu* on the non-gabled side. The entrance was in the center of the non-gabled side, and the building was elevated about three feet from the ground—still a large building, but far less bold. A recent addition is an even larger *shimenawa* (over forty-two feet long and weighing five tons), located on the *kaguraden* to the left of the *baiden*.

Though the current *bonden* (from 1744) is half covered by the surrounding fence, at almost eighty feet (to the *chigi*), it immediately strikes the visitor as being taller than other shrines. Yet, surprisingly, there is evidence that it was once even higher. According to written records, it once stood at a height of 157 feet, which would make it even taller than the Todaiji *daibutsuden* (“great Buddha hall”), the largest wooden building in the world. Although such comparisons are also a matter of politics (the importance of Shinto versus Buddhism), the claim seemed to be verified when three wooden columns, each three feet in diameter, were excavated near the base of the shrine in the year 2000. They had apparently been strapped together and painted red to create a single massive column of nearly ten feet in diameter. This perfectly matched the content of an ancient document in the possession of Izumo Taisha. Investigations revealed that these columns were from a rebuilding that occurred in 1248, probably the last time such a tall structure was built. Other documents apparently show that the structure was unstable, and that it collapsed and was rebuilt on at least six occasions. In modern times research carried out by Professor Fukuyama Toshio of Kyoto University revealed what the structure may have looked like, and a Japanese construction company did a full computer graphics work-up, including digital earthquake testing, to demonstrate the viability of such a structure. A model and drawings of the supposed building are on display at the nearby Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo.

The current layout of the shrine seems to have been established in 1667. Prior to this time, the site contained Buddhist structures such as a pagoda and a prayer hall, according to old illustrations. At that time, the fence around the *bonden* and its support pillars

were painted in red. As for the current *bonden*, it is a square shape, two bays wide by two deep. However, since each bay is almost eighteen feet wide, this gives a wall length of about thirty-six feet per side. A slightly curving roof covered in cypress bark, with massive overhanging eaves, creates an impression of size and power. There are two *chigi* on the roof, set well back from the edge, and three *katsuogi*. Besides the roof, it is the elevation of the building from ground level (about ten feet) that adds so much to the overall height. Inside the double-door entrance in the right bay, a partition runs between the right-side wall and the center of the room, parallel to the door opening. This blocks the view from the entrance to the rear right corner, where the *goshintai* (“sacred body”) of the *kami* faces to the left. The left bay of the front side features *shitomido* shutters, the lower half of which can be removed and the upper half latched open to reveal the interior, as seen in a hanging scroll from the seventeenth century (although these days they are never opened). The building is encircled by a veranda, and a steep staircase of about seventeen steps leads to the doorway in the right bay. The staircase is covered with a gable roof that angles down, following the slope of the stairs, a distinctive mark of *taisha-zukuri*. However, this building is not the oldest of its kind in existence. That distinction belongs to Kamosu Jinja (in the nearby city of Matsue), which enshrines Izanami. Built in 1583, it is the oldest *taisha-zukuri* building in Japan, and, like the *bonden* of Izumo Taisha, it is designated a National Treasure. Renovation of Izumo’s *bonden*—which occurs once every sixty years—began most recently in 2010 and is scheduled for completion in 2013.

There are many other unique aspects to Izumo’s building style that have been handed

down through the roughly twenty-five times it has been rebuilt. For example, the building contains one massive pillar in the center called the “heart pillar” (*shin no mibashira*) that has limited structural purpose. This central column instead acts as a *yorishiro*, a place for the *kami* to descend. Such a symbolic center post also exists at Ise Jingu under the surface of the floor. The heart pillar is thought by some to reflect the “true pillar of heaven” (*ame no mibashira*) through which Izanami and Izanagi descended to earth. There is also speculation that the pillar in Japanese buildings originates from the reverence for great trees as places where the *kami* descends. Architectural historian Ueda Atsushi believed that an early style called “construction of heaven and earth” (*tenchi kongen-zukuri*) incorporated some sort of symbolic pillar. Certainly, because Japan is a country of post-and-lintel wood construction, the pillar was the heart of the building in a very real as well as symbolic sense.

Important spiritual features: The original name of the shrine was Kizuki Oyashiro. Cape Kizuki is the name of a piece of land that was supposedly taken from the Korean kingdom of Silla and attached to Izumo to increase its size in the “land pulling myth” (*kunibiki shinwa*). This land and the *kami* who cut it off and pulled it to Japan, Yatsukamizu omitsuno no mikoto, are central to the mythology of the *Izumo fudoki*. The *fudoki*, a record of Izumo from the eighth century, as well as similar gazettes from other parts of the country, were written on order of the compilers of the *Nihon shoki*. However, the “land-pulling myth” was omitted from that document. Today, Izumo Taisha is dedicated to Okuninushi, the “land master” and descendant of Susano-o, *kami* of the wind and the sea. Okuninushi and his sons were the last of the line of Susano-o

to rule the land, being forced to surrender it to the descendants of Amaterasu. Sometimes called the “Izumo cycle” of legends, the relevant myths that were recorded in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* move from the birth of Susano-o, to the conflict with his sister Amaterasu, his expulsion from heaven, his settling of the land together with his earth deity descendant Okuninushi, and the latter’s surrender of the land to the heavenly descendants of Amaterasu. It is a spiritual allegory of the pitfalls of unbridled power. It is also a story of the rivalry of ancient politics (Izumo as represented by Susano-o and Yamato as represented by Amaterasu) and a clear example of how history, as well as myth, is shaped by the victors to justify their victory.

Yet the history of any country is one of conflict tempered by compromise. In handing over the land to the heavenly *kami*, Okuninushi inserted a sort of “hands-off” clause when he said, “As to the land of Izumo, however, it alone shall be kept as my territory...” These words come not from the *Nihon shoki* but again from the *Izumo fudoki*. Thus, the head of the shrine retained the title of *kuni no miyatsuko* or *kokuso* (governor), a title dating from as early as the fifth century. The extent of the “contract” can be seen even in the seventeenth century, when the Yoshida and Shirakawa families were put in charge of all Shinto affairs, with the exception of shrines such as Izumo and Ise Jingu. Neither were the Izumo legends incorporated into the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* entirely cast in a negative light.

After his expulsion from heaven for outrageous offenses, Susano-o’s first encounter on earth with an eight-headed dragon yields a magic sword (from the dragon’s tail) that is presented to Amaterasu. This sword later becomes one of the symbols of the emperor of Japan. Another part of this complex relationship is related to an alternative name for Okuni-



Kaguraden shimenawa

nushi: Omononushi. This is an “aspect” of the deity, who is also enshrined on Mount Miwa as the father of Jinmu’s wife. Miwa was likely the center of worship of the ancient Yamato state, and the *Kojiki* records that during the reign of Emperor Sujin (r. 97–30 B.C.) he received an oracle from Omononushi on how a plague could be ended if the deity was properly worshipped at Oniwa. It also relates that around the same time, the mirror of Amaterasu was sent out of the palace to be enshrined farther away. These myths may point to a time when the *kami* of the Izumo clan was ascendant.

Another important aspect of Izumo is the family of priests who reside here. The current *kuni no miyatsuko* and *guji* of the shrine is

the eighty-fourth generation of the same family line that consists of two branches: the Senge and Kitajima. Both branches trace their ancestry to Amenohohi no mikoto in the “age of the gods” (*kamiyo*), who was a son of Amaterasu and Susano-o appointed to perform rites for Okuni-nushi in a shrine that reached up to the clouds.

Description: The significance of Izumo is that of victor and vanquished and how their myths were merged. The Yamato kings won control of the country and, with it, the power to record a mythology that honored their chosen ancestor, Amaterasu, above all others. The dark and unruly *kami* of the wind, Susano-o, and his progeny Okuni-

nushi (Onamuchi) were relegated to secondary and supportive roles as ancestors of the losing side. Susano-o, who longs to be with his mother, Izanami, in *yomi* (the underworld), ultimately takes his position alongside her while his descendants are forced to hide away and relinquish the land they helped to build. One theory relating to Susano-o is that he was an important agricultural *kami*, responsible for wind and water, and therefore the more “unruly” of the essential forces for rice growth.

Both Izumo and Kumano, on the opposite (southern) side of the main island of Honshu, were said to be doorways to and from *yomi*. Indeed, the connections between Kumano (the land of Izanami, the mother) and Izumo (Susano-o, the son) have always been strong. The myths may also reflect the yin/yang theory of the unity of opposites, as well as ancient rivalries between the kingdoms of Korea, from where many of the ruling class may have originated. There is evidence that Izumo had close relations with Silla and China, whereas Yamato had strong ties to the rival Korean kingdom of Paekche. This struggle in Japan and Korea was played out both in fact and in myth.

Another custom at Izumo combines the Indian-Buddhist deity Daikokuten with that of Okuninushi, probably due to the coincidence that the Chinese characters for Okuni can also be pronounced as “Daikoku” (Izumo uses “Daikoku sama” rather than the more Buddhist-related Daikokuten). The deity was believed to bring prosperity and abundance with his wealth-pounding mallet and his treasure sack. (Incidentally, the word for the main pillar of a house is *daikokubashira*, meaning “Daikoku pillar”). Originally a six-armed, black-colored god of war, considered by Chinese Buddhists as a deity of the kitchen, he came to be depicted as a big-bellied deity of good fortune after being brought to Japan by the Tendai sect.

Okuninushi is famously touted as a god of marriage because of the story of how he ran away with his father Susano-o’s daughter, Suserihime, after surviving many trials. (Susano-o is himself famous for slaying a dragon and rescuing and marrying Kushiinadahime.) Then there is the story of how all the *kami* of Japan gather at Izumo in the lunar tenth month and, among other things, deliberate on which prayers for a good spouse deserve to be answered. This concept of the gathering of *kami* is reflected in the old name for the tenth month in Japan, which was *kannazuki* (“the month of no *kami*”), whereas in Izumo it was called *kamiarizuki* (“month of *kami*”). It was based on the belief that Okuninushi was in charge of all the earthly *kami* and that they came to be with him for one month each year (except for Ebisu, the deaf *kami* of commerce, who couldn’t hear his summons).

Festival: Kamiari Matsuri, in October or November; the dates vary each year. All the *kami* of Japan are welcomed in the evening onto the Inasahama shore near Izumo in the Kamimukae Festival. They are led ashore by the dragon *kami* (*kojin* or *ryujajin*) that rules the sea. Priests go into the water to usher the dragon ashore, and then all the *kami* are invited to two *himorogi* set up for them on the beach. After an additional ceremony, the participants proceed from the beach to Izumo’s *kaguraden*, where another ceremony is held. Finally, the visiting *kami* are invested in rows of small box-like shrines arranged to temporarily shelter them. After a week, a send-off ceremony is held for the *kami* who move to other local shrines before returning home after a ceremony at Mankusen Jinja at the end of the month. Throughout the week, the priests maintain ritual purity, including no use of cars, no meat eating, and a bath after each toilet.

Kibitsu Jinja

MAP 4

DATE FOUNDED: Foundation thought to be at the behest of Emperor Nintoku (A.D. 313–99). The current building is from 1425.

ADDRESS: 931 Kibitsu, Kita-ku, Okayama-shi, Okayama 701-1341

TEL/INFORMATION: 086-287-4111. There is a kiosk dispensing fortune telling oracles in English for ¥100 as well as postcards with short descriptions in English (¥700 per set).

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Kibi Line from Okayama Station to Kibitsu Station, then about 5 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Okibitsuhiko no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Good health and long life, future business prospects, increased wisdom and success in studies.

BEST TIMES TO GO: November is good for the changing colors of the six-hundred-year-old ginkgo trees on the surrounding hills, and early April for the cherry blossoms. The shrine grounds are also known for their plum trees (February), peonies (end of April), and hydrangea (mid-June).

Important physical features: The *honden* and *haiden* here are built in the distinctive *kibitsu-zukuri* style. The *honden* is the second largest in Japan after Yasaka Jinja, at seven bays wide by eight bays deep (about forty-eight by fifty-eight feet). It is essentially built like two side-by-side *irimoya*-style buildings but with a continuous roof. This *biyoku-irimoya* style roof is unique to Kibitsu Jinja and was probably influenced by the *daibutsuyo* style established by the Buddhist priest Chogen (1121–1206) for the rebuild-



Kibitsu Jinja, *honden* and *haiden*

ing of Todaiji. The double gable and upturned corners of the exceptionally long cypress-bark-covered roof make a powerful impression. A third ridge joins the parallel ridges at the center, creating an “T” shape when seen from above. Two large *chigi* and *katsuogi*, set well back from the ends, top each of the parallel ridges. The exterior walls are unpainted horizontal boards on the bottom half and vertically latticed windows (*renjimado*) on the upper half. The interior is very complex, with several space divisions and differences in floor height connected by adjoining steps. The lowest level (*gejin*) surrounds the closed inner core like a corridor. Its floor and outer walls are unpainted up through the top of the *renjimado*. One step above the *gejin* on the front side of this core is the roughly ten-foot-deep platform called the *shudan*, at the front side of which stand six round pillars.

Floor and pillars are brightly lacquered in red. Four lacquered steps in the center of the *shudan* lead to the *chujin*, which again acts as a corridor on the inside of the core, surrounding the raised *naijin* that stands several steps above it at the same height as the *nainaijin*

connected to the back. This is the sanctuary where the *kami* resides. The ceiling levels rise with the floor levels, and the *nainaijin* has its own roof canopy. Most of the interior from the *shudani* inward is coated in vermilion and white lacquer except for the coffered ceiling, which uses black lacquer as well, and the floors of the *naijin* and *nainaijin*, which are unpainted. An exterior veranda surrounds the entire building, which sits on a “tortoise-belly” (*kamebara*) foundation, constructed of packed earth and stone with a white plaster coating. This is a device often seen in temple construction and one that amplifies the height of the structure. The *baiden* attached to the front is by contrast smaller than the *bonden* and employs another device used in temple construction, a *mokosbi*. This is basically an additional eave placed somewhat lower than the actual roof line, to give the impression of a two-story structure. While the height of the building merits a second story, the interior is a two-story clear span up to the rafters and entirely open on the back side that faces the *bonden*. About seven steps lead to the floor of the *baiden*, and another eight steps from there to the floor of the *bonden*. Worshippers are allowed to the level of the *gejin* for prayers and on certain ritual occasions.

Important spiritual features: Kibitsu Jinja enshrines Kibitsuhiko no mikoto, who was in life a son of Emperor Korei (r. 290–215 B.C.) and conqueror of the ancient kingdom of Kibi. It was a center of Japanese power and culture in the Kofun period (A.D. 250–538), particularly in the fifth century, as attested to by the large number of *kofun* (burial mounds) in the area now known as Okayama Prefecture. For example, the Tsukuriyama Kofun of the late fifth century, located several miles east of Kibitsu Jinja, is the fourth-

largest burial mound in Japan. At that time, the kingdom of Kibi was still a strong rival of Yamato for dominance. The *Nihon shoki* relates how the Yamato court sent Prince Kibitsuhiko with his half-brother Wakatakehiko to conquer Kibi Province. In this they were successful, and the lore surrounding Kibitsuhiko says that he lived to the age of 281. He is supposedly buried in the nearby Nakayama Chausuyama burial mound. The *Kibitsu jingu engi* of the Muromachi period records that at some point in his escapades, the prince was ordered to destroy a powerful ogre named Ura. From the place where Kibitsu Jinja now stands, he attacked the ogre with arrows, only to have them struck down by those of the ogre. Kibitsuhiko then devised a method to shoot two arrows at once and hit Ura in the eye, killing the monster, who turned into a carp and swam away. A reminder of this battle is the “arrow stone” (*yaoki iwa*) at the entrance to the shrine. This is where Kibitsuhiko is supposed to have laid the two arrows to pray for divine assistance before firing them at the ogre.

Kibitsuhiko is considered to be the person on whom the Momotaro (Peach Boy) legend is modeled. This famous Japanese story relates how a young hero, born from a peach, goes on to become a slayer of ogres. Kibitsuhiko's brother, Wakatakehiko, is said to have crossed over the Inland Sea into the Takamatsu area of Shikoku, where he also slew an ogre, generating that area's association with the Momotaro legend. In an extension of the legend from a later date, the story goes that the head of the ogre continued to emit screams, so it was buried beneath the *okamaden* (“oven hall”) of the shrine, but this did not make it stop. In a vision, the ogre appeared to the prince and said that if his wife was allowed to cook the sacred food offerings, the screams would end. He also said that when the oven was heated and a ques-

tion asked about the future, the sound given off by the boiling pot would determine the answer. Thus was born the ritual of fortune-telling by listening to the sounds given off when rice is steamed. The oge was from a region called Azo, so the woman who assists the priest in this ritual is called the *azome* (woman of Azo). Fortune-telling is conducted every day except Friday, for those who apply before 2 P.M. (a donation is requested).

Description: One of Japan's more fascinating shrines, Kibitsu Jinja sits at the lush green western foot of Mount Kibi no Nakayama. The *bonden* is designated a National Treasure, while the *okamaden* and the north and south gates are Important Cultural Properties. Though one large stone *torii* is set at the entrance from the main road, *torii* are otherwise conspicuously absent. A steep staircase leads up to the north gate that is the main entrance. It is called a *zuishinmon* (*zuijinmon*) and has three bays; the outer bays are semi-enclosed, and a figure sits inside each bay. The roof is hip-and-gable style, covered in cypress bark, with vermilion lacquered wood and plaster walls. Unlike the usual *zuijin* guardian figures, this gate actually enshrines two *kami*: Yamemaro, a *kami* of the night, and Higemaro, a *kami* of the day. Past the gate is another steep staircase that leaves the panting worshipper directly in front of the *haiden*. Between the top of the stairs and the *haiden* is another covered gate with a structure that wraps around the shrine to the right. This is an open-sided *kairo* (corridor) that leads through the south *zuishinmon* and continues to the Hongu shrine on the opposite side of the grounds. The north gate was built in 1543 and the south was built in 1357, pre-dating the existing shrine building. The south gate houses figures representing Inukai Tak-

eru and Nakata Furuna, who it is said came to this place with Kibitsuuhiko. Branching off from this main corridor are passages leading to the "oven hall," the Ebisu shrine, and several other auxiliary shrines. The overwhelming length of the corridor, about a quarter of a mile, is unlike that seen at any other shrine in Japan. Indeed, this type of corridor is usually found on temple grounds, but even there such a length is rare.

Festival: Yatate no Shinji, 3 January. A prayer ceremony is held and then the chief priest (*guji*) of the shrine shoots an arrow into each of the four directions to ward off danger in the coming year.

Okayama Momotaro Matsuri, beginning of August. This is not actually a festival of Kibitsu Jinja, but the legend of Momotaro ("Peach Boy") is based on Kibitsuuhiko no mikoto's battle with the oge named Ura. This is the biggest festival in Okayama, with many events held over the course of its three days. Teams of dancers compete in a parade of *uraja* dance, wearing original costumes and painted faces called *uragesho*. The first night of the festival opens with a display of five thousand fireworks.

Okamaden divination



KUMANO SANZAN

Kumano is an area in the southernmost part of the Kii Peninsula in present-day Wakayama Prefecture. The Kumano Sanzan are three separate shrines, but translates literally as “three mountains of Kumano.” The term *zan*, meaning “mountain,” was historically applied to important Buddhist temples, such as the famous Gozan (“five mountains”) of the Zen sect. Throughout most of their history the three shrines—Hongu, Hayatama, and Nachi—have been linked together in the minds of worshippers and in the practice of pilgrimage. They have also been centers of combinatory Shinto, Buddhist, and *shugendo* worship for most of their long history and were previously referred to as the Sansho Gongen. They enshrine many of the same *kami* (though the nomenclature varies).

The northern part of the prefecture and the southern part of Nara Prefecture developed as great centers of Buddhism from at least the early ninth century, when the monk Kobo Daishi established the Shingon sect on Mount Koya. Ultimately the entire region became crisscrossed with pilgrimage routes, embracing the Yoshino and Omine mountain ranges in southern Nara, Mount Koya in northern Wakayama, Kumano in southern Wakayama, and Ise in Mie Prefecture to the east. The whole area was dotted with shrines, temples, and hot-spring lodgings. Pilgrimages by retired emperors with large entourages became frequent from the eleventh century and helped create a network of religious sites and small villages. As time went by, religious guides called variously *sendatsu*, *osbi*, or *bikuni* directed pilgrims from site to site. The mountains also became the sacred ground of a group of ascetics known as *shugenja* or *yamabushi* (“men who lie

down in the mountains”). The practice of *shugendo* flourished from the Heian to the Edo period and became closely affiliated with the Buddhist sects of Tendai (Hozan-ha faction) and Shingon (Tozan-ha faction). The *yamabushi*, who sought to attain Buddhahood “in this body” and in this lifetime, consider the seventh-century ascetic En no Gyoja as spiritual leader and founder. Their practice centered on entering the mountains and traversing them for a hundred to a thousand days, either from Kumano to Yoshino (*jumbu*) or the reverse (*gyakubu*); during this period they performed ascetic rituals at caves, cliffs, waterfalls, shrines, and temples in an attempt to cross through the Buddhist “ten realms of rebirth” and thus be reborn as a living Buddha. As pilgrims in the area increased, so did the number of shrines. Many of them are associated with lodgings and bathing spots.

These places of worship and ascetic practice are inseparable from the mountains, forests, and natural waterways that make up the region’s environment. In recognition of this, in 2004 the area was designated a World Heritage Site known as the “Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range.” It includes Buddhist temples such as Kinpusenji and Omimesanji, as well as Shinto sites such as the “Ninety-nine Oji” small shrines. Chief among the shrines included in the pilgrimage routes are Kumano Hongu Taisha, Kumano Hayatama Taisha, and Kumano Nachi Taisha.

The three-legged, eight-span crow of Kumano



Kumano Hongu Taisha

MAP 5

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in the sixty-third year of the reign of Emperor Sujin (97–30 B.C.), according to shrine tradition. The current buildings are from the Kamakura period.

ADDRESS: 180 Hongu, Hongu-cho, Tanabe-shi, Wakayama 647-1731

TEL/INFORMATION: 0735-42-0009. Explanation sheet in English is available for ¥200. For information in English on any of the Kumano shrines, the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau is extremely helpful. Visit the bureau's web site at <http://www.tb-kumano.jp/en> or email info@tb-kumano.jp.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Kisei Honsen Line from Nagoya to Shingu Station. Take the Kumano Kotsu or Nara Kotsu bus from the station and get off at Hongu Taishamae. From there it's 3 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Ketsumiko no okami (Susano-o no mikoto), Kumano musubi no okami (Izanami no mikoto), Miko hayatama no okami (Izanagi no mikoto), and Amaterasu Omikami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: The shrine believes that all who visit here have been called by the *kami* and therefore all prayers will be answered.

BEST TIME TO GO: For the cherry blossom season from the end of March to the beginning of April.

Important physical features: This shrine was once located on a sandbank at the confluence of the Kumano, Iwata, and Otonashi rivers, a place called Oyunohara. Today the site contains the largest *torii* in Japan (over 111 feet), and the stone remains of the former shrine's foundation mark the spot where



Hongu Taisha, *honden*

it was carried away by floods in 1889. The main shrine buildings were salvaged, and the shrine was relocated to its present site, where it was reconstructed in 1891. Passing under the *torii* at the entrance, you enter the wooded area that surrounds the plateau on which the shrine now stands. Climbing the 158-step stairway brings you to the water basin for ablutions (*temizu*), then to the main gate (*shinmon*) and the shrine grounds. Walking along the short *sando*, you will see the *haiden* to the left, and to the right of it, the gate to the inner compound.

The main structures of Hongu are all located here behind a fence and lined up in a row from left to right. The largest building (counted as two) is to the left, with its roof eave parallel to the fence. This is the *aidono* or *nishi gozen*, five bays wide by four bays deep, which enshrines Kumano musubi and Miko hayatama. The next two smaller structures, with the gabled side facing the fence, are the *shojoden*, which enshrines Ketsumiko no okami (lined up with the entrance to the compound), and the fourth shrine (*nyaku ichioji*) for Amaterasu. This layout mimics the original site, which can be seen in an old picture scroll from 1299. The structures are a

cross between *kasuga*- and *taisha-zukuri* styles (called *kumano gongen-zukuri*) in unfinished wood, with *chigi* and *katsuogi* as well as roofs surfaced in cypress bark. Both the larger and smaller structures have a pent roof on the gabled side. The general style is said to be unchanged since the fourteenth century, though the shrine was completely reconstructed on this new site. The fence is punctuated by gates in front of each shrine (the larger shrine has two gates), and this is where the worshipper prays. A donation box and bell are located at the front of each gate.

Important spiritual features: The *kami* of Kumano are closely associated with some of the basic tales of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, such as Izanagi's descent into the underworld (*yomi*) and Susano-o's wanderings to join his mother there. The main *kami* enshrined here, Ketsumiko (also called Ketsumimiko), is a deity of tree and forest, said to be another aspect of Susano-o. The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* agree on Izumo as the place where Izanagi closed the entrance to *yomi*, but they differ on where Izanami was buried (the *Kojiki* has Izumo, but an alternate version in the *Nihon shoki* has Kumano). Many of the places in Izumo associated with Susano-o bear the name Kumano. Another important association of this region with the *Kojiki* is the story of Emperor Jinmu's quest to found the Yamato state. When he lost his way in Kumano, Amaterasu sent a three-legged crow known as *yatagarasu* ("eight-span crow") to guide him. One theory holds that this story relates to local clans who helped Jinmu and his army. The *yatagarasu* went on to Yamato and is venerated as an ancestral deity by the Kamo shrines. Although this *kami* is not actually enshrined in the *bonden* of Kumano, it is still worshipped in a ceremony called the Hoin Shinji, when holy pictures of crows (*karasu go-o shinpu*, or *go-o boin*) arrayed to spell out

the Chinese characters for "Kumano Daigongen" are distributed. All three Kumano shrines link their histories to the *yatagarasu*, and all use variations of the *karasu go-o*.

But perhaps the most important feature of the region's *kami* is their role within the tradition of combinatory Shinto and Buddhist belief. This combinatory belief system first flourished around the *kami* Hachiman in the eighth and ninth centuries at places of worship in Kyushu, then at Tamukeyama in Nara and Iwashimizu in Kyoto. Early centers of combinatory practice included Kofukuji/Kasuga and Enryakuji/Hie, where *kami* were enshrined as protectors of the Buddhist temples established there and a new category of monk was established called *shaso* (who was ordained like a Buddhist monk but did not shave his head and who was free, like a Shinto priest, to marry). Combinatory practice was strong in the area of Yoshino, Kumano, and Mount Koya, home of the Shingon sect of Kobo Daishi. It was at the latter that the use of mandalas to envisage the sutras began with Kobo Daishi and the Shingon sect. The mandala was a graphic depiction of the sacred world and a visual teaching tool, but in Japan it also became associated with a particular place. Thus it was that the mandala came to be an important teaching tool at some shrines as well. The Yoshino area became "mapped" to the Diamond World (*kongokai*) Mandala, and the Kumano area to the Womb World (*taizokai*) Mandala.

The *kami* of Kumano Hongu was identified with Amida Nyorai. Amida is the most important Buddha of the Pure Land sect, who vowed that anyone who repeated his name, especially at the moment of death, would be reborn in the Pure Land Paradise. The monk Ippen, who popularized the Pure Land (Jodo) sect of Buddhism with his ecstatic *nenbutsu* dance, had a revelation from the *kami* of

Kumano that simply distributing amulets with the *nenbutsu* written on them would guarantee the receiver entry to the Pure Land when he or she died. The *nenbutsu* is simply the repetition of the words “Namu Amida Butsu” (sometimes translated as “I take refuge in Amida Buddha”). Kumano is historically therefore an ancient home of deep spirituality and mystical transformation, regardless of scripture, sect, or political patronage. Much of this lies in the awesome power and beauty of nature that was a wellspring of revelation.

Description: While shrine tradition claims a founding date in the era of Emperor Sujin, a *shugendo* document from the twelfth century attributes the founding to the monk Zendo in the seventh century. Considered the head of the Kumano Sanzan, the shrine was formerly known as Kumano Nimasu Jinja. Of the three Kumano shrines, it is the farthest inland. Most of the pilgrimage routes (*sankeimichi*) centered on Oyunohara, the former location of the shrine. Hongu was traditionally the first stop on the pilgrimage route from Kyoto that included the other two Kumano shrines or Ise Jingu. It went through Iwashimizu Hachimangu to Sumiyoshi in Osaka, and then along the coast of the Kii Peninsula to the town of Tanabe in the southwest; from there it led into the mountains to Hongu, by boat down to Shingu, and then overland to Nachi before returning to Tanabe. Although pilgrimage in Japan existed from before the Nara period, it gained royal favor through visits to Kumano by retired emperors Seiwa (850–81) and Uda (867–931). Such imperial processions became grander and more frequent over time, with retired Emperor Shirakawa (1053–1129) visiting twenty-four times, Toba (1103–56) visiting twenty-three times, Go-Shirakawa (1127–92) visiting thirty-four times, and Go-

toba (1180–1239) visiting twenty-nine times. These elaborate affairs involved hundreds of courtiers and lasted a month at a time. Taxes were imposed on people along the route to pay the enormous costs, which included expensive gifts bestowed upon the various shrines and temples. So numerous were these pilgrimages that the phrase “the ants’ pilgrimage to Kumano” became widely used to describe the procession of people streaming to these holy sites. In time, pilgrimage spread to the wider population, and a whole industry developed around intermediaries who could guide pilgrims to holy sites. They became important to the shrine’s survival when royal patronage collapsed as a result of warfare between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. They became even more of a mass phenomenon when the stability and economic growth of the Edo period set the entire country on the march to holy places. The biggest such pilgrimages were to Ise, but the adage “seven times to Ise, three times to Kumano” shows just how important the area was. There are currently over three thousand Kumano shrines in Japan.

Festival: Kumano Hongu Taisha Reita-isai (Kumano Hongu Taisha Spring Festival), 13–15 April. Begins on the 13th with the Yunobori Shinji (“hot water purification”). Twelve fathers and their young sons purify themselves in the sacred waters of Yunomine Onsen before walking part of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route to Oyunohara wearing traditional costumes. The twelve young boys have the character *dai* (“big”) written on their foreheads to show that the *kami* has entered into them, and are carried on the shoulders of their fathers to keep them from being polluted by touching the ground. On the 15th the *mikoshi* of Izanami is carried to Oyunohara, and *yamabushi* mountain ascetics perform a fire-walking ritual.

Kumano Hayatama Taisha

MAP 7

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in this location in the 58th year of the reign of Emperor Keiko (A.D. 71–130), according to shrine tradition. The current *honden* are from 1952, and the *haiden* from 1965.

ADDRESS: 1 Shingu, Shingu-shi, Wakayama 647-0081

TEL/INFORMATION: 0735-22-2533. A brief pamphlet in English is available.

HOW TO GET THERE: From Nagoya, take the JR Kisei Honsen Line to Shingu Station. It's a 15-minute walk from there.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Hayatama no omikami (Izanagi no mikoto), Musubi omikami (Izanami no mikoto), Ketsumimiko omikami, and others. The *kami* of Kumano were traditionally known as the Junisha (twelve) Gongen but currently a total of sixteen *kami* are enshrined at Hayatama Taisha.

PRAYERS OFFERED: A good marriage, recovery from illness, and safety at sea.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Any time from spring to fall is probably a good time to visit, as is 6 February for the Oto Matsuri (Fire Torch Festival). May is also good for the bright green of new leaves on the shrine's large camphor trees.

Important physical features: The entrance to Hayatama is located in the town of Shingu, marked by an arched bridge and a red *torii*. Situated near the mouth of the Kumano River, where it meets the Pacific Ocean, Kumano Hayatama Taisha is also known as Kumano Shingu. It is the second oldest of the Kumano Sanzan. The shrine was once rebuilt every thirty-three years and reflects



Shrine *honden*, with *haiden* at left

the layout seen in a number of mandalas from the fourteenth century. Along the *sando* to the left is an ancient *nagi* tree (*Podocarpus nagi*) said to have been planted by Taira no Shigemori in 1159, which would make it over 850 years old. Farther up the *sando*, you pass through a gate called the *osbinmon* and into the grounds proper. Like Hongu, the main shrine buildings are arrayed behind a fence, punctuated by roofed gates. Although the layout is reminiscent of Hongu, all the wood of the buildings is painted in vermillion lacquer, and all the wall areas are in white plaster, which makes it feel more like Nachi Taisha.

There are sixteen *kami* at this shrine, fifteen of which are enshrined in four separate *bonden* arrayed left to right, with the second from the left housing Hayatama no omikami. The *bonden* to the far left enshrines Musubi omikami, who is said to be of equal importance to Hayatama. The first two structures are *kasuga-zukuri* style, with the gable and pent-roof

side facing forward. Directly in front of these *bonden* is the small two-by-three-bay *raiden* (another term for a *baiden*), with the fence that blocks access to the other *bonden* extending from both sides. The next structure to the right has a *nagare-zukuri*-type roof, with the eave parallel to the fence. It is as tall as the two main *bonden*, but under the roof it is separated into three sections housing three *kami* (including Ketsumimiko), which is reflected in there being three gates in the fence in front of it. The final building to the right is lower, long and narrow, and houses ten *kami* under its roof (but with only two gates). All of the roofs are surfaced in copper and all were renovated in 1952, except the *raiden*, which is from 1965. Finally, less than one mile away is Kamikura Jinja, where the sixteenth *kami* of Hayatama is enshrined.

Important spiritual features: The original worship of the Hayatama deity took place at the above-named Kamikura Jinja on the side of Mount Gongen. This is the site of the annual Oto Matsuri (Fire Torch Festival). It is built at the foot of a great rock called *gotobiki iwa*, where the *kami* of Hayatama is said to have descended. The rock is thought to have been an object of worship since the third century, as confirmed by *dotaku* ritual copper bells found in the surrounding area. This is why Kumano Hayatama Taisha is also called Shingu (“new shrine”), as it was moved from the original location where Kamikura Jinja now stands. The town where Hayatama resides took its name from the shrine and is also called Shingu. Although the Hayatama deity is usually thought of as Izanagi, in an alternate reading of the *Nihon shoki*, Hayatama no omikami is the first god that appears when Izanagi leaves *yomi* after fleeing from his deceased wife, Izanami. The name “Hayatama” literally means “fast jewel,” and is said to relate to the speedy wish-

fulfilling efficacy of the *kami*. Another reading from the *Nihon shoki* refers to Hayatamano-o, who was born from the spittle of Izanagi and whose name means “man of valiant spirit.”

Another *kami* enshrined at Hayatama is Musubi omikami (also called Fusumi no okami), considered another name for Izanami no mikoto. In other words, the relation to these “first parents” and the underworld is very strong at this shrine. One of the variations in the *Nihon shoki* relates that Izanami is buried in Kumano and that the great stone that Izanagi used to close the entrance to *yomi* is a little farther up the coastline, at Hana no iwaya. It is one reason for the reverence for great rocks at Kumano in general (there are many examples of massive or unusual stones along the coast). In the Shinto worldview, *yomi* was associated with the dead and impurity; when Izanagi returns from *yomi* he washes himself to remove pollution. Ablution by water (called *misogi*) came to be one of the central acts of the faith. The Buddhist view of death, on the other hand, is more closely associated with rebirth; death was just another stage leading to a new life until enlightenment and release from the cycle. That release could be achieved by rebirth in the Western Paradise, another image with which Kumano was closely associated.

The collective *kami* of Hayatama, as with both of the other Kumano shrines, is also known as Kumano Gongen; in this case, it is identified with the Yakushi Nyorai. Yakushi, whose worship in Japan dates to the seventh century, is called the “Medicine Buddha.” He is usually depicted with a medicine jar or a sprig of the myrobalan tree that is used as a cure-all in Indian Ayurvedic medicine.

Description: Together with Kumano Hongu and Nachi, Hayatama Taisha shares an important place in Shinto,

Buddhist, and *shugendo* traditions. The shrine is often the starting point for pilgrims after landing at the large port of Shingu. It has also been a traditional departure point for pilgrims going by ship to Ise farther up the eastern coast of the Kii Peninsula. Kumano was once associated with a navy (*suigun*) that was instrumental in fighting pirates (*wako*) and decisive in the final battle between the Taira and Minamoto that ushered in the Kamakura period.

It seems that after the appointment of the Kumano *betto* (head priest) to oversee the Kumano area in the late tenth century, he was occasionally called upon to gather warrior monks. Such was the case in 1114, when he was required to kill and capture pirates working from the west coast of the Kii Peninsula around the area called Shirahama. During the battle for supremacy between the Taira and Minamoto, the *shugenja* warrior Benkei, who was the guardian of Minamoto no Yoshitsune and the son of the *betto* of Kumano of the time, named Tanzo, went to persuade his father to fight on the side of the Minamoto. According to *The Tale of the Heike*, Tanzo could not make the decision and instead left it to the gods in the form of a cockfight at a shrine in the town of Tanabe called Tokei Jinja (*tokei* means “cock-fighting,”). Seven red cocks representing the Taira and seven white ones representing the Minamoto were set against each other. At the end, only the white were standing, and the two-hundred-ship Kumano navy joined the Minamoto to defeat the Taira in 1185 at the famous Battle of Dan no ura. Tokei Jinja is the site of the Tanabe Festival, held every year since the seventeenth century.

Festivals: Oto Matsuri (Fire Torch Festival), 6 February. About two thousand men and boys dressed in white and holding lighted torches gather at Kamikura Jinja.



Kamikura Jinja and *gotobiki iwa*

At a signal, they all burst through the shrine gate and race down the ancient stone steps at breakneck speed, creating an image of a fiery serpent snaking its way down the mountain. It is referred to as “releasing the dragon.”

Kumano Hayatama Grand Shrine Festival, 15–16 October. At the festival’s climax on the 16th, nine boats filled with muscular local young men race up the Kumano River to the island of Mifunejima, with a decorated boat known as a *shinkosen* following behind carrying a *mikoshi*. The festival’s inspiration is said to come from the pirate ships that once plied the coast of Kumano, and it commemorates the important place of the Kumano warriors in keeping the sea lanes open.

Boats race around Mifunejima in the Grand Festival



Kumano Nachi Taisha

MAP 8

DATE FOUNDED: Founded around A.D. 317 during the reign of Emperor Nintoku (r. 313–99), according to shrine tradition.

ADDRESS: 1 Nachisan, Nachi Katsuura-cho, Higashimuro-gun, Wakayama 649-5301

TEL/INFORMATION: 0735-55-0321. Pamphlet available in English.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Kisei Honsen Line to Kii-Katsuura Station. Take the Kumano Kotsu bus to Jinja/Otera-mae bus stop, then about 15 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Fusumi no kami (Izanami no mikoto) and others. From earliest times people have worshipped the deity of Nachi Falls, enshrined as Onamuchi no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Good connections, a good marriage, protection against danger, and anything related to agriculture, forestry, or fishing.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Great for summer hiking along the mountain paths, as well as enjoying the refreshing spray at the base of Nachi Falls. Most of the mountains are covered with tall cedars and green all the year round. Also good in June to see the *ajisai* (hydrangea).

Important physical features: Nachi Taisha is located on a plateau of Mount Nachi, opposite one of the longest and most revered waterfalls in Japan, the 440-foot *nachi no otaki*. Above the falls a *shimenawa* rope marks this as a place where a *kami* has descended. Around the base of the waterfall is probably the original site of worship from which the shrine later developed. Now it is the site of



Nachi Taisha *honden*

Nachi's Hiro Jinja. The main shrine sits on a plateau overlooking the waterfall, where it was constructed during the reign of Emperor Nintoku.

Like Hongu and Hayatama, the main structures of Nachi are placed behind a *tamagaki* fence, punctuated by covered gates where worshippers stand in prayer. Most of the six structures are of a *kasuga* type called *kumano gongen-zukuri*, with the entrance on the gable side and a pent roof above the entrance. All the woodwork is painted red and all the walls in white, while the roofs are surfaced in cypress bark. The arrangement here uses an L-shaped fence, with the longer *nagare-zukuri*-style shrine standing to the left, and the five smaller shrines arrayed in a row to the right. The main *kami* is enshrined in the fourth small shrine from the right (actually slightly larger than the other four). The arrangement dates back to at least the thirteenth century and possibly earlier, but the current structures were rebuilt in the eighteenth century and renovated in 1935.

Unlike the Hongu and Hayatama shrines, Nachi still sits next to a Buddhist temple and a three-story pagoda. The temple, Seigantoji (for-

merly called Nyoirin Kannon-do), also traces its history to the reign of Emperor Nintoku, when it is said that a monk from India named Ragyo Shonin, credited with finding the falls, had a vision of Kannon during austerities near the waterfall. The temple was declared the first stop of the Saigoku Kannon thirty-three-temple pilgrimage by Emperor Kazan in 988. This pilgrimage is one of the oldest and best known in Japan. The current *bondo* (main worship hall) was reconstructed in the late sixteenth century by order of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the famous three-story pagoda was reconstructed in 1971, three hundred years after the previous one burned down. The temple contains many treasures, such as the eighth-century Kannon Bodhisattva sculpture. An old stone path leads from the pagoda down to the waterfall, and this is where the Nachi no Himatsuri is held.

While clearly the most important physical feature of the shrine is the waterfall itself, two other features worth noting are an 850-year-old camphor tree planted by Taira no Shigemori (1138–79) and the “bird stone” (located behind the fence in front of the *bonden*) associated with the three-legged crow (*yatagarasu*) that guided Emperor Jinmu. The base of the falls can be more closely approached from a platform that is accessed from Hiro Jinja for a ¥300 donation. You can also taste water from the falls there.

Important spiritual features: Fusumi is a *kami* that “holds things together.” Under its alternate name, Musubi no kami, this is a female *kami* of weaving, with the implication of creating bonds. Perhaps because this deity is considered the consort of Hayatama and is also identified with the female *kami* Izanami, Nachi Taisha has a tradition of acceptance of female worshippers, unlike other mountain-worship shrines (although all the Kumano shrines are



The pagoda of Seigantoji with Nachi Falls in the distance to the right

relatively open in this respect). The original Buddhist sects imported into Japan held that women could only enter paradise after first being reborn as men. Shinto too, because of its attitude toward the defilement of blood, tended to restrict shrine access by females to those who were pre- or postmenstrual. Even to this day, one section of the Yoshino and Omine mountains held sacred by the *yamabushi* remains off-limits to women. However, it should be noted that Buddhism also had a history of ordaining nuns, and when Emperor Shomu established nation-protecting temples (*kokubunji*) in every province of Japan in the eighth century, he also established *kokubun niji* nunneries.

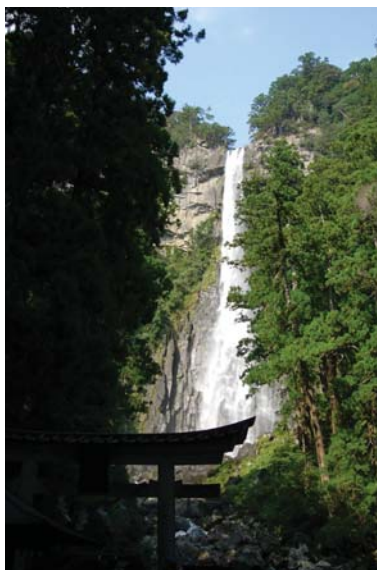
Like the other Kumano shrines, Nachi was a center of combinatory practices (*shinbutsu shugo*). Here Fusumi no kami was identified with the thousand-armed Senju Kannon, which has both a masculine and feminine manifestation. While teachers and guides (*oshi* and *sendatsu*) were instrumental in spreading faith in the Kumano Gongen, at Nachi, “painting-recitation nuns” (*etoki bikuni*) made an important contribution, using mandala picture scrolls as teaching tools. Along

with guides, they sold *gofuda* amulets, collected money, and encouraged pilgrims to visit the shrine. This was an important source of income, especially after the fifteenth century when royal patronage ceased due to the collapse of central authority and constant war.

Another interesting aspect of Kumano was the devotion to Kannon and the desire to be with the bodhisattva in her immortal dwelling place on Mount Fudaraku. It was said that Mount Fudaraku was out in the southern ocean off Nachi Beach., which led some devotees to be sealed in rudderless boats and launched from the area—a practice known as *fudaraku tokui*—never to be heard from again. Fudarakusanji temple, connected to Seigantoji and located near the beach, was a center of this activity. Though only twenty-five cases at Nachi are documented between the ninth and eighteenth centuries, they demonstrate one of the most fervent manifestations of devotion.

Description: Kumano Nachi Taisha is the third of the three sacred sites collectively known as Kumano Sanzan. Worship at Nachi originated at the foot of the waterfall, and the waterfall remains the main attraction for worshippers and tourists alike. The three shrines of Kumano eventually came to enshrine the same twelve *kami*, but each shrine emphasizes one in particular. At Nachi, it is Fusumi no kami, also called Musubi no okami. In addition, Nachi maintains the tradition of twelve *kami* plus the *kami* of the falls, identified as Onamuchi no mikoto, for a total of thirteen.

Until the Meiji separation of Buddhism and Shinto, these *kami* were usually referred to as *gongen* (manifestations of Buddhist deities). Nachi became well known through the “Nachi Pilgrimage Mandala,” which along with the “Ten Worlds Mandala” was used as a



The tallest waterfall in Japan at Nachi Taisha

storytelling device to attract worshippers as well as to bring in donations and gain converts. The Nachi mandala is a *sankei*- or *miya*-style mandala that includes a depiction of the actual site along with various stories associated with the shrine and its deities. Unlike the abstract depictions of Buddhist cosmology in the “Ten Worlds Mandala,” the Nachi mandala overlaid the real landscape with the mystical, thereby creating a “road map” to paradise. *Miya*-style mandalas are generally depictions of shrines and may incorporate a pastiche of the shrine’s foundation *engi*. *Sankei*-style mandalas also show a layout of the site but tend to include a sequence of events, usually of pilgrims passing through the actual and metaphysical landscape. As the pilgrims encountered real or supernatural beings, so the *etoki bikuni* nun would describe for her audience the miraculous events they too might experience. Quite

a number of mandalas from Kumano survive, and at least six different types have been identified. This was an important feature of Japanese combinatory practice by which the places depicted in Buddhist scripture were mapped over actual landscapes. A journey through geographical space thus became a journey from the profane to the sacred world, a type of death and rebirth that was typified by the mountain asceticism of the *yamabusshi*. Kumano and its shrine-temple complexes lay at the heart of this devotional journey.

Festival: Nachi no Himatsuri (Nachi Fire Festival), 14 July. Considered one of the largest fire festivals of Japan, it reenacts the procession of the twelve *kami* when they were moved from the falls to their present position in the shrine overlooking the falls. The festival is held in honor of Emperor Jinmu and features twelve *ogi-mikoshi* into which the *kami* have entered. Each is twenty feet tall and decorated with fans and mirrors. Beforehand, the path up the stone steps is purified by twelve pine torches, weighing more than a hundred pounds each, which are waved around as they are carried to the top of the steps and back.

The Nachi Fire Festival



Sumiyoshi Taisha

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in A.D. 211 at the behest of Jingu Kogo, according to shrine tradition. The current buildings date from the late Edo period (about 1830).

ADDRESS: 2-9-89 Sumiyoshi, Sumiyoshi-ku, Osaka 558-0045

TEL/INFORMATION: 06-6672-0753. A 4-page pamphlet in English is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Nankai Hosen Line to Sumiyoshi Taisha Station, then a few minutes by foot. Also by Nankai Koya Line to Sumiyoshi Higashi Station, or Hankai Subway Line to Sumiyoshi Torii-mae Station.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Sokotsutsuno-o no mikoto, Nakatsutsuno-o no mikoto, and Uwatsutsuno-o no mikoto. These three are collectively known as "Sumiyoshi okami" ("great deities of Sumiyoshi"), or the Suminoe deity (Suminoe is an older reading of Sumiyoshi). Also enshrined is Okinagata-rashihime no mikoto (another name for Jingu Kogo).

PRAYERS OFFERED: Safety at sea, safety on the roadways, safe childbirth, and prosperity in business.

BEST TIMES TO GO: Events are held throughout the year. In August the arched bridge is illuminated after dusk. In autumn, full-moon viewing and poetry readings begin at 6 P.M. Dates vary between mid-September and early October. Also go for the blooming *unohana* (*Deutzia crenata*) in May.

Important physical features: A large stone *torii* marks the entrance, and immediately you are led to the first of a number of historic structures, the steeply arched *soribashi* bridge built by order of Toyotomi Hide-

MAP 10



Sumiyoshi Taisha *haiden* and *honden*

yoshi. Passing through another stone *torii* and the main gate brings you to the heart of the shrine and the four *bonden* where the *kami* of Sumiyoshi are enshrined separately. Each sanctuary is built in the *sumiyoshi-zukuri* style, one of the oldest styles of shrine architecture, characterized by a straight gable roof with deep eaves and a thick covering of cypress bark. The roof has a squared ridge and five squared, copper-covered *katsuogi*. The *chigi* (called *okichigi* here) are set at a steep angle. The structure is two bays wide by four bays deep (about sixteen by twenty-six feet), and five wooden steps lead from ground level to the entrance in the center of the two-bay gabled side. There is no veranda.

The interior is divided into front and back rooms (*gejin* and *naijin*) separated by short walls and a wooden door. The exterior walls are constructed of horizontal planks painted white. The framework is painted red. The building is surrounded by a vertical wooden board fence (*mizugaki*), with the boards painted vermillion and the tops cut to a point and painted black. This fence is surrounded by another open-style fence (*tamagaki*) painted

in the same fashion. All the *bonden* have *baiden* in the *kirizuma karabafu-zukuri* style that were added in the Edo period. The unpainted three-by-two-bay structure has a *chidoribafu* and *karabafu* that do not extend from the edge of the eaves. Built like a split *baiden* (*wari-baiden*), the floor of the center bay is low, with the two outer bays raised one step above it and surfaced in *tatami* mats. A covered corridor (*watariden*) connects the two, but a red *sumiyoshi torii* placed between the *baiden* and *wataridono* is a remnant of the time when worship was conducted directly in front of the *bonden*. All the buildings are designated National Treasures.

It is thought that the design is related to the *daijokyu*, a building temporarily constructed for the Daijosai (“Great Food Offering Festival”) that takes place on the ascension of a new emperor. In addition, the wooded grounds are home to over six hundred stone lanterns donated through the ages. Sumiyoshi is also famous for an unusual stone *torii* known as the *kaku torii* or *sumiyoshi torii* (described in the introduction) that stands at the main entrance to the shrine. The stone stage (*ishibutai*) on a stone bridge to the right of the *soribashi* is one of only three in existence, including those at Shitennoji and Itsukushima.

Important spiritual features: The three deities enshrined here are the children of Izanagi, born through his ablutions after his return from the land of the dead. Thus they are considered gods of the sea and became known as the protectors of ships sailing from the ancient port of Suminoe no tsu (in present-day Osaka). Sumiyoshi Taisha was once located on an inlet from Osaka Bay, but landfill and other factors now find it about five miles from water. The deities enshrined here were feared as powerful *kami* who struck down the legendary

fourteenth emperor of Japan, Chuai. The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* record that Chuai was fighting the Kumaso clans in Kyushu, and through his shaman wife, Jingu Kogo, the Suminoe (an older reading of Sumiyoshi) deities told him that if he took possession of a country over the sea in the west, the Kumaso would submit to him. He dismissed this oracle as false and was soon struck dead. Though she was now with child, Jingu Kogo herself heeded the command of the gods and crossed the ocean to conquer Silla in a campaign that lasted past the usual term of pregnancy—she forestalled giving birth by tying a rock to her belly. On her return, she ordered the building of the shrine to give thanks for her victory, along with Hirota Jinja in Nishinomiya, Sumiyoshi Jinja in Fukuoka, and Sumiyoshi Jinja in Shimonoseki. She also gave birth to the future Emperor Ojin, later revered as Hachiman, the “god of war” (both Hachiman and Sumiyoshi are associated with protection of the nation).

Along with the three female deities enshrined in Munakata Taisha in Kyushu, the three male deities of Sumiyoshi Taisha became more important as protectors of sea routes as relations with the continent increased. This contact was a double-edge sword, bringing power to the Yamato kings, who controlled the trade, as well as the fear of invasion from more powerful neighbors. Legends about the Sumiyoshi deities clearly show the fearsome power of *kami* and the importance of the female shaman as a vehicle to express the will of the *kami* to the people. Some historians believe the figure of Jingu was modeled by eighth-century writers on the third-century Chinese *Wei zhi* (Wei Chronicles), which recount how the Japanese queen of Yamatai, Himiko, controlled the people with “sorcery.” But accounts of Jingu must also be seen in the light of other “water goddess” myths, which were a main stream of mythology in Japan.



One of the *sumiyoshi-zukuri honden*, seen from the back

At some later date, the Sumiyoshi deities came to be revered as *kami* of *waka* poetry. The association comes when a priest of Sumiyoshi named Tsumori no Kunimoto (1023–1102), who was famous as a poet of *waka*, identified the *kami* of the fourth *honden* (where Jingu Kogo is enshrined) as Sotoorihime—a *kami* of poetry. Later, the famous poet Fujiwara no Atsuyori visited Sumiyoshi Taisha every month to pray that he would become a great poet until he died at the age of eighty (in 1183). One of his poems is immortalized in Katsushika Hokusai’s final series of prints known as “100 Poems Explained by a Wet Nurse,” begun in 1840. Many other poets, including Emperor Go-Toba, followed in Atsuyori’s path and became devotees of the shrine. Another literary tradition of the shrine relates to a Noh play by Zeami called *Takasago* from the late fourteenth century, which is based on a line from the preface to the tenth-century collection of poems called the *Kokinshu*. The line reads, “The pines of Takasago and Suminoe seem to be a pair.” This refers to the pines of Takasago and Sumiyoshi that were famous for their beauty as well as their age. The play tells the story of a traveling monk who finds himself under the famous Takasago pine in present-day Hyogo Prefecture

along the Inland Sea. He meets an old couple there and asks them about the history of the tree; they tell him it is paired with the Sumiyoshi pine in far-off Osaka. Afterward the couple reveal themselves as the *kami* of Takasago (the old woman) and Sumiyoshi (the old man). The point is that though they are far apart, their love defies space and time. Thus the story is even today quoted at weddings, as a wish for the couple's long life and true love.

Description: There are currently about 2,300 Sumiyoshi shrines in Japan, and this is the main one. Tradition has it that the shrine was founded on the instruction of Jingu Kogo, after she returned from conquering Silla in present-day Korea. In fact, the foundation stories of seven shrines altogether are involved in the Jingu legend. Apart from this one, they are Hirota Jinja in present-day Nishinomiya, Ikuta Jinja in present-day Kobe, Nagata Jinja also in Kobe, Sumiyoshi Jinja in Fukuoka, Sumiyoshi Jinja in Nagasaki, and Sumiyoshi Jinja in Shimonoseki. Some consider that the oldest of these is in Fukuoka, as this is supposed to be the place where the *kami* originally revealed themselves to Jingu Kogo and therefore where they were first worshipped. But Sumiyoshi Taisha believes it was the first to enshrine these deities since Jingu's expedition force was said to depart from here. Another interpretation is based on the *Kojiki* records that "she laid [the deities] to rest and crossed back [to Japan]," which can also be taken to mean that the deities were enshrined and worshipped in Korea first. On her return to Japan, the deities made a wish that their *aramitama* (rough or active spirit) should be enshrined in "Yamada in Anato," present-day Shimonoseki. Their gentle spirits (*nigimitama*) are enshrined here at Sumiyoshi Taisha.

The first priest was Tamomi no Sukune,



Sarihashi of Sumiyoshi Taisha

who was told by Jingu to enshrine the three Sumiyoshi deities as she had been instructed by the *kami*. Some time after her death, Jingu Kogo was herself enshrined in a fourth *bonden* at Sumiyoshi (the *bonden* to the right that is not aligned with the other three). Jingu was not considered a ruling empress by later historians and is instead known as *kogo*, or consort. This implies that she was only a placeholder until her son, the rightful emperor, was of age to take the reins of government. Tamomi no Sukune, whose descendants are still head priests at the shrine, fathered seven lines, including that of the Tsumori, who were also renowned as great poets. Although the shrine was supposedly founded in 211, the first structures were built in the mid-eighth century. From an early date, a twenty-year rebuilding program (*shikimen sengu*) was instituted and seems to have been carried out until 1434. A number of reconstructions were carried out after that, until we arrive at the current buildings that date from 1810. The shrine is uniquely constructed, with four separate *bonden* that face west so as to "look on the passing ships" (on their way to and from Korea) as instructed by the oracle. They



The *sumiyoshi torii* in front of the shrine entrance

are arrayed in imitation of an ancient strategic formation for a fleet of ships roughly translated as “scales of fish . . . wings of a crane.” In 2011, to mark the 1,800th anniversary of its founding, the shrine revived the practice of rebuilding at twenty-year intervals.

The myths surrounding the legendary conquering of Silla by Jingu Kogo and the miraculous birth of Emperor Ojin are fundamental to the cosmology of Sumiyoshi Taisha and provide another example of the strong historical connections between Japan and Korea. Unraveling these myths is made more difficult by differing accounts in the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, *Settsu no kuni fudoki* (between A.D. 713 and 733), and the *Sumiyoshi Taisha jindaiki* (A.D. 731 or 789). It is also made difficult by lack of historical evidence that any Japanese leader ever conquered Silla. However, ample evidence exists of large-scale immigration of Koreans to Japan, along with important new skills and technology, at various periods in time. Many of these clans were integrated into the highest ranks of the society. One such clan, the Wani, flourished between the fourth and sixth centu-

ries, and many of their daughters became the wives of emperors—including Ojin.

In Japanese mythology, the *wani* (literally, alligator, but referring to a mythical sea dragon) was considered a medium that carried messages between this world and the undersea or netherworld (*ne no kuni*). In ancient Japan, travel to foreign countries was also considered travel to *ne no kuni*, and ships often carried a “mourner” (*jisai*). The *jisai* was a male shaman—originally from the Azumi clan of seafarers who spread along the coast of the Inland Sea, later from the Tsumori clan of Sumiyoshi Taisha—who did not wash, eat meat, or sleep with women throughout the journey. His job was to maintain ritual purity and therefore the integrity of the voyage by absorbing the impurity of travel to the netherworld. The success or failure of the voyage was often attributed to the meticulousness with which the *jisai* carried out his duties. In any case, both myth and fact point to the periodic renovation of ancient Japan through migration from and contact with the various Korean and Chinese kingdoms.

Festivals: Otaue Matsuri (Planting Festival), 14 June. The Otaue ceremony is celebrated in early summer to pray for rich harvests. During the planting, the *sumiyoshi-odori* dance and other performances are conducted in order to increase the power of the grain and encourage its growth. It is said that Jingu herself ordered the creation of a ceremonial rice field, making this a ceremony with an 1,800-year-old tradition. The festival is designated an Important Intangible Cultural Property.

Sumiyoshi Matsuri, 30 July to 1 August. One of the main festivals at this shrine. Displays of *sumiyoshi-odori* danced by children and a procession with a *mikoshi*.

Tsukubusuma Jinja

MAP 11

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in the third century B.C., according to the *Chikubushima engi* of 1415. According to the same document, in A.D. 724 the original shrine and Hōgonji temple were built by the priest Gyōki (668–749) on the order of Emperor Shōmu. The temple was rebuilt in 1942. The *honden* of the shrine was rebuilt just prior to and during the Momoyama period (1573–1603) at the behest of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

ADDRESS: 1821 Hayazaki-cho, Nagahama-shi, Shiga 526-0124

TEL/INFORMATION: 0749-72-2073

HOW TO GET THERE: There are boats to Chikubushima from Hikone, Hamaotsu, and Ōmi-Imazu, but the best port of departure, in terms of frequency, is Nagahama. For schedule details, contact the Biwako Tourist Association at 0749-72-5255.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Ichikishimahime no mikoto (also identified as Benzaiten), Ugafukujin, Azaihime no mikoto (also identified as Ubusunagami), and Ryūjin.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Safety on the sea and on the roadways, prosperity, the health of a newborn, success in business and in the arts.

BEST TIME TO GO: From May to October when the lake crossing is smooth.

Important physical features: The most important physical feature here is of course the island of Chikubushima itself. It is located in the northern part of the largest lake in Japan, Lake Biwa. It is the perceived sacredness of the island that drew worshippers from ancient times and resulted in the building of a temple and shrine.

Tsukubusuma Jinja is one of the island's



Tsukubushima Jinja

designated National Treasures and was originally just the *benzaitendo* (Benzaiten hall), the construction of which reflects its Buddhist roots. Now the *honden*, it was constructed in 1567 and refitted with a new central three-bay-square core called a *moya* in 1602. The *bisashi* corridor surrounding the *moya* and the *kobai* are from the original building, but the sculptured transoms were inserted from another building when the *moya* was added. The new *moya* was built in Kyoto as part of a memorial shrine dedicated to Hideyoshi's infant son Sutemaru, who died in 1591 at age two. It may have been brought from Fushimi Castle to be fitted into the existing building. The interior is a splendid example of Momoyama culture and craft, with black lacquered and inlaid woodwork, as well as ceiling decorations by Kano Mitsunobu and others. The shrine's location, perched on the cliffs of the mountain and overlooking Lake Biwa, is impressive.

The cluster of buildings that lead from the small beach and landing on the southeast side of the island includes Hōgonji temple, which is the thirtieth stop on the Saigoku thirty-three-Kannon pilgrimage route. The temple consists of the *bondo* (also called the *bentendo*), a



Honganji temple on Chikubushima

three-story pagoda destroyed by fire in the early-Edo period was reconstructed in 2000, and a *kannon*do. To the front of the cypress bark-covered *irimoya-zukuri kannon*do was added a four-legged *karamon* gate in 1602. This gate, formerly located at Toyokuni Jinja (dedicated to Toyotomi Hideyoshi), was brought from Kyoto at the behest of Toyotomi Hideyori and is now designated a National Treasure. Originally built in 724 and rebuilt a number of times through 1942, Hongonji Temple houses a number of Benzaiten sculptures, including one that is considered the oldest such sculpture, reputed to have been carved by the founder of the temple in the eighth century (a hidden image displayed once every sixty years). A number of statues from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are also on display. An elevated, covered walkway called the *funaroka* (“boat corridor”) was built from the wood of Hideyoshi’s ship, the *Nibonmaru*. The architecture and the part played by the Toyotomi clan is carefully detailed in the book *Chikubushima: Deploying the Sacred Arts in Momoyama Japan* by Andrew Watsky.

Important spiritual features: Much of what is known about the *kami* of Chikubushima comes from the *Chikubushima engi*, written by Tendai monks in 1415. It details a story of how Azaihime no mikoto

descended into the lake and created the island. It may be that the first temple-shrine complex was built by the Buddhist priest Gyoki (668–749) at the behest of Emperor Shomu in the eighth century, but it is only stated in the literature that he built a hut and installed sculptures of the Four Heavenly Kings there. Identification of the *kami* with Benzaiten may have begun in 834 when Ennin (794–864), chief priest of the Tendai sect on Mount Hiei, had a dream that Sarasvati (Benzaiten) told him to enshrine her statue on the island. But an older account, *Chikubushima engi* from 951, does not mention Benzaiten or Ugafukujin.

Another writing, the *Godansho* (Tales of Oe no Masafusa) from about 1107, seems to verify the worship of Benzaiten on Chikubushima from at least that time. Sometime in the tenth century, a religious society called *renge-kyo* was praying to Benzaiten for rain. Much later on, this became an annual event called the Renge-e (Lotus Festival, after the Lotus Sutra) that included making a new image of Benzaiten each year and bringing it to the island. The *Heike monogatari* (Tale of the Heike), recounts a visit in the twelfth century by Taira no Tsunemasa, who prays to Benzaiten to defeat his enemies. In any case, it seems that Benzaiten worship dominated the spiritual character of the island from as early as the ninth or tenth century, and that it was perhaps the earliest center of what came to be widespread worship of the deity. Most Japanese deities whose names incorporate the suffix *-ten* originated in Indian mythology, and this goddess of water and of “everything that flows,” such as music and words, goes back to the Hindu goddess Sarasvati, a deity of rivers. Adopted into Buddhism in China, she was later brought to Japan and identified with the *kami* Uga no mitama by the Tendai sect on Mount Hiei. She is often depicted with the body of a



The sacred island of Chikubushima

snake and the head of a woman; alternatively she could take the form of a white snake that slips easily from one dimension to another. From Chikubushima, the cult of Uga Benzaiten spread throughout Japan. Sometime in the Kamakura period she was depicted with two arms and playing a Japanese lute (*biwa*), though the goddess Sarasvati was originally recorded in the Konkomyokyo (“Golden Light Sutra”) as a *bodhisattva* of wisdom and learning, having eight arms and holding objects including a spear, ax, and bow. In the fifteenth century Benzaiten became associated with a group of amalgamated deities called the *shichifukujin* (“seven gods of good fortune”)—the ultimate merger of Hindu, Buddhist and Shinto myth.

Description: In many ways Tsukubusuma Jinja, Hagonji, and the island of Chikubushima are one and the same entity. They represent a perfect example of the joint worship of Japanese, Chinese, and Indian traditions as they relate to the same sacred space. The island is only 1.2 miles in circumference and essentially one big rock in the northern end of Lake Biwa, covered with trees and the bamboo called *chiku* (from

which the island gets its name). The shrine and temple cling to the southeastern cliffs, accessed from the nearby dock by a flight of 165 “pilgrim stairs.” The only reason for the constant stream of people to Chikubushima, aside from the lovely boat ride across the lake, is to visit the temple and the shrine. There is nothing else on the island except for a place to eat and a few gift shops. And while there may be some strict disciples of one religion or the other who would visit the shrine and not the temple or vice versa, they would likely be the exception.

The most visited part of the island is confined within a small circuit. From the boat landing, some stairs and a short road lined with *omiyage* (souvenir) shops lead to the long flight of steps to Hagonji. After visiting the top, descend again to the recently rebuilt three-story pagoda and the nearby treasure house. A number of important objects, such as Noh masks and sculptures, are housed here. Another stairway leads down to the *kan-nondo* and *karamon* gate from which the *funaroka* leads to Tsukubusuma Jinja. In front of the shrine is an overlook with a *torii* that stands at the edge of a low cliff, facing the sea. From here you can purchase small clay

disks on which to write a wish. Throwing the disk through the *torii* is said to make the wish come true. Finally a short road takes you past the base of the elevated *funaroka* and down another stairway to bring you back to where your journey began. Along the way you will also pass by the twelfth-century wooden statue of Fudo Myo-o (Acala), framed in fire, just one of the many treasures on this “island of the gods.”

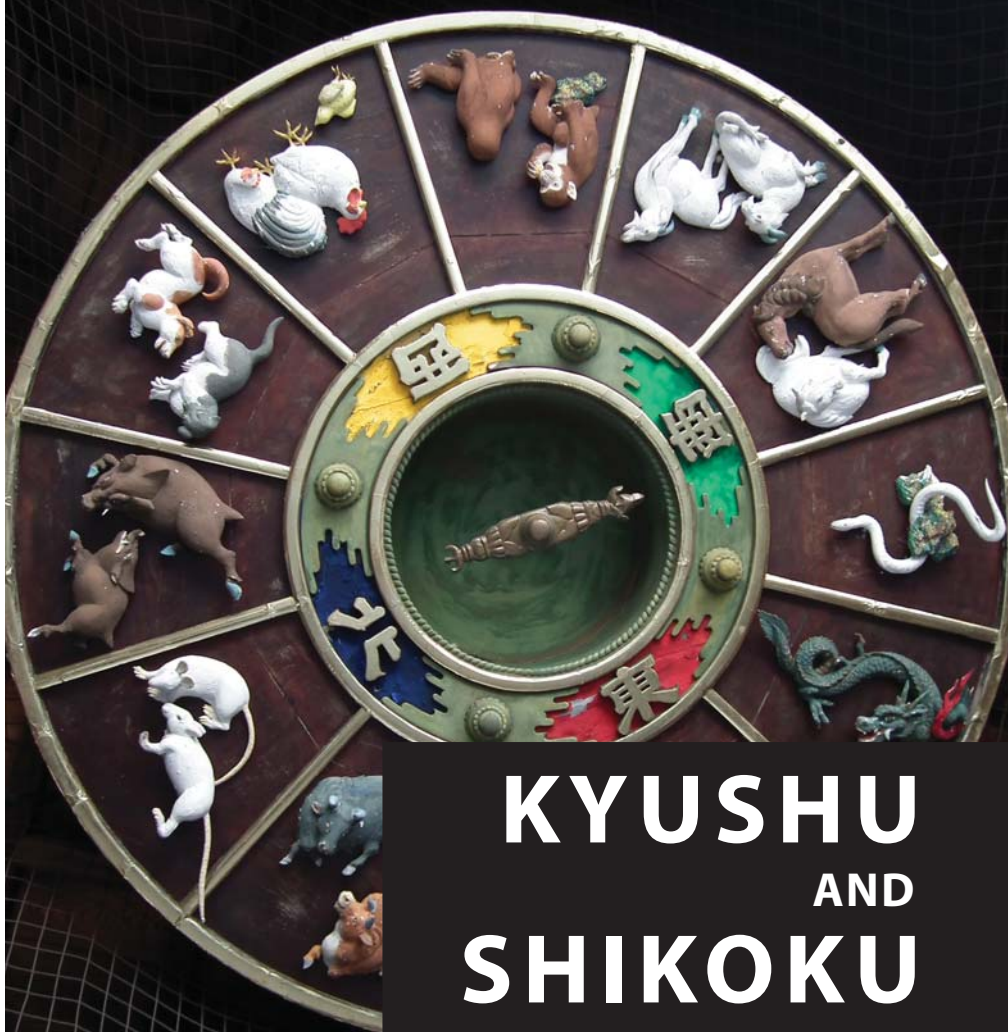
Chikubushima has long been considered one of the three most important places for the worship of Benzaiten in Japan, along with Itsukushima Jinja and Enoshima Jinja—all of which are located on islands. Worship of the goddess Benzaiten is in itself Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, and while largely thought of in the context of the “seven gods of good fortune” in contemporary Japan, the importance of Benzaiten was much greater in the past. This is attested to from the long list of luminaries associated with the island. Since the Meiji separation of Buddhism and Shinto, images of Benzaiten were removed from the Benzaiten-sha, which was renamed Tsukubusuma Jinja, and worship has continued under the names of associated Shinto *kami*. The Noh drama *Chikubushima* (from the fifteenth century or later) popularized the island as a sort of Peng-lai (Horai in Japanese), or the “island of the immortals” of Taoist legend. Here is a magical place where the goddess Benzaiten resides on the island's peak, and the dragon god lies coiled around the base of the island in the waters of Lake Biwa. This image reflects the medieval *Chikubushima engi* from about 1415, wherein a huge catfish lies coiled seven times around the island and a white snake—a symbol of Benzaiten—descends from the peak. The Benzaiten of Chikubushima was also associated with the Sayohime legend of the seventeenth century, a story of a young woman

who sells herself so that she can pay to have a religious service performed for her dead father. The rich merchant who buys her intends her as a sacrifice to a malevolent deity, who manifests as a giant snake. The young woman is rescued by reciting the Devadatta chapter of the Lotus Sutra and ultimately reveals herself as Benzaiten. A picture scroll from the period, *Honji-mono Sayohime*, illustrates Benzaiten riding the head of a snake and pilgrims coming to worship at Chikubushima. But it should not be forgotten that the island also has a long history of belief in Kannon, and that it is stop number thirty on the famous thirty-three-site Saigoku pilgrimage that began in the Heian period and continues today.

Festivals: Chikubushima Festival, 10–15 June. A festival with a 1,500-year history is held here every year. The main days are 10 June (Sansha Benzaiten Matsuri) and 14 June (Ryujinsai, or “Dragon Festival”).

The three-story pagoda of Hongonji





KYUSHU AND SHIKOKU

KYUSHU AND SHIKOKU

- 1 Dazaifu Tenmangu
- 2 Hakozakigu
- 3 Munakata Taisha
- 4 Udo Jinja

- 5 Usa Jinja
- 6 Yutoku Inari Jinja
- 7 Isaniwa Jinja
- 8 Kotohiragu
- 9 Oyamazumi Jinja



Dazaifu Tenmangu

MAP 1

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 905. The current *honden* dates from 1591.

ADDRESS: 4-7-1 Saifu, Dazaifu-shi, Fukuoka 818-0195

TEL/INFORMATION: 092-922-8225. A small pamphlet in English, which includes a map, is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: From JR Hakata Station, take the Kuko Subway Line to Fukuoka Tenjin Station. Change to the Nishitetsu limited express to Futsukaichi Station; transfer there to the Dazaifu Line and get off at Dazaifu Station. The first *torii* is just in front of the station to the right. Make a note of the schedule for the trip home, since trains are infrequent.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Tenman Tenjin, the deified spirit of Sugawara no Michizane.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Success in entrance exams and anything else related to learning.

BEST TIMES TO GO: When the shrine's six thousand plum trees are in bloom (from about the beginning to the middle of February), or for the iris in June.

Important physical features: Historically, the most important physical feature of Dazaifu was its location in northern Kyushu. When the Yamato ruling clans consolidated power over this part of the country, Dazaifu became the seat of their appointed governor. The ruins of the government administration buildings are still located in the town, not far from Dazaifu Tenmangu (about a fifteen-minute walk from Tofuomae Station on the Nishitetsu Line). In addition to its administrative functions, Dazaifu acted as a military



The *gongen-zukuri* shrine of Dazaifu Tenmangu

outpost for the Yamato government. It was not a popular posting, and Kyoto elites who fell from favor were often exiled here. As we will see, this is how the shrine also came to be.

The grounds of the shrine cover a vast three thousand acres, which are mostly wooded with a large open courtyard in front of the main building. Besides the lovely landscaping with its magnificent old pine, camphor, and Japanese flowering apricot (plum) trees, there are two ponds along the approach. The *shinji ike* ("heart pond") is shaped like the ideogram for *kokoro* (also pronounced *shin*), or heart, a common pond design in Japanese gardens from as early as the Heian period. The other pond, best viewed in June, is filled with irises, another Japanese garden favorite. Perhaps most striking are the massive old trees leaning left and right across the pond as you cross the bridge to a grand five-bay *romon* and large *temizuya*. The *sando* that crosses the ponds on the way to the shrine contains two drum



The pond and bridge at Dazaifu (left) and the garden *ittekikaitei* at Komoyoji (right)

bridges (*taikobashi*), of different curvatures, at either end of a flat middle section. The significance of the Buddhist-influenced design is that the first steeply inclined bridge represents the difficulties of the past, the flat middle section those of the present, and the gentler incline difficulties to come.

From there, one enters into the sand-covered courtyard in front of the shrine building that dates from 1591. It is basically a *nagare-zukuri* type, with a *karabafu* canopy extending from the middle of the non-gabled side. The wood surfaces of the structure are painted predominantly in vermilion, with polychromed and gilded carvings above the tie rods. The interior is also decorated in red, black, and gold. The *baiden* and *bonden* are connected in the *gongen-zukuri* fashion but are housed under one large gable roof surfaced in cypress bark, which is more typical of temples and Buddhist-influenced architecture such as Yasaka Jinja in Kyoto. The *kaire* that surrounds the courtyard emanates directly from both sides of the main building to connect with the *romon* gate. In another feature that is rare for a shrine, Dazaifu Tenmangu is built over the grave of Sugawara no Michizane,

and is therefore his mausoleum as well. Standing to the right front side of the shrine is the famous *tobiume* ("flying plum" tree). Legend has it that the tree so missed Michizane that it flew from Kyoto to be with him in exile. It is said that this tree is always the very first to blossom, opening the season for the thousands of other plum trees.

Important spiritual features: Dazaifu is now the name of the city and the shrine, but it was once the name of the administrative headquarters where the governor of Kyushu, the Dazai *sochi*, held command. The post was created by the Taiho Code of 701, and from that time governors and other officials were appointed from Kyoto. In the early years, control by Kyoto was contentious, and rebellion by the local clans was frequent. This and the threat of war, first with Silla and then the Mongolian Empire, made Dazaifu an important outpost of the ruling clans. It performed this role from as early as the Asuka to the Kamakura period. The proximity to Korea made Kyushu a bulwark against attack from the continent, and a defensive mound called *mizuki* built in Dazaifu in 664 still partly

exists. It was three-quarters of a mile long, 260 feet wide, and 33 feet tall and included a 200-foot-wide moat (filled in long ago).

While Kyushu was also the conduit of trade and knowledge that poured in from abroad, Dazaifu was nevertheless far from the capital and became a place of exile for high officials who had fallen from the court's favor. It was in this position that Sugawara no Michizane (845–903) found himself when he was abruptly dismissed from his post as Minister of the Right (theoretically the second most powerful position in the government) and sent into exile here. Michizane was a scholar, a poet, an expert on China, and holder of various high public offices under Emperor Uda (r. 887–97). Through the machinations of a Fujiwara clan rival, he was sent into exile in Kyushu, where he died several years later. The story is told that an ox pulling the cart that bore Michizane's body stopped (or went mad) at a certain point, where Michizane was subsequently buried. Two years after his death, his follower Umasake no Yasuyuki built an altar to him on the grounds of the Buddhist monastery that existed there. This is considered the founding of the shrine. In 919, Fujiwara no Nakahira (875–945) sponsored the building at Dazaifu of what later became a major Buddhist monastery called Anrakuji. Later still, Michizane was deified as Tenman Tenjin and enshrined both here and in Kyoto at Kitano.

The histories of Dazaifu and Kitano Tenmangu show how Tenjin worship began as a belief in an angry and vengeful spirit (*goryo*). It is recorded that from some time shortly after Michizane's death, an unending series of disasters befell the capital. Fujiwara no Tokihira, the man who conspired to have Michizane exiled, died in 909 at the age of thirty-nine. Crown Prince Yasuakira, the nephew of Tokihira and child of his sister and Emperor Daigo (who was

responsible for Michizane's exile order), died in 923 at age twenty-one. In 925, Crown Prince Yoshiyori, a grandson of Tokihira, died at the age of five, and in 930 the palace was struck by lightning, killing a man who had conspired in Michizane's downfall. Emperor Daigo was so distraught by all these events that he resigned and became a monk, only to die shortly afterward, when he was forty-six. Thus, in the space of twenty-five years, the spirit of Sugawara no Michizane was seen as wreaking revenge on his supposed tormenters, the imperial house, and their Fujiwara allies.

The concept of *goryo* spirits had been prevalent since the eighth century and Michizane became the last of the "eight *goryo*" (ghosts of aristocrats who had been wronged in life and were believed to be exacting revenge by causing plagues and natural disasters). Though the court was thought to be the primary target of their wrath, the suffering fell equally on the people of Kyoto. In the tenth century a series of plagues was responsible for mass death and suffering, and monks led gatherings (at which sutras were read) to quell the "angry spirits." According to the *Shomonki*, a record written in 940 of the rebellion of Taira no Masakado in eastern Japan, a prostitute had received an oracle in the form of a proclamation written by Michizane's spirit in which Masakado was declared the new emperor. Realizing the rebellious potential of these "angry spirits," the court took action to control their worship. Primary among them was that of Michizane.

As explained in the entry for Kitano Tenmangu, events leading to the fear of Michizane's angry spirit, his enshrinement as Tenman Tenjin, and finally the shift in the way he was perceived—from *goryo* to protective *kami* of learning—occurred for the most part in the capital. This was only natural since Michizane's repentant enemies were also in

Kyoto and were becoming increasingly anxious to make amends as disasters continued to strike. In 959 Fujiwara no Morosuke, the son of the above-mentioned Tadahira, rebuilt and expanded the Kitano shrine. His branch of the Fujiwara clan became known as Kujo, and Kitano became their family shrine. In 976 the Sugawara family was given control of Anrakuji and Kitano, and the stage was set for Michizane's transformation from angry spirit to protective *kami* and god of literature. As a result, Emperor Ichijo (r. 986–1011) added Kitano Tenmangu to the list of shrines receiving offerings from the imperial court in 991.

Description: The train to Dazaifu Tenmangu leaves you directly in front of the first *torii*. The approach to the shrine is lined with the type of gift shops typical of many larger shrines and temples. At Dazaifu they include teahouses selling *umegae mochi*, a local specialty. It is said that an old woman named Jomyoni, who cared for Michizane and often made rice cakes stuffed with sweet bean-paste for him, offered one to his soul after he died, along with the twig of a plum tree.

Three large granite *torii* in fairly close succession mark the entrance to the grounds. Past the third *torii*, the road turns to the left and another *torii* marks the entry to the shrine proper. According to old drawings, a fence or wall partly separated the shrine grounds from the surrounding buildings, which included a number of pagodas and temples that no longer exist. Nevertheless, the shrine and the grounds retain some Buddhist influence (the three-bridge arrangement mentioned above, with its Buddhist theology, is one example).

Today, Dazaifu is a popular destination for students and tourists alike. Plan to go early in the morning, and don't despair if things become less than serene. There is an interesting

temple, literally a stone's throw from the shrine, which offers peace and quiet. If you go back to the third *torii* and continue straight past the street leading from the train station, you come to Komyoji (also called Komyozenji), a Zen temple established in 1273 by Tetsugyu Enshin, an ordained member of the Sugawara family. The temple is associated with the story of how Michizane appeared to a Zen master who had returned from studies in China. He wanted to become the monk's disciple, but the master suggested that Michizane go to China and study with his teacher instead. Michizane thus traveled to China and was instructed by the Chinese master, receiving a Buddhist robe from him before his return to Japan (the establishment of the temple is, of course, three hundred years after Michizane's death). The story became popular with painters, who depicted Michizane as a Daoist sage holding a plum branch.

The temple is also famed for its beautiful *karesansui* (dry landscape), by the best-known Japanese garden designer of the twentieth century, Shigemori Mirei (1896–1975). The front garden, called *bukko sekitei*, uses stones set in groupings of three, five, and seven in a sea of gravel to form the Chinese character *bikari* (light). Two Japanese maples, one of which turns red in autumn while the other turns yellow, give a hint of what awaits the visitor who ventures behind the temple. Called *ittekikai-tei* (literally, "one-drop ocean garden"), it is a tour de force of color and classic Japanese garden design, combining stone groupings, sand, and moss-covered islands to create an image of land and ocean. In summer the moss and preponderance of Japanese maples turn the garden into a silent, brilliant green enclave. It highlights the beauty of carefully arranged nature that is the essence of a Japanese garden. In autumn, it explodes with reds and yellows in a fleeting reminder of another year's passing.

Festivals: Usokae Shinji (Liar Festival), 7 January. The sound of the word *uso* in Japanese can mean either “bullfinch” or “untruth” (although the written forms are distinctly different). The tradition here is to buy a wooden bullfinch at the shrine and tell all your problems to it. The bird “lies” and turns the negative into positive, thus bringing good luck for the year. The Onisube ceremony, in which townspeople ritually drive away demons with fire, takes place on the same day.

Kyokusui no En (Meandering Stream Festival), first Sunday in March. A festival that recalls the importance of poetry and the elegance of courtly life in the Heian period. A dance called *tobiume no mai* (“flying plum” dance) is performed. Also, *waka* poetry is composed quickly by poets in Heian period costume, before a cup of saké that is floated down a stream can reach the writer, who then consumes it. All of this takes place under a canopy of blossoms formed by six thousand plum trees.

Autumn Grand Festival, 21–25 September. The shrine’s main festival, begun in 1101, includes a grand procession with *mikoshi* carried by townspeople in Heian-period costume. The climax begins at 8 P.M. on the 25th with a night-time performance of *kagura* (ancient dance) by the light of a thousand candles placed along the bridges and around the pond.

Participants in the Meandering Stream Festival



Hakozakigu

MAP 2

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 923. The main sanctuary was rebuilt in 1546, and the *romon* in 1594.

ADDRESS: 1-22-1 Hakozaki, Higashi-ku, Fukuoka-shi 812-8655

TEL/INFORMATION: 092-641-7431. A single-page description in English is available for free.

HOW TO GET THERE: Hakozaki Subway Line to Hakozaki-Miyamae Station, then two minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Hachiman (also identified as Emperor Ojin), Jingu Kogo, Tamayorihi no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection from danger, the well-being of the family, safety on the roadways.

BEST TIME TO GO: During the Hojoya Festival, 12–18 September, when a million people attend over three days.

Important physical features: Hakozakigu is a superb example of how Buddhist temple building came to influence the structure of the Shinto shrine. One of the oldest shrines in Fukuoka, it has burned down and been rebuilt many times but has maintained the same form seen in a painting from the sixteenth century. The architecture reflects yet differs from the Hachiman style in a number of ways. The shrine has a two-story *romon* gate embedded at the center of a wide-roofed *kairo* that surrounds the *bonden*, creating a square inner courtyard. The *kairo* and *romon* are typical features of Hachiman shrines, but the scale of the eight-legged tower gate, especially



The *romon* of Hako-zakigu

its massive *irimoya-zukuri*, cypress bark-covered (*biwadabuki*) roof, is unlike anything seen outside Buddhist temples. Although most Hachiman *romon* are painted in vermillion, this one is not. The roof has sharply upturned corners called *naginata-zori* (the *naginata* is a Japanese spear with a curved blade), which add greatly to its formidable appearance.

An independent, open-sided structure that sits between the *romon* and the *bonden* is the *baiden*, from which prayers are conducted and rituals performed. However the double-gabled *bonden* that is a typical feature of *hachiman-zukuri* is not in evidence here. Instead, the *bonden* is a single-gable roof structure, nine bays wide (*kyuakensha*) by three bays deep, with about five hundred square feet of floor space. The *nagare-zukuri* gable roof is covered in cypress bark, like the *romon*, but unlike the *romon* and the *kairo*, the exterior and interior of the *bonden* are lacquered in red. Six round pillars support the edge of the gabled roof, and there are three separate staircases leading to

the veranda that wraps around the front of the building. There are six masks and six tridents attached to the pillars, representing Tobatsu Bishamonten—a fierce protector deity originally from Tang China and found primarily in the early Japanese frontiers of Kyushu in the south and Tohoku in the north. The Kyushu Tobatsu Bishamonten has a long nose and fierce countenance, reminiscent of the *tengu* or Sarutahiko okami.

In front of the shrine to the right is a small pine tree surrounded by a red *tamagaki* fence. It is said that under this tree is a box that contains the placenta of Emperor Ojin. According to the *Kojiki* and other accounts, Ojin's birth was miraculous because his mother, Jingu Kogo, went off to "conquer" Korea while she was pregnant and did not give birth until she returned to Japan, which occurred between one and three years later. Because of this story, the area around the shrine came to be called Hako-zaki ("box cape"). Founded many centuries after the time of Ojin, the shrine takes its name from the area.

Important spiritual features: Hako-zakigu is one of the many thousands of shrines dedicated to the Hachiman deity. While these shrines spread throughout the country, northern Kyushu is the source of the Hachiman cult (specifically Usa Jingu in neighboring Oita Prefecture—though Hako-zakigu's strongest ties were to Iwashimizu in Kyoto). Hachiman was a Shinto-Buddhist syncretic cult from its inception. (Please see the entries for Usa Jingu, Iwashimizu Hachimangu, and Tsurugaoka Hachimangu shrines for further details.) Many, if not most, Hachiman shrines also enshrine Ojin's mother, Jingu Kogo, who carried him to a miraculous birth. In addition, a third deity is often included whose identity varies between his

father (Emperor Chuai) or most often another female *kami*. This other female *kami* is sometimes simply referred to as Hime (“princess”) or, as in this case, Tamayorihime no mikoto, the mother of Emperor Jinmu.

Description: Like many of the temples and shrines of its time, Hakoza-kigu was deeply involved in the China trade, and the northern coast of Kyushu was full of Chinese communities of traders, sailors, and interpreters. The connection with the sea is confirmed by the orientation of the shrine to the northwest and the sea. Its *sando* begins at the coast from where it stretches about a half mile from the first to the third *torii* and the shrine grounds proper. The Hakozaiki-style *torii* is of a heavy and sturdy type, as one might expect from a gate that must withstand the onslaught of the elements along the shore. It is basically in the *myojin* style but has wider-than-usual uprights and a sharply upturned *kasagi* and snub-nosed ends, as though curling inward to keep from breaking off in a high wind. It dates from 1609 and is the closest *torii* to the shrine. It stands like a stout and fierce bulldog, set hard against all foes.

Hakozakigu is best remembered for its role in an important chapter of Japanese history: the Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281. The shrine vividly recalls the episodes with a plaque that hangs from the tower of its *romon*. Where most such plaques simply give the name of the shrine, this one, written by then-retired Emperor Kameyama (r. 1259–74), ominously warns, “Surrender, Enemy Country” (*tekikoku kofuku*). Briefly, the conflict began when Kublai Khan first made veiled threats to the government of Japan through his Korean vassals in 1268. The Kamakura *bakufu* choose to ignore them, rather than making full-scale preparations for defense.

The invasion finally came in late 1274 when a large force of men (100,000 is the figure often given but is thought to be wildly exaggerated) took the islands of Tsushima and Iki near the northern Kyushu coast. The attack combined Mongol and Korean forces in as many as nine hundred ships.

Two weeks after the attack on Tsushima, they attacked again and captured Hakata and Hakozaki, forcing the defenders to fall back to Dazaifu. The Mongols chose to return to their boats that night and ready the attack for the next day, from which point stories vary. It seems that sometime during the night the boats simply disappeared, and the battle was over. This was attributed to a typhoon, a “divine wind” (*kamikaze*). The expression is known throughout the world today in its Japanese form, but it has become attached to a very different group of warriors and a very different war: the suicide pilots of World War II. Hakozakigu was burned down in fighting to defend Japan, and when it was rebuilt, it came to embody the pride of the samurai and the divine protection of the *kami*.

The shrine's role was reinforced when the Mongols again invaded in 1281. This time the khan was determined and sent 3,600 ships in two groups. The first group decided to go directly to Hakata, where the Japanese had built a wall along the beach to forestall an attack. The Mongols were held off at an island close to the shore, while the Japanese made nightly raids in small boats. The harassment forced the fleet to retreat to Iki Island, with the defenders in pursuit. Meanwhile, the other half of the force met up, about two months late, with the initial force at the island of Takashima. Just as the full fleet was readying the attack, a powerful storm wiped it out. Once again the wrathful *kamikaze*, with a little help from some stubborn and wily samurai, ruled the day.



Hakozakigu's Tamaseseri

Festivals: Tamaseseri, 3 January. As part of the New Year's celebrations, male worshippers dressed only in *fundoshi* (loincloths) are hoisted on other men's shoulders and compete for two ritually purified eighteen-pound wooden balls. The competition occurs between the "land team" and the "sea team," while spectators douse both with water in the freezing cold. Depending on which team finally hands over the balls to the priest waiting at the shrine gate, a good catch of fish or a good harvest is predicted for the coming year. Even touching one of the balls is said to bring good luck for the year. This event is about five hundred years old and possibly related to the legend of Jingu Kogo receiving a "tide-raising pearl" and a "tide-ebbing pearl" from the Dragon Palace under the sea.

Hojoya Festival, 12–18 September. An ancient ritual called the Hojo-e Festival at other Hachiman shrines, based on the Buddhist precept of respect for life. At this event, thousands of birds and fish are released into the wild. Over seven hundred vendors offer food and toys. Part of the festivity is the buying and selling of traditional glass toys variously called *chanpon*, *bidoro*, and *poppen*. They are super-thin glass bulbs that make a twanging, popping sound when air is blown in or sucked out. The origins lie in the glass-blowing techniques taught to the Japanese by Dutch traders in the sixteenth century.

Munakata Taisha

DATE FOUNDED: Based on archeological evidence, worship was conducted from sometime in the fourth century. The oldest buildings currently existing are from 1578.

ADDRESS: 2331 Tashima, Munakata-shi, Fukuoka 811-3505

TEL/INFORMATION: 0940-62-1311. A 36-page color brochure in English is available for ¥500.

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Kagoshima Honsen Line to Togo Station. Then take the Genkai Nishitetsu bus via Konominato to Fukuma and get off at Munakata Taisha-mae bus stop (directly in front of the shrine).

To go to Nakatsumiya on Oshima Island, get off at Togo Station and take the Nishitetsu bus to Konominato Hatoba bus station (about a 15-minute ride). Then take one of two boats to Oshima Port, either the Shiokaze at Konominato-ko, or the Oshima Ferry. Together there are a total of seven round trips per day.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Hetsumiya on the mainland of Kyushu enshrines Ichikishihime no kami. Nakatsumiya on Oshima Island enshrines Tagitsuhime no kami. Okitsumiya on Okinoshima enshrines Tagorihime no kami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Safety on the sea and on the roadways.

BEST TIME TO GO: 1–22 November for the largest chrysanthemum competition in western Japan, with three thousand exhibits.

Important physical features: It's tempting to say that the most important physical feature of the shrine is the Genkai Sea, as the southern part of the Sea of Japan is

MAP 3



The *honden* at Munakata Taisha Hetsumiya

known. It was one of the most important entry points for trade between Japan and the continent in ancient times, and the deities enshrined here protect the sea lanes. But perhaps the most interesting physical feature of Munakata Taisha is its division into three shrines in three different locations. Two of the locations are small islands, one of which is open once a year to male worshippers only. This kind of prohibition was more widespread in ancient times, when entry to places considered abodes of the *kami*—mountains, islands, and others—was forbidden. Prohibition in order to avoid impurity is still very much a part of Shinto. For example, entry into a shrine's *honden* or its immediate surroundings is forbidden to anyone but priests of the highest level, and even they are not allowed to look directly upon the *goshintai* kept there. Ise Jingu is surrounded by four fences and normally the *honden* cannot even be seen except for the top edge of the roof. And, of course, the emperor's palace is off-limits, a huge exclusion zone in the heart of Tokyo. Still, prohibiting entry to an entire island such as Okinoshima is rare indeed. The

island was once called Oiwasu sama, meaning “unspoken,” implying that as a sacred space, its name was not to be defiled by being spoken. It was a common practice in the ancient world, related to the concept of *kotodama* or “the spirit of words.” Essentially, it is a belief in the magic properties of words that is also essential to prayers and spells.

The straight *sando* and the front of the *bonden* at Hetsumiya (also called Hetsugu) face northwest. It is an unusual direction for a shrine, but it is the direction of the islands on which the other two shrines reside. It is also the direction of the sea and of the Korean/Chinese mainland (nearby Hakozakigu also faces northwest to the sea). The current buildings are from 1578 (*bonden*) and 1590 (*baiden*), rebuilt after the previous structures burned down in 1557. While they have burned down many times in the past, one of the most devastating fires was in 1132, when not only the buildings but also the *goshintai*, sacred treasures, and sutras were destroyed. Interestingly, the fire was caused by a dispute between two of the leading shrine priests at the time, which apparently got quite out of hand.

The current *bonden* is a *nagare-zukuri* style, with the entrance on the non-gabled side. The roof is covered with cypress-bark tiles, and there are *chigi* and five *katsuogi*. The building is a rather large five by four bays, with a staircase as wide as the center bay leading to a veranda that surrounds it. The woodwork is painted red and the walls plastered in white. It is closely surrounded by an unpainted *tamagaki* with a copper-tile roof. The *baiden* is an open-sided type, four by six bays, placed perpendicular to the *bonden*, with their roofs almost touching. A heavy *shimenawa* is hung above the front of the *baiden* and the coin box placed here, at the point where prayers are offered. The entrance to the *bonden* is



Haiden of Munakata Taisha Nakatsumiya

ordinarily left open. At Hakozaikigu there is a Tobatsu Bishamonten and tridents attached to the pillars, but here the pillars at the edge of the roof sport *naginata*, a sort of Japanese spear with a slightly curved blade. It indicates Munakata's position as a protective shrine, but with the Buddhist overtones removed.

The grounds contain some wooded areas and a large number of auxiliary shrines. Of most interest among these may be the Teinonomiya and Teisannonomiya ("second shrine" and "third shrine"), located some distance behind the main building. They were disassembled and brought from Ise Jingu when it was rebuilt in one of its twenty-year cycles. They are excellent examples of *shinmei-zukuri* and present a good opportunity to view a pure example of the form. One of the most important places on the shrine grounds is not a building but a stone dais called *takamiya saijo*. It is believed to be the place where the *kami* originally descended, and rituals are still conducted here.

To reach the Nakatsumiya, seven miles off the coast, requires a twenty-five-minute boat ride from Konominato (Ko Pier) to the

island of Oshima. It has a circumference of just nine miles and a population of only eight hundred. A tree- and grass-covered island, where cows graze and life moves slowly, it can easily be cycled around in a day. The port is on the southeast side of the island, as is the shrine. The approach is by a long and steep stone stairway. The shrine looks like a smaller, unpainted version of the Hetsumiya. Again it is a *nagare-zukuri* style, but it is only three by two bays. The *haiden* is also smaller, at just three bays deep, and it sports a large *shimenawa* over the front side. The shrine is located at the foot of Mount Mitake, and the Amanogawa (Heavenly River) originates on the grounds. The auxiliary shrines Kengyu Jinja (dedicated to the star Altair) and Shokujo Jinja (dedicated to Vega) face each other across the river. Shrine tradition regards this as the birthplace of the Tanabata Star Festival, according to which Altair and Vega are celestial lovers able to meet only once a year. In addition, the shrine has a remote location on the north side of the island called the *okitsumiya yobaijo*. It is so named because on a clear day you can pray while peering at Okinoshima in the distance, where the Okitsumiya is located.

Okinoshima lies thirty-five miles farther off the coast. It is a much smaller island, only two and a half miles in circumference. It is basically a single mountain eight hundred feet tall, with a ridgeline running from southwest to northeast. Okitsumiya shrine is located at the southern tip of the island near the small port. It stands on the slope of the mountain, accessible by steep staircases and winding roads on which a number of *torii* have been placed. The shrine buildings are very similar to the Hetsumiya and Nakatsumiya but smaller than either. They have copper roofs rather than cypress, and have no *tamagaki*

fence around them. They sit atop a base made of stone, with the right side of the *bonden* artfully tucked under a big boulder.

One priest lives on the island, which is in itself considered sacred. Only priests are allowed here, except for one day in the year. On 27 May, a select number of people who have applied in advance and paid a minimum of ¥20,000 are allowed to enter the island for the Okitsumiya Grand Festival. It commemorates the victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–5. The war was largely fought on the sea, thus the festival gives thanks to the Munakata deity. Interestingly, during World War II the army prevailed upon Munakata to have gun emplacements put on the island. The shrine reluctantly agreed after the army accepted a list of conditions which stipulated that any visitors would wash in the sea and change footwear before stepping on the island, as well as prohibiting all wives or girlfriends.

The most prized physical property of the island is, in a sense, no longer there, for this was the site of one of the most important archeological finds pertaining to religious practice and relations with the Asian mainland ever discovered in Japan. The idea that the island was an important religious site since at least the fourth century was dramatically confirmed in excavations conducted from 1954. They revealed over 120,000 objects from the fourth through the ninth centuries that were offered in worship to the deities. The objects, including bronze mirrors, swords, pottery, and jewelry, are now displayed in the *shinpokan*, or shrine museum, located next to the Hetsumiya on the mainland. Needless to say, the Munakata shrines have been designated Important Cultural Properties, as are some of the excavation finds, while others are National Treasures. The shrine is currently a nominee for status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Important spiritual features: The history of spiritual activity associated with Munakata is long and deeply integrated with the culture of the seafaring peoples of Kyushu. Simply speaking, the three female deities of Munakata are mentioned in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*, as well as the *Sendai kuji bongi*, commonly known as the *Kujiki*. They are a product of a critical encounter in the imperial mythology between Amaterasu and Susano-o. In this legend, Susano-o has been banished to the land of the dead (*yomi*) and pleads to visit heaven to see his sister Amaterasu one last time. She fears malicious intentions on his part and asks for proof of his sincerity. He proposes that they produce children, so Amaterasu asks for the ten-span sword that he wears, and breaks it into pieces. She washes them in the “True Well of Heaven,” chews them, and spits out three female deities. The firstborn is Tagorihime, the second Tagitshime, and the third Ichikishimahime.

The legend goes on to state that these are “the great goddesses that the Munakata lords treasure and worship.” Different versions present the deities as children of either Amaterasu or Susano-o. The *Kojiki* has Amaterasu saying to Susano-o, “The three female children were produced from your seed [from his sword], therefore they are your children.” But the *Nihon shoki* provides an alternative version, which has Amaterasu bearing three swords from which the goddesses were made. Since Susano-o is considered a god of the sea, that would appear to lend weight to his connection with the deities. Then again, the *Kujiki* and a different version in the *Nihon shoki* mention another clan, the Minuma, as worshipping these female deities. Such discrepancies aside, the Munakata lineage has been involved with the worship of the three deities since at least the fourth century. As to the various versions of



The sacred island of Okinoshima, where the Okitsumiya of Munakata Taisha is located

the story, the differences have led to some confusion over the centuries about which *kami* was born first, their precise names, and exactly where it is within the Munakata shrines that each *kami* dwells. In fact, so conflicted was this history that it was only in 1957 that the order and place were finally settled, based on the most consistent traditions of the shrine.

The fact that offerings of a religious nature were made on the island of Okinoshima from the fourth century is of great importance. As was noted, verification of this came in archeological excavations made after 1954. Twenty-three individual sites have been found to date, each exhibiting various types of objects, according to the age in which they were deposited. The oldest (fourth- and fifth-century) sites contained large numbers of bronze mirrors, swords, and daggers, the majority of which are of domestic manufacture and rival the contents of some of the greatest *kofun* tombs. Offerings from the early sixth century exhibit a heavy bias towards imported goods, many from China and some from as far away as the Middle East. By the seventh and eighth centuries, offerings are largely miniature replicas of items in daily use, or simple objects of pottery or stone.

Examples include a mini-loom in bronze, mini-*koto* (zither), personal ornaments, and precious objects from Tang-period China. The trend after the eighth century is toward offering non-precious, symbolic objects. As the quality of ritual objects evolves, so does the style of ritual. The oldest ritual sites are located on top of large rocks, middle-period sites are caves and secluded places, and later-period sites are in open areas.

Description: The northern and western coasts of Kyushu have been the most important areas for economic and cultural exchange with Korea and China since at least the Yayoi period (300 B.C. to A.D. 300), but possibly as early as 900 B.C. The Yayoi culture originated in northern Kyushu and western Honshu, from where rice cultivation, metalworking, and new types of pottery spread throughout Japan. Some historians have speculated that by the mid- to late Yayoi period, ships moved freely between Kyushu and the Korean peninsula. Trade involved many small city-states and a thorough mixing of Japanese and continental peoples. The *Nihon shoki* records that by the end of the fifth cen-

ture, immigrant groups lived in communities scattered across the country. Chinese colonies called *tobo* flourished along the Genkai Sea coast at an early date, although the word is first found in Heian-period documents.

One such colony called the Tsuyazaki *Tobo* was located at Munakata. It is mentioned in a treatise on music and dance called *Kyokun sho* (loosely translated as “A Learner’s Treatise”), compiled by Koma no Chikazane in 1233 and based on essays from the eleventh century. As with Hakozaki, Hakata, and all the other major ports that participated in trade with the continent, the Chinese and Korean communities at Munakata played a vital role. At least two Chinese women are documented as having married into the Munakata clan, and there were likely many more. In the medieval period there were twelve areas recognized as *tobo* settlements, and during the Mongol attacks of the late thirteenth century, there is mention of such immigrants fighting to repel the invaders. As with other Kyushu clans, the Munakata clan controlled seafarers organized into worker groups called *be* (pronounced “bay”), made up largely of immigrants. The very name of the clan may be related to a fish scale tattoo (*kata*) on the chest (*mune*) of clan members.

The Munakata were not only shrine priests but a major Kyushu clan with large holdings and great power up until the mid-sixteenth century. One of the keys to maintaining their power was their ability to strike accords with the Yamato polity that developed in the fifth and sixth centuries. Conversely, part of the strength of the Yamato clans lay in their ability to import goods and technology from the continent. For this they relied heavily on the Kyushu clans. Crisis came in the sixth century, when Emperor Keitai tried to enlist support to mount an invasion of one of the kingdoms of Korea. The clans refused, and Keitai launched



The Okitsumiya shrine on Okinoshima island

an attack against them instead. Led by a clan leader named Tsukushi no Iwai, they were defeated and subjugated under the emerging Yamato state. An invasion force was sent to Korea the following year, with disastrous outcome. Interestingly, the *Nihon shoki* records that Emperor Yuryaku previously had the same intention, but the Munakata deity appeared to him in a dream and ordered him to stop—which he did.

The defeat of the Kyushu clans by Keitai did not alter Yamato’s dependence on their seagoing skills. And although a defense battery under the control of Kyoto was set up at Dazaifu, slightly southeast of Munakata, the centralizing state continued to rely on cooperation from its Kyushu subjects in mounting defenses. This proved to be the case in the thirteenth century, when the Mongols invaded. Throughout all, the Munakata clan managed not only the rough waters of the Genkai Sea, but the sometimes rough relations with the Yamato state as well. A high point for the clan came in the seventh century, when a daughter of Munakata no kimi Tokuzen became a consort of Emperor Tenmu and bore him his first male child, Prince Takechi. It may account for the clan’s *kami* having such a prominent place in the imperial mythology that took shape under Tenmu.

In terms of archeology, there are many large tombs and *kofun* (burial mounds) found in the Munakata area. A number of them are thought to belong to members of the clan. One, known as Miyajidake, is possibly the burial site of Munakata no kimi Tokuzen mentioned above. While the tumulus is not the largest in Kyushu in terms of landmass, its burial chamber is the biggest by far, measuring seventy-three feet in length and composed of mammoth stones up to sixteen feet in height. The *kofun* yielded three hundred precious objects, including horseback-riding paraphernalia, swords, and jewelry. It is located on a mountaintop about ten miles north of Munakata, and a shrine named Miyajidake Jinja stands in front of it. It is notable for what is claimed to be the largest *shimenawa* in Japan, at forty-four feet long (two feet longer than Izumo) and a weight of five tons. The site is another testament to the power of the Munakata clan and their *kami*.

Festivals: Mioresai, 1–3 October. Two boats carrying *mikoshi* from the islands of Okinoshima and Oshima are escorted by a procession of four hundred ships to Hetsumiya, where the *kami* of Okitsumiya and Nakatsumiya are welcomed. Further festivities give thanks for a plentiful harvest at this 750-year-old event.

Okitsumiya Grand Festival, 27 May. A once-a-year event that can be attended only by permission and with the payment of a ¥20,000 fee well in advance. Not the average tourist destination, but a rare chance to glimpse an island that has been held sacred for almost two millennia.

Tanabata (Star Festival), 7 August. Take the boat out to Nakatsumiya on Oshima for an ancient festival that includes horseback archery and other events.

Udo Jingu

DATE FOUNDED: Founded during the reign of Emperor Sujin (r. 97–30 B.C.), according to shrine tradition.

ADDRESS: 3232 Oaza Miyaura, Nichinan-shi, Miyazaki 887-0101

TEL/INFORMATION: 0987-29-1001

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the JR Nichinan Line from Minami-Miyazaki Station to Nichinan Station. Take the bus going to Udo Jingu, and get off at the Udo Jingu Iriguchi bus stop. There is also a bus that leaves from Miyazaki Station, and tour buses that stop at several points, including Udo Jingu.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Ugayafukiaezu no mikoto.

PRAYERS OFFERED: The *ochichi iwa* ("breast rock") is said to be where the *kami* was nourished as a child, so people come here to pray for safe childbirth, healthy development of the child, and a good marriage, as well as safety at sea.

BEST TIME TO GO: The best weather is from May to November.

Important physical features: The most important physical feature of Udo Jingu is its location inside a cave on the side of a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, along the coast of Miyazaki Prefecture. This area is called Cape Udo and is part of the Nichinan coast, famous for its beaches and beautiful sea. The *yatsumune-zukuri*-style shrine combining *bonden* and *haiden* under an *irimoya*-style copper-shingle roof is of Edo-period vintage. There are a *chidoribafu* and *karabafu* in line with the edge of the eave over the entrance. The building is primarily painted

MAP 4



The *ichi no gaten* of Usa Jingū

in red, with some touches of polychrome and carvings above the tie beams and on the nosings of the projecting beams. It is surrounded by a shallow veranda and only slightly elevated above the stone-tile floor of the cave. It looks like a shrine you might encounter anywhere except that above the roof, where you would normally expect to see blue sky, there is instead the stone roof of a cave.

Also inside the cave is a hanging protuberance from which water seeps. It is the *ochi-chi iwa* ("breast stone"), which according to shrine legend, is where the *kami* Ugayafukiaezu was sustained after his mother, Toyotamahime, returned to the home of her father, the dragon god of the sea. Candy made from the "milk" called *mizuame* is sold at the shrine. When stirred in warm water it takes on the consistency of cornstarch or taffy. Another point of interest here is the "turtle rock," which lies just off the stone seawall that protects the area from erosion. The stone has a depression a few feet in diameter, into which people try to toss small, rough ceramic balls (*undama*, or "lucky balls") sold at the shrine (five for

¥100). The idea is to toss the balls (with the left hand for men, right hand for women) and land one in the depression. If you do, whatever you wish for will come true. It makes for a bit of fun while looking out over the craggy shore. Actually, "craggy" doesn't do justice to the huge stones jutting out of the sea in a row, like so many submarines breaking surface in formation. All in all, it is one of the more magnificent settings for a shrine.

Important spiritual features:

Ugayafukiaezu no mikoto is the son of Hohodemi (also called Yamasachihiko, meaning, literally, "blessings of the mountain") and father of Jinmu Tenno, the legendary first emperor of Japan. The *kami* was the third generation from the heavenly descent of Ninigi no mikoto to live out his life in Hyuga (present-day Miyazaki). His mother was Toyotamahime, the eldest daughter of Watatsumi, kami of the sea. The *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* recount the legend of how Ugayafukiaezu's father, Hohodemi, went in search of his brother's fishing hook. He was instructed to seek out the daughter of the dragon king Watatsumi, who lived in a palace under the sea, for help. He found the young woman and they fell in love and were married. He spent three years under the sea, but his wife sensed his longing for the land and sent him back home. As she was with child, she promised to come to land to give birth and asked that he build a parturition hut, thatched with cormorant feathers. When she appeared as promised, the thatching was not yet finished, so she forbade her husband to spy on her while she gave birth. But he broke this promise and saw her in the form of a *wani* (literally meaning "alligator," but referring to a mythical sea dragon). Embarrassed and enraged, she returned to the sea, leaving the child Ugayafukiaezu in his father's charge.



The entrance to Udo Jingu

She blocked the passage between sea and land and swore that it would no longer be possible to travel between them. Later she sent her younger sister, Tamayorihime, to look after her son. The sister raised the boy and later married him, bearing him four sons. One of the four was named Kamuyamato Iwarebiko and would later become the first emperor, Jinmu.

Some believe it was on the site now occupied by Udo Jingu where Ugayafukiaezu no mikoto was born. When Emperor Kanmu had the shrine rebuilt in 782, he put a monk of the Tendai sect in charge of it. From that time it became a combinatory religious site known as Ninno Gokokuji, and the *kami* was commonly referred to as Udo Gongen. The Ninno Hannyakyo (“Benevolent Kings Sutra”), along with the Konkomyokyo (“Golden Light Sutra”), formed the basis of Buddhism in Japan up through the Nara period. Both sutras promised protection to the ruler and to the nation if they revered the Buddha. The shrine-temple complex remained under Tendai monks until the Meiji period, when the Buddhist part of the equation was removed and the shrine was renamed Udo Jingu.

Another important aspect of the shrine’s spirituality is related to two sword-fighting schools, one known as Kage-ryu (“shaded style”) and founded by Aisu Iko, and the other known as the Nen-ryu (“mindful style”) and founded by the fourteenth-century monk Jion (Soma Yoshimoto). It seems that Jion received divine inspiration while in the cave of Udo Gongen and that he founded his school of swordsmanship based on his revelations. Then

in 1488 Aisu Iko also received a visitation from the deity while praying and practicing at Udo. In his account of the incident he states that a spider suddenly appeared hanging in front of him. In trying to capture the spider and follow its nimble movements, he came to master the art of swordsmanship. The spider then miraculously turned into an old man who rewarded him for his devotion by transmitting the art of Kage-ryu to him. This style became famous and was later transmitted through his son to Kamiizumi Fujiwara Nobutsuna, who sought further instruction from the founder of Kashima Shinkage-ryu (“Divine shade-style”), Matsumoto Naokatsu. Kamiizumi later became Matsumoto’s successor as head of the Kashima sword-fighting school. Udo Jingu is therefore a very important place for these sword-fighting lineages.

Description: The long road leading to the shrine is lined with a low railing, painted in bright vermillion. The entrance gate is a modest *zuijinmon* followed by a tall three-bay *romon*. The *sando* runs around the coast at an elevated level, and then drops down with dramatic effect toward the sea and the mouth of the cave. The first building was constructed during the reign of Emperor Kanmu in 782; it was rebuilt most recently in 1968. Udo Jingu is a wonderful example of how Shinto attached worship of specific *kami* to specific locations and how Buddhism overlaid those same locations with a sense of universal spirituality. Though the nature and focus of worship have changed over time, the sense of “eternal place” continues to draw people to locations like Udo Jingu century after century.

Festival: Autumn Grand Festival, 3 November. *Kagura* dance performances are held all day.

Usa Jingu

MAP 5

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 725, according to shrine tradition.

ADDRESS: 2859 Minami-Usa, Usa-shi, Oita 872-0102

HOW TO GET THERE: From JR Usa Station, it's a 10-minute bus ride to the Usa Hachiman bus stop and a 10-minute walk from there.

TEL/INFORMATION: 0978-37-0001. A small color brochure on the shrine's history is available in English for free.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Hachiman identified with Hondawake no mikoto (Emperor Ojin). Hime okami (comprising Ichikishimahime no mikoto, Tagitsuhime no mikoto, and Tagirihime no mikoto) and Okinagatarashihime no mikoto (Jingu Kogo).

PRAYERS OFFERED: Good fortune, safety on the roadways, and safe childbirth.

BEST TIME TO GO: August for the lotus blooms, other seasons for various attractions.



The *ichi no goten* of Usa Jingu

Important physical features: Usa Jingu is built in a distinctive style that came to be known as *bachiman-zukuri*. The key feature of this style is that the roofline gives the impression of two separate buildings joined together. It has two distinct gable roofs that come close together along the eaves over a large wooden rain gutter covered in gold leaf. The building under the roofs, though appearing to be two, is in reality one continuous structure. The rear part of the structure (*naiin*) is three bays wide by two bays deep, while the front part, called the *gein*, is only one bay deep. The one-bay space created between the *naiin* and *gein* (also called *naiden* and

geden at other Hachiman shrines) is called the *ainoma*. It has a flat roof that stops short of the overhanging eaves of the front and rear structures, and there is a door at both ends (on the gable sides). This creates a corridor between the front and rear structures. The front side of the building has a door in each bay, and a part of the front eave extends over the steps to form a canopy (*kobai*). The front structure is not a *haiden*; only priests are allowed to enter. It is a place for the *kami* to repose, and a chair is set out for the *kami* to use at leisure, while the *naiin* has a raised and curtained dais reminiscent of a sleeping chamber. This concept of *naiin* and *gein* may be a Buddhist influence. Temple grounds often contained a set of two buildings—a *raido* and *naijin*—collectively called *narabido*. (Taken together they resemble the *bachiman* style.) The walls of the shrine are in white plaster while the woodwork is painted in vermillion, and a shallow veranda surrounds the building.

Whereas later Hachiman shrines have one

nine-bay structure housing the enshrined deities, Usa Jingu is actually composed of three virtually identical buildings of three bays each, placed so close together that their roofs seem to be one. The far left building is the *icbi no goten* that enshrines Hondawake no mikoto (Emperor Ojin), first constructed in 725. The central building was first constructed in 733 and enshrines Hime okami (identified as the three Munakata deities), and the right-hand building that enshrines Okinagatarashihime no mikoto (Jingu Kogo) was first constructed in 823. The buildings were rebuilt once every thirty years from 941, and then once every thirty-three years from 1101, but the practice ended in the Muromachi period. The current structures, designated Important Cultural Properties, were built in 1861. Directly in front of the central building, and almost touching both it and the *minami-chu romon* gate built in 1743, is the open-sided stage called a *moshiden*. The inner compound also contains three small auxiliary shrines and is encircled by a *kairo* walkway with a broad roof. The red *romon* and *kairo* present the familiar face of many Hachiman shrines.

Another set of three buildings comprise the Gegu (the main shrine is called the Jogu). As with the Geku of Ise Jingu, this is where food was prepared for the *kami*.

Important spiritual features: The origins and early history of the *kami* are obscure, and neither the *Kojiki* nor the *Nihon shoki* mentions Hachiman. The *Nihon shoki* refers to the Usa region only as a place where Emperor Jinmu stopped on his way to Yamato. The account states that one of Jinmu's ministers, an ancestor of the Nakatomi, was married to a princess of a local clan. In later ages, history records that the Nakatomi/Fujiwara had a close relationship to Usa and to

Kyushu. Ninth-century sources recount how a man named Omiwa (or Oga) came to live with a blacksmith on Mount Oomoto in Usa in the sixth century. The man spent three years in prayer at which time he was visited by a golden hawk that transformed first into a dove, then into a young boy who proclaimed himself Ojin Tenno. The predominant theory nowadays holds that Hachiman was an amalgamation of the *ujigami* of several Kyushu clans from as early as the fifth century. Several were of Korean origin, and revered mountain (Karakuni Okinaga) and sea deities (Himegami). In addition, the Oga of Omiwa in Yamato became prominent in Usa from around the end of the sixth century and may have added their worship of Ojin and Jingu Kogo to that of the Kyushu cults.

Chief among the clans were the Korean Karashima (or Karajima) and the Usa seafaring clans. It may be that the name Yahata ("eight banners") was originally a reference to the amalgamation of these clans. The theory goes that the Karashima, who occupied the Toyokuni region in the north, pushed south and conquered the Usa, who occupied Yamakuni. The name of the "Yama" and "Toyo" regions morphed into the name Yahata, the Chinese characters for which are also read as Hachiman. There are many Hachiman shrines in Kyushu, and it seems clear the *kami* originated in the beliefs of local clans and Korean immigrants, then amalgamated with the cult of Jingu at an early date. The term *jinguji*, meaning a temple constructed on or near the grounds of a shrine to perform Buddhist rites and transfer the merit gained to a *kami*, was first used in Kyushu. *Jinguji* named Hokyoji and Kokuzoji were founded in Usa around 683.

The *Hachimangu Mirokuji engi* of the ninth century refers to prayers being offered to Hachiman in 720. At that time, the Hayato people of southeastern Kyushu raised a rebellion



The *minami-chu romon* of Usa Jingu

and the priests led a “divine army” to subjugate them. It seems that a shrine was established and the Hojo-e ceremony began from around this time to pray for the souls of those who died in the conflict. Shrine tradition dates the foundation of Usa Jingu at the present location to 725, when several temples were merged into a shrine-temple complex called Mirokuji (also called Mirokuzen-in). The Karashima, Usa, and Oga provided the sometimes contentious sacerdotal lineages of the shrine.

One of the most important aspects of Hachiman is his role as an early example of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism. Though the traditional date for the introduction of Buddhism to Japan is 552 or 538, it is thought that Buddhism was practiced from an earlier time in parts of Kyushu. The *Nihon shoki* records that a *bosshi* (a sort of Buddhist monk and shaman) from Toyo no kuni (Kyushu) visited the court during an illness of Emperor Yomei (r. 585–87). This and later visits were in connection with the special healing powers of monks from the region. Although Hachiman’s recognition as a

daibosatsu (great bodhisattva) did not occur until 781, Usa was associated with Buddhism and shamanism from an early period.

Hachiman’s development from a local *kami* of Kyushu to one of national importance is easier to trace than his origins. For example, the *Shoku Nibongi* records that an offering was sent to five Kyushu shrines in 737, including Hachiman, to pray for divine protection from Silla (in present day Korea), and again to Hachiman in 741 for helping to overcome a rebellion by Fujiwara no Hirotsugu, the vice-governor of Kyushu. Thus the protective and martial nature of the *kami* is established from an early date. From the mid-eighth century, Usa was referred to as a *daijingu* (“great shrine”). In 745, the deity was appealed to for support in building the Great Buddha of Todaiji. It seems the massive undertaking was in danger of failure, and the problems connected to the project were overcome through the support of the Kyushu clans and Hachiman. There are legends to the effect that Hachiman gave an oracle about where gold for the

project could be discovered (it was found at about this time in the province of Mutsu). On a more practical note, it seems that Usa Jingu donated both money and labor in the form of metal-casting craftsmen. Be that as it may, the *Shoku Nihongi* records that the *kami* also gave another oracle, through the priestess of the shrine, saying that he would proceed to Nara. Therefore a palanquin such as would normally be sent for the emperor was dispatched to Usa, along with high-ranking courtiers, to carry the priestess and a priest of the Oga clan to Nara. In 749, Hachiman was enshrined next to Todaiji at Tamukeyama Hachimangu, as protector (*chinjugami*) of the temple. It may be that this was the origin of carrying the *kami* in a portable shrine (*mikoshi*), which became a standard part of shrine festivals.

The completion of Todaiji's Great Buddha in 752 was the jewel in the crown of a newly established system of state-sponsored temples. Known as *kokubunji* (provincial temples for realm-protecting [*chingo kokka*] rites), they were ordered built by Emperor Shomu in 741. A basic component of the acceptance of Buddhism by the ruling class was the doctrine of *gokoku* (protection of the state). The system was based on a statement in the Konkomyokyo Sutra that the Four Guardian Kings would protect any nation that revered the Buddha. It also found expression in two other sutras: the Ninnō Hannyakyo and the Hokkekyo (Lotus Sutra). The sutras not only guaranteed the protection of the nation, but also the personal protection of the emperor. They also affirmed the right of the ruler to govern based on good deeds in a former life and devotion to the Buddha, therefore subtly implying that the emperor's rule was based on the divinity of the Buddha. This was distinctly different from basing divine rule on direct descent from the sun goddess, as previously. Behind this, and behind the rise

in the importance of Hachiman, lay the need for the emperor to strengthen his own position through the powerful influence of Buddhism.

From an early date, Hachiman pronounced oracles on matters of national importance. It was in this capacity that Hachiman was called on to aid the building of Todaiji. And it was again in this capacity that the monk Dokyo used a supposed oracle from Hachiman to have himself proclaimed emperor. He had steadily gained the confidence and perhaps intimacy of Empress Koken (especially during her second reign, when she was known as Empress Shotoku). To further his ambitions he turned to Hachiman, who must have seemed the ideal deity to sponsor a Buddhist monk to a Shinto throne. Forces opposed to him sent the retainer Wake no Kiyomaro to Usa to confirm the oracle. However, he returned with the famous message that "Since the establishment of our state, the distinction between lord and subject has been fixed... The throne of sun succession shall be given to one of the imperial lineage..." This second oracle (and the death of Koken a year later, in 770) caused the downfall of Dokyo and, with him, the temporary downfall of Hachiman.

The story of Kiyomaro illustrates that Shinto-Buddhist syncretism was neither always smooth nor always desired. Kiyomaro came from a Buddhist family that opposed religion meddling in politics. While Dokyo was still under the protection of Koken, he had Kiyomaro exiled and had the tendons in his legs cut. Protected by powerful friends, he was eventually recalled to government service when the next emperor had Dokyo exiled. He became an adviser to Emperor Kanmu, whom he reputedly convinced to move the capital from Nagaokakyo to Heiankyo (present-day Kyoto). His face was on Japanese currency for many years and he is enshrined along with his sister in Go-o

Jinja ("defender of the monarch shrine") on the west side of Kyoto's imperial palace.

The Dōkyō incident weakened the position of the female shaman at Usa and increased suspicion of the manipulation of oracles for political ends. Thus the oracles went silent until the next appeal was made to Hachiman in 855. This was soon after the Todaiji Great Buddha lost its head in an earthquake. The emperor called on the *kami* to aid in the repair of the great statue, bring peace and tranquility to the nation, and protect the emperor. Shortly after, in 859, the monk Gyōkyō received an oracle that Hachiman wished to be closer to the capital. By this time, Hachiman came to be identified with Emperor Ōjin (r. 270–310) and proclaimed "great imperial ancestor" and "protector of the country," from the mid-ninth century. Ōjin was the son of Jingu Kōgo (the wife of Emperor Chuai and a powerful female shaman closely associated with Kyūshū). Legend says that she carried him in her womb throughout her campaign to conquer Silla, managing not to give birth for an extended period by tying a rock to her stomach. By some accounts, Ōjin directed the campaign from within her womb and then returned to Japan for a "magical birth." Hachiman's new oracle led to the founding of the *miyadera* Iwashimizu Hachimangu Gokokuji and the evolution of a new identity as the god of war. This evolution reached fulfillment with the founding of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu by the Minamoto, in their eastern stronghold of Kamakura. Even so, the strongly Buddhist nature of Hachiman led to his increasing portrayal as a monk, the so-called Sōgyō Hachiman. In fact, Hachiman continued to be one of the few Shinto deities represented in the form of a monk in both sculpture and painting. There is some speculation that these *shinzo* (representations of *kami*) are in fact more common than is generally thought, but are kept hidden either as *goshintai* (*kami* body) or for other reasons.

Two interesting aspects of worship at Usa Jingu are the celebration of the Hojo-e and the Gyoko-e. In the original Hojo-e ("rite for releasing of life"), clams and snails were released into the ocean to quiet the souls of the dead killed in the Hayato uprising. Today it is done also in honor of the Buddha's prohibition against killing any living beings. During the original Hojo-e at Usa, the shrine's copper mirror was also remade and replaced. The copper came from Mount Kawara, located to the west of the shrine, and the Usa clans were known for their metal crafting skills. The Gyoko-e was an important festival held roughly once every six years from 749 until the Kamakura period. In the Gyoko-e, the *goshintai*, called the Komo no makura (pillow of *komo*), was renewed and replaced. The *komo* is a reed that grew on the grounds of Komo Jinja a few miles west of Usa. A new pillow was made from this reed to replace the old one. The old *goshintai* moved to Nata Hachimangu, and the latter's was cast out to sea. A total of eight shrines participated in this festival. The renewal and transference of the *goshintai* are believed related to the original combining of the *kami* cults of the ancient Kyūshū clans. The custom of renewing the *goshintai* was meant to renew and reinvigorate the spirit of Hachiman. The Hojo-e festival is still performed at Hachiman shrines around the country.

Description: The story of how Hachiman came to be enshrined throughout the country and usher in the age of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism is a fascinating tale reflecting the hopes and fears, compromises, and growing pains of the nation itself. The *Hachimangu mirokuji engi*, written sometime between 834 and 848, is one important source and perhaps the earliest text to link Hachiman with Emperor Ōjin. Another

important source is the *Hachiman Usagu gotakusenshu*, a compendium of oracles compiled by the Buddhist monk Jinun, in the early fourteenth century. Hachiman actually evolved through several distinct stages, from a combination of clan gods (*ujigami*), to an oracular *kami* pronouncing on national issues, to the first prominent example of combinatory Shinto and Buddhist worship, to protector of the country and of the imperial line, to the tutelary god of the Kamakura shoguns.

Usa Jingu was once home to a large shrine-temple complex known as Mirokuji, the remains of which can still be seen on the 140-acre grounds of the current shrine. While other remains in the area point to a once-sizeable Buddhist presence, today that legacy exists primarily in festivals such as the Hojo-e and in the style of the structures. All of these are painted in vermillion, and some, like the *saidaimon* ("great west gate"), built around 1592 and approached by a stone staircase of a hundred steps, exhibit details typical of Buddhist-influenced *gongen-zukuri*. The Hatsusawa Pond features lotus blossoms—the flower typically associated with the Buddha—which bloom between July and August. Usa Jingu is bordered by the Yorimo River, over which several bridges lead to the shrine grounds. One of these is a small covered bridge called the *kurehashi*, built prior to the thirteenth century. It is crossed only once every ten years by an imperial messenger who comes bearing gifts for the *kami*. The bridge has been rebuilt a number of times, and old photos show it without the doors that now keep it off-limits. The 255th crossing takes place in 2015.

Festival: Summer Purification Festival, first weekend after July 27. Three *mikoshi* are brought together by over three hundred bearers to the sound of drums and flutes.

Yutoku Inari Jinja

DATE FOUNDED: Founded in 1687 as the family shrine of the Nabeshima clan. The current buildings date from 1957.

ADDRESS: Furueda, Kashima-shi, Saga 849-1394

TEL/INFORMATION: 0954-62-2151. A one-page description of the shrine is available in English.

HOW TO GET THERE: From Hakata Station in Fukuoka, take a JR limited express to Tosu Station. Change to the Nagasaki Honsen Line to JR Hizen-Kashima Station. Then 10 minutes by bus to the Yutoku Inari Jinja bus stop.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Uga no mitama no okami, Omiyanome no okami, and Sarutahiko no okami (collectively known as Inari).

PRAYERS OFFERED: Abundant crops, prosperity in business, safety on the roadways, and the well-being of the family.

BEST TIME TO GO: From early April to May when the cherry trees, peony, and some fifty thousand azaleas are in bloom.

Important physical features: The most important physical features of the shrine are its dynamic construction and its setting against Mount Sekiheki in rural Saga Prefecture. Built in the *kake-zukuri* (hanging) style, the main shrine building stands on scaffolding that extends out from the side of the mountain, affording a wonderful view of the surrounding countryside. The style is most closely associated with Kiyomizudera temple in Kyoto's Higashiyama district. While the view from that venerable old temple is perhaps more interesting, the architecture is no more impres-

MAP 6



The bridge and *romon* of Yutoku Inari Jinja, with the shrine in the background

sive than that of Yutoku Inari. The shrine building is a *gongen-zukuri* style, with some variations. The *bonden* and *baiden* are connected by an intermediate structure and all have copper tile-covered gable roofs. The *bonden* is in the *nagare-zukuri* style with *chigi* and *katsuogi*, and the *baiden* sports large wings and a large *chidoribafu* whose ridge height is equal to that of the main structure.

In front of the *baiden* is an entrance canopy that extends from the roof almost to the edge of the wide veranda that stretches across the front of the building. The canopy has deeply curved *karabafu* on the front side and on the left and right as well. In an unusual feature, the ridge of these side *karabafu* slopes downward, making the bottom edge lower than that on the front. A sort of pent roof then extends from the sides and wraps around the front, but leaves a gap in the middle. All the eaves and the gable edges have very strong, drooping verges (*minko*) that add to the weightiness and the complexity of

the appearance. From under the front *karabafu* and extending past the separation in the pent roof hangs a huge panel with the name of the shrine. The effect is quite dramatic and regal. The exterior and interior of the buildings are lacquered predominantly in cinnabar red, with polychromed details and a large helping of gilded surfaces. Inside the *baiden*, set back from the front wall, are three broad staircases of five steps each that lead to an elevated floor. A low banister surrounds each staircase and both banister and staircase are lacquered in red. Near the back of the *baiden*, the floor is elevated again and painted in black lacquer. In the center is another, smaller set of steps leading to large gilded doors. The tops of the pillars, rainbow beams, and beam-supporting brackets are gilded and polychromed.

If you walk around to the right of the *baiden*, you can begin a climb that takes you through myriad red *torii* on a pilgrimage up the mountain that is a hallmark of worship at the larger Inari shrines. Along the rugged stairs to the top are a number of smaller shrines, foxes, and *otsuka* stone altars.

Important spiritual properties: The *kami* enshrined here are said to be *bunrei* (“divided spirits”) of those at an Inari shrine that was located on the grounds of the Kyoto imperial palace. The Inari *kami* have always been agricultural deities and especially related to rice. Uga no mitama no okami is a *kami* of grains; Omiyanome no okami, a *kami* of water; and Sarutahiko no okami, a *kami* of the land. Though various *kami* are worshipped at different Inari shrines, these three deities are most often associated with Inari worship and are known collectively as Inari. (For details on Inari worship, please see the entry for Fushimi Inari Taisha.)



The *kake-zukuri* architecture of Yutoku Inari Jinja

Description: Approaching the shrine from the first *torii*, you walk past places hawking the usual fare of local sundries and shrine-related goods. There are a total of three grand Inari-style *torii* along this shopping street. The second one, thick-legged and made of stone, is as wide as the narrow street itself, virtually touching the facades of the shops on both sides. Just past the third *torii*, you see an arched bridge to the left that leads across a small stream to the parking area and the Higashiyama azalea garden, where fifty thousand azalea plants enliven the atmosphere from late April to mid-May. Suddenly, on your right, the shrine appears—soaring above the trees, standing majestically before the mountain. Turn to the right under the fourth *torii*, and another arched bridge presents itself, leading to a brightly painted three-bay *romon* with *zuijin* guardian figures. This is the entrance to the inner precincts. From there, magnificent zigzagging staircases lead up to the shrine, and then to the pilgrimage up the mountain. In the adjacent shrine museum, a large number of Kashima *nishiki* brocade, suits of armor, and swords—passed down through the generations of Kashima lords—are on display.

People like to speak of the “top ten” or the “best three” in almost any field, and the world

of religion is no exception. Since there may be as many as thirty thousand Inari shrines around the country, to be considered one of the top three is a great honor. While each divided spirit is said to have the same efficacy, generally the original shrine—in this case Fushimi Inari in Kyoto—is thought to be of greatest importance. From here on there is less agreement. The other name that comes up most often is Toyokawa Inari in Nagoya (though some discount it because it is on the grounds of a Buddhist temple named Myogonji). Opinion on the third most important seems to vary by region, with Kasama Inari Jinja in Ibaraki Prefecture cited by people in eastern Japan, Saijo Inari by those in western Japan, and Yutoku Inari by those in Kyushu. The people of Saga take great pride in their shrine and refer to it as the “Nikko of Kyushu.” A closer analogy might be the “Kiyomizu of Saga” (although Kiyomizu is a temple). Be that as it may, it is a magnificent shrine in a wonderful setting and impeccably maintained. So much so that, as you climb the mountain, it seems that attention has been paid to every blade of grass or bunch of moss.

The shrine was originally built in 1687, but unfortunately it burned down in 1949 after having survived the war. The present building is from 1957. During the Edo period Yutoku

was the family shrine of the Nabeshima clan, hereditary rulers of the Kashima domain in Hizen (present-day Saga). The present Guji is the tenth generation of Nabeshima to occupy the position. It was built on the occasion of the marriage of the princess Mankohime (daughter of Emperor Go-Yozei's grandson) to Nabeshima Naotomo (1622–1709). In honor of the marriage, the *kami* of an Inari shrine located on the palace grounds in Kyoto was invited to be enshrined here. The graves of the Nabeshima family are in nearby Fumyoji temple, and once a year in November a joint light festival is held which features thousands of cut-bamboo lanterns that illuminate the entire one-mile route between shrine and temple.

The Nabeshima are famous for porcelain ware, the finest ever created in Japan. Nabeshima Naoshige (1537–1619) was one of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's main generals in his invasion of Korea. Though the campaign ultimately failed, many Korean artisans were brought back to Japan. They were concentrated in Nabeshima's fiefdom and became responsible for the creation of the world-famous Arita and Imari porcelain, as well as the exclusive Nabeshima ware. The clan is also known as the embodiment of the "way of the samurai." Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659–1719) compiled commentaries of his lord, Nabeshima Mitsushige, into a book called *Hagakure* (*Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*), which became popular in the twentieth century as representing the epitome of *bushido*.

Festival: Hatsuuma Festival, beginning of February (the date varies each year). An ancient agricultural festival traditionally associated with Inari, held in February on the first "day of the Horse." An ancient dance in "devils' masks" is performed, to the accompaniment of drumming.

Isaniwa Jinja

MAP 7

DATE FOUNDED: Foundation date unknown but presumed to be from the Heian period. The current building was rebuilt in 1667 at the behest of Matsudaira Sadanaga (1640–74).

ADDRESS: 173 Sakuradani-cho, Matsuyama-shi, Ehime 790-0838

TEL/INFORMATION: 089-947-7447

HOW TO GET THERE: From JR Matsuyama Station take a streetcar headed to Dogo Onsen, and then continue about 10 minutes on foot.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Emperor Chuai, Jingu Kogo, Hachiman (identified as Emperor Ojin), and the Munakata deities (Ichikishimahime no mikoto, Tagitsuhihime no mikoto, and Tagorihime no mikoto), known here collectively as Mihashira no hime okami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Protection from danger, well-being of the family, safety at sea and on the roadways.

BEST TIME TO GO: During the Matsuyama Autumn Festival, 5–7 October.

Important physical features: The shrine sits atop Mikariya Hill, accessed by climbing an impressive stairway of 135 rough stone steps. It is one of only four existing *hachiman-zukuri* shrine buildings and said to be based on the design of Iwashimizu Hachimangu in Kyoto. It begins with an *irimoya-zukuri romon* with a *karabafu* over the entrance, connected to a wide, covered corridor (*kairo*) that extends from the *romon* and wraps around the entire inner compound. The *romon* is connected to a small corridor



The *haiden* and *hachiman-zukuri honden* of Isaniwa Jinja

and gabled-roof *mosuden*. An open lattice-work fence extends from the *haiden* and wraps around the *bonden*. The *bonden* is a double-gabled roof structure, with two-bay-deep front and rear chambers (*geijin* and *naijin*). A one-bay intermediate space (almost as wide as the other chambers) forms a covered corridor between the two. The structure is nine bays long, with the central bay of each group of three being slightly wider. Although the gold-covered rain gutter under the eaves in the center of the structure typical of *hachiman-zukuri* is missing here, the columns have been gilded. The entire exterior is painted in vermilion with some polychromed details on the shrimp-like rainbow-beams (*ebikoryo*) and other sculptural details. One nice aspect of the shrine is that you can walk the entire length of the *kairo* while viewing the *bonden* at leisure from all sides. The building is designated an Important Cultural Property.

Important spiritual features: Isaniwa Jinja is mentioned in the tenth-century *Engishiki*. Legend states that it was constructed on the site visited by Emperor Chuai and Jingu Kogo when they visited the hot springs here. The name Isaniwa is thought to refer to Jingu herself. Later, it was considered a family shrine of the Kono clan that ruled this area from the fourteenth century. However, the Kono were a seafaring clan, and this may be why the Munakata deities are also enshrined here as they are at Usa Jingu in Kyushu. These deities are considered protectors of sailors and sea-lanes. In 1662 Matsudaira Sadanaga, third *daimyo* of the Hisamatsu Matsudaira clan to rule the Iyo Matsuyama domain, promised Hachiman that he would rebuild the shrine if he was victorious in a *yabusame* horseback archery contest held in Edo Castle. He was, and the current shrine dates from that time. (For details on the Hachiman deity, please see the



The *romon* of Isaniwa Jinja

entries for Usa Jingu and other Hachimangu shrines. For details on the Munakata deities, please see the entry for Munakata Taisha.)

Description: The Kono were warlords in Iyo (present-day Ehime prefecture) who had a strong navy and ruled the province from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. That navy was used by Mori Motonari (1497–1571), a warlord who controlled a large part of western Japan. The Kono had a castle at Yuzuki near Isaniwa, in what is now Dogo Park (Isaniwa was also called Yuzuki Hachimangu). The last Kono was forced to leave Iyo by Chosokabe Motochika when he took over Shikoku in the late sixteenth century. In 1603, Kato Yoshiakira built a large castle with a five-story *tenshu* (tower or keep) on the current location of Matsuyama Castle, but it was still unfinished when the Kato were moved to Aizu in 1627 by the Tokugawa. Gamo Tadachika was brought in to replace the Kato and finished the castle. Matsudaira Sadayuki was brought in after this, and he rebuilt the main keep into a three-story structure. The castle, which stands high atop the center of downtown Matsuyama, was rebuilt once again in 1854 and fully restored in the late 1900s. Sadayuki's grandson Sadanaga rebuilt Isaniwa Jinja. It and

nearby Yu Jinja, which enshrines Onamuchi and Sukunahikona no mikoto, are both closely related to the ancient Dogo Onsen. A short distance from the shrine the famous hot springs is the main tourist attraction. The area may have been known for its *onsen* since the fifth century, and several emperors are thought to have visited here. According to shrine tradition, Jingu Kogo and Emperor Chuai also came here (which would place the *onsen* in the second century). The centerpiece of this *onsen* town is an ornate wooden bathhouse from 1894 called the Honkan that featured in the work of the writer Natsume Soseki. A ¥1,500 deluxe ticket allows use of an upstairs room after the bath, where tea and sweets are served. Open from 6:30 A.M. to 10 P.M. (first-floor bath open until 11).

Near the shrine is Dogo Park, where the excavated remains of Yuzuki Castle are open to the public. Another place to visit is the fifty-first stop on the eighty-eight-temple pilgrimage around Shikoku, called Ishiteji. It can be reached by a short bus ride (buses leave from the front of Dogo Park). Ishiteji houses a three-story pagoda and a two-story *niomon* gate with guardian figures carved by members of the Kei school. The gate was built in 1318 and is designated a National Treasure. The story of the temple, whose name means “stone

hand," is one of the most famous connected with the Shikoku eighty-eight-temple pilgrimage. It relates how the wealthy Emon Saburo, who several times denied alms to a begging monk, finally broke the alms bowl and drove him away with a stick. From this point, Emon's eight sons died—one each day—until all were dead. He searched for the old monk to make amends for the evil actions, circling the island twenty times, but to no avail. Finally, he decided to circle in the opposite direction, and, just as he was on the verge of death, the monk—who turned out to be Kobo Daishi—appeared and forgave him because of his sincere repentance. In response he told Kobo Daishi he wished to be reborn as the lord of Iyo in order to help the people. Kobo Daishi picked up a stone, wrote a small message on it, and put it into the hands of the dying man. Later, when the wife of the lord gave birth to a son, the baby was found to be clutching something so tightly that his hand could not be pried open. A monk was called to recite prayers, and the child then opened his hand to reveal a small stone and a message reading, "I am Emon Saburo, reborn." Thus the name of the family temple was changed to Ishiteji ("stone hand temple"), and the stone itself is now on exhibit there. The legend is said to represent the origin of the pilgrimage.

Festival: Matsuyama Autumn Festival, 5–7 October. It is originally a festival to stimulate the *tama* (soul) of the *kami*. Eight *mikoshi* stand off against each other, two at a time, colliding with the aim of toppling or driving back the other. Several of the *mikoshi* are housed at Isaniwa Jinja and are carried down the stone steps by as many as one hundred bearers to the plaza in front of Dogo Station. From beginning to end, the barely controlled chaos makes for a heart-stopping event.

Kotohiragu (Konpira-san)

DATE FOUNDED: Unknown, but about three thousand years according to shrine tradition. The current buildings date mostly from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

ADDRESS: 892-1 Kotohira-cho, Nakatado-gun, Kagawa 766-8501

TEL/INFORMATION: 0877-75-2121

HOW TO GET THERE: Take the Takamatsu-Kotohira Line from Takamatsu-Chikko Station to Kotoden Kotohira Station (the terminus), then walk 15 minutes to the entrance of the *monzen-machi* (market street). From there it is a long walk uphill to the main shrine.

ENSHRINED KAMI: Omononushi no kami and seventy-fifth Emperor Sutoku.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Safety at sea and on the roadways, prosperity in business.

BEST TIME TO GO: For the Kotohiragu Festival in October or the cherry blossoms in April.

Important physical features: Probably the most striking physical feature of Kotohiragu is its magnificent setting on the side of Mount Zozu ("elephant head") in Kagawa, the least mountainous prefecture in Shikoku. What mountains it does have stand on the plains like triangular *onigiri* (rice balls), and this very characteristic landscape becomes clear when viewed from the platform in front of the *bonden*, which stands about 824 feet above sea level. At this point you will have climbed 785 stone steps and have another 583 and another strenuous half-hour of walking to go if you intend to visit the *okusha*, closer to the top of the mountain at around 1,381 feet. The *okusha* (inner shrine), also called Izu-

MAP 8



The *haiden* of Kotahiragu

tama Jinja, has a three-by-two-bay *irimoya-zukuri haiden* painted in red, with a veranda around the structure and the gable facing to the front side. A small, unpainted *nagare-zukuri bonden* sits behind it. To the left is a rock wall where hang images of *karasu tengu* and *tengu*. The walk to the *okusha* takes you through an old-growth forest that also serves as a bird and butterfly sanctuary.

Down at the main shrine, the first structure of interest is the entrance gate built at the behest of Matsudaira Yorishige in 1648. It is a two-story gate housing *zuijin* guardian figures. Continuing up the steps brings you to the *omoteshoin*, which contains paintings on the walls and *fusuma* (sliding doors) by the painters Maruyama Okyo and Murata Tanryo. The seven rooms of the guesthouse are each covered with an individual theme, including a magnificent display of ink paintings such as *The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove* and *Playing Tigers* done by Maruyama Okyo in 1787. Unfortunately, gold daubing was added at a later date over these lovely works, but seen in

total, the effect remains powerful. Admission is ¥800. Other works by Ito Jakuchu (1716–1800) in the *okushoin* are not currently on display but may be at some future date. The *shoin-zukuri* building was once used as a guesthouse for noble visitors, including the emperor.

Farther up the stairs is the magnificent sixty-foot-tall building called Asahi-sha, built in 1837. It was formerly the *kondo* (“gold hall”) of the Buddhist temple Konkoin. The five-bay-wide, two-story structure with *kara-bafu* stair canopy is intricately carved with birds, flowers, and cloud motifs, not only on struts and bracket sets, but also on the underside of the eaves. Unfortunately, a small pagoda that stood in front of it, on a slightly lower level, was torn down. Once again continuing up the stairs brings you to the *sakakimon* gate (also called the “upside-down gate” because one of its pillars is reversed), which was built in the late sixteenth century and rebuilt in 1879.

At the main shrine and viewing platform mentioned at the beginning is the large three-bay-square *haiden* with folding latticed doors and a veranda. Rebuilt in 1878, the *haiden* has an *irimoya-zukuri* gable roof with *chidori-bafu* and *karabafu* on all sides, creating a very dense and symmetrical image. Behind this is an *irimoya-zukuri bonden* with a *chidori-bafu* on the stair canopy and with *chigi* and *katsuogi*, connected by a closed corridor to the *haiden*. On its outside walls, the *bonden* features paintings of trees in lacquer and gold. When the structure was restored in the late nineteenth century, a shrine dedicated to the daughter of Takamimusuhi no mikoto and wife of Omononushi, Mihotsuhime, was built to the far left of the main shrine, and a 131-foot covered corridor (*minami watadono*) was later created to connect the two. The *emaden*, with a number of interesting votive tablets, is located next to this shrine. Finally, walking

past the *bonden* to the right to begin the trek to the *okusba*, comes the Shiramine Jinja, with a three-bay-square *irimoya-zukuri baiden*, behind which is an elevated gate and fence and small *bonden*. It was built in 1913 and dedicated to Emperor Sutoku. The woodwork is all painted in red with white walls (except the *bonden*, which is completely in red).

Important spiritual features: While the foundation date is not clear, it seems that some form of worship existed on Mount Zozu from at least the thirteenth century. One theory links the founding to a shrine named Kumoke dedicated to a thunder deity mentioned in the *Engishiki* in the province of Sanuki (Kagawa), but the location is not clear. By the mid-thirteenth century a hermitage called Shomyo-in dedicated to Amida existed at the foot of the mountain, and a temple where Kannon was worshipped, named Takidera (“waterfall temple”), existed on the side of the mountain. The evidence comes from a diary of a monk who visited both sites in 1248. At the time of the Mongol invasions in the late thirteenth century, a temple dedicated to the *sanjubanjin* (thirty tutelary deities) that protect the Lotus Sutra was established on the mountain, possibly by followers of Nichiren. By the sixteenth century, the *sanjubanjin* were being worshipped on the mountain at a temple named Matsuoji.

It was not until 1573 that a shrine to Konpira was built on the mountain by a monk named Yuga, who was head of a sub-temple of Matsuoji called Konko-in. Konpira (Kubira, who lived in the Ganges River and took the form of a crocodile) is mentioned in the Golden Light Sutra as an Indian protector of Buddhism. This whole myth cycle was incorporated from the Hindu Vedas, where the *yaksha* were the warriors of Kubira, the guardian

of wealth and a deity of water. Yuga enshrined Konpira in the esoteric Shingon tradition, but also as a *kami*. With the invasion of the province by the lord of Tosa (present-day Kochi Prefecture), Chosokabe Motochika, Yuga fled and the *shugendo* priests Yui and Yugon were installed. Worship of the *sanjubanjin* again became the main focus and worship of *shugendo* deities such as Fudo Myo-o was added to this. Motochika was deposed soon after completing the *sakakimon*, and Hideyoshi’s general, Sengoku Hidehisa, took control in 1585. To demonstrate loyalty to him, Yugon reinstalled Konpira as the main focus of worship. Though the mountain continued to be primarily a Shingon-*shugendo* complex, from this time Konpira worship flourished on Mount Zozu and the landholdings of the shrine greatly increased. In 1868 came the enshrinement of Omononushi no kami and Emperor Sutoku, collectively defined as the Kotohira deity. The slightly altered Chinese characters and pronunciation of the shrine’s name were apparently designed to remove the image of the Buddhist nature of Konpira worship, without damaging the popularity of the shrine (other characters had been used in the past such as those for the name of the town). The removal of all Buddhist and *shugendo* associations from this point on transformed Konpira-san into the thoroughly Shinto site that it is today.

The basic outline of the history given above does not provide the complete picture, however, as there are any number of myths and legends connected to the site. One important legend is that of how Emperor Sutoku (r. 1123–42), who was exiled to Sanuki (present-day Kagawa Prefecture) in 1156 after instigating the Hogen War, became a *tengu* on Mount Zozu. The legend states that the repentant Sutoku spent three years copying sutras that he tried to offer to Anrakuji temple in Kyoto. When he was pre-

vented from doing so, he bit his tongue and wrote on each sutra in his own blood his intention to return as the “great devil of Japan” to take revenge on his enemies. Separately, at the beginning of the Edo period, a cult of the mountain *tengu* Kongobo developed under the direction of a *shugendo* monk of Kotohiragu named Yugen. His predecessor, Yusei, had been responsible for a resurgence of worship on the mountain. Yusei carved an image of himself as a *tengu* that was installed as Kongobo by Yugen after his death. Though the two myths had nothing to do with each other originally, Sutoku was identified as the *tengu* Kongobo in a puppet play from the eighteenth century.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, then chief priest Yuzan had a new history of the shrine written, identifying the *kami* Konpira as Onamuchi. It was based on Yoshida Kanetomo's identification of Konpira as Onamuchi in the late fifteenth century. It is thought Yuzan did this to create a stronger connection for the shrine with the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, helping the shrine to gain imperial patronage. Thus, with the pressure to expunge Buddhist connections at the beginning of the Meiji period, the imperial ancestor Sutoku and Onamuchi gave the shrine its strong Shinto identity (Omononushi no kami, another name for Onamuchi, is used by the shrine today). To this day, however, Kotohiragu is still commonly referred to as Konpira-san, and its strongest identity is as a maritime deity and protector of the seafarer. The *kami* is also strongly associated with wealth, and the first Chinese character used for the name Konpira is also the character for the word “gold.”

Description: Kotohiragu is an extremely interesting shrine and the most popular destination point of tourists going to Shikoku other than the

eighty-eight-temple pilgrimage. Even in the 1800s, Konpira was a top pilgrimage destination. One of the reasons was that like many such shrine and temple towns, the area offered a heady combination of sanctity and sacrilege—with entertainments being as much a draw as the deities. No doubt the proximity to the birthplace of Kobo Daishi at nearby Zentsuji was helpful, as was closeness to ports of access along the Inland Sea. Sailors claimed to have been guided safely ashore in rough seas by a light shining from the mountain. When copper was discovered in nearby Ehime Prefecture, prayers of thanks and offerings of copper lanterns were made to the *kami*. Similarly, when the advent of steamships increased trade and tourism along the Inland Sea, the *kami* of Mount Zozu was considered the source of this good fortune. And when war came and a base was established at nearby Marugame, the families of soldiers organized pilgrimages to pray for their safety. Nowadays it is the difficult trek up the stairs and the magnificence of the shrine that leaves the greatest impression. If you prefer, you can hire one of the many pairs of bearers to carry you up the stairs for a fee.

Along the approach to the shrine grounds, there are several points of note. One interesting structure is the *takadoro* lantern built in 1860 and located near the train station. At over ninety feet tall, it is more a small lighthouse than a lantern. It is made of wood on a tall stone base, with a long staircase leading to an entrance. It was built by one of the religious confraternities organized in the Meiji period. Another interesting structure, built at the end of the seventeenth century, is the *sayabashi* (covered bridge) that spans the narrow Kanakura River that flows past the entrance to the market street of the shrine. It is also called the *ukibashi*, or “floating bridge,” because its arched base provides support without the use

of any legs. The rather elegant bridge, with a copper-covered gabled-roof center section and two *karabafu*-roofed sections at either end, is only used once a year for shrine ceremonies.

A final point of interest is the old Konpira Kanamaru-za, built in 1835 and designated an Important Cultural Property. To see it turn left from the *monzen-machi*, before you climb any stairs. It is the oldest kabuki theater in Japan, which was restored and moved a short distance in 1976. Performances by Japan's top kabuki actors have been put on about two weeks every April at a festival held since the mid-1980s. The theater has a number of distinct features, such as a human-powered revolving stage and lighting without the use of electricity. It was used as a backdrop in the 1995 film *Sharaku*, about the legendary *ukiyo-e* master.

Festivals: Kotohiragu Taisai (Kotohiragu Festival), 9–11 October. A *mikoshi* weighing more than a ton is carried down the stone steps during the night and returned to the shrine the following night.

Cherry Blossom Festival, 10 April; Plum Blossom Festival, 10 October. Both festivals include a procession and dance by *miko*.

Kemari, a Heian-period game wherein players try to keep a small ball in the air as long as possible by kicking it to each other. Held on 5 May and 7 July, and at the end of December.

Kabuki, two weeks in April (dates vary). Top actors come to the Kanamaru-za for daily shows in the morning and evening. Tickets are ¥7,000 to ¥13,000 and can be purchased through the Japan Travel Bureau (JTB). A ticket to view the theater on non-performance days, including the mechanism below stage, is ¥500.

Oyamazumi Jinja

DATE FOUNDED: Founded during the reign of first Emperor Jinmu and moved to its present location around A.D. 594 at the behest of Empress Suiko, according to shrine tradition. The current buildings are from 1427.

ADDRESS: 3327 Omishima-cho Miyaura, Imabari-shi, Ehime 794-1304

TEL/INFORMATION: 0897-82-0032. A pamphlet in English is available from the museum.

HOW TO GET THERE: From JR Matsuyama Station, take the express bus to Oyamazumi Jinja-mae bus stop (about 2 hours and 15 minutes, ¥2,590). From Hiroshima Bus Station, take the bus to Omishima bus stop and change to the bus for Oyamazumi Jinja-mae bus stop (about 2.5 hours).

ENSHRINED KAMI: Oyamazumi no kami.

PRAYERS OFFERED: Fulfillment of any wish, good crops, and safety at sea.

BEST TIME TO GO: To see the one-man sumo in May or June.

Important physical features: Probably the most important physical feature of the shrine is its location on the Inland Sea island of Omishima. Since ancient times its *kami* has been worshipped by warriors who have deposited weapons and armor in honor of the deity. As a result, the shrine museum contains more than a thousand objects, of which there are 8 National Treasures and 472 Important Cultural Properties. Some of Japan's most important items of medieval warfare are housed here, including a suit of armor from Minamoto no Yoshitsune and the only existing example of a woman's armor from the



The *haiden* of Oyamazumi Jinja

mid-sixteenth century. It was made for Tsuruhime, the teenage daughter of the Ochi clan of shrine priests, later known as the “Jeanne d’Arc of the Inland Sea.” The story goes that she helped successfully defend the island from the Ouchi clan, but committed suicide when she learned that her lover had not survived the battle. An event held on the island every July commemorates her bravery. The museum also houses a *naginata* (halberd) that belonged to Tomoe Gozen, a female samurai and captain of Minamoto no Yoshinaka’s forces immortalized in the *Heike monogatari*. Other treasures include Shinto and Buddhist items used in worship and a collection of palm-sized copper mirrors (*dokyo*). Another museum, the Maritime Museum, houses artifacts of the old samurai navies and a boat built for Emperor Showa. Open from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.; the ¥1,000 entrance fee covers both museums.

As to the shrine itself, it was rebuilt in 1427 and completely restored in 1953, when writing found inside the structure confirmed its age. The seven-bay-wide and four-bay-deep *haiden* has a simple gabled roof (*kirizuma-zukuri*) with a *karabafu* stair canopy built into the

center of the non-gabled side supported by two additional pillars. It is made of horizontal planks of unfinished wood that at times appear almost black. The roof is surfaced in cypress-bark shingles, and a veranda encompasses the building. A fence extends from either side of the *haiden* and wraps around the *bonden* behind it. The *bonden* is a three-by-three-bay *nagare-zukuri* structure with the front bay a few steps lower than the rear two. The walls are in white and all the woodwork is in vermilion, in stark contrast to the darkness of the *haiden*. The *bonden* stands in the center of the courtyard created by the surrounding fence, with two smaller shrines of similar style standing to its left and right. The buildings are oriented toward the northwest. A new *somon* (*romon*) was built in 2010. It houses two of the most interesting *zuijin* figures of any shrine in Japan, created by a father and son from Ehime. The standing figures, outfitted with armor, sport *nio*-like poses. The shrine is surrounded by some two hundred giant camphor trees; at least one calculated to be about 2,600 years old.

Important spiritual features:
Oyamazumi no kami (Oyamatsumi) is mentioned numerous times in the *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and *Shoku nibongi*. However, it is not always clear if the references pertain to the same deity, and it seems instead to be a general name for mountain deities. First, there is the Oyamazumi who is created after Izanami and Izanagi descended from the plain of heaven and begot many deities. The *Kojiki* and one alternative reading in the *Nihon shoki* tell us that an Oyamazumi was born when Izanagi cut the fire *kami*—whose birth caused the death of Izanami—into pieces. Then there is the Oyamazumi who is the father of Kamuo-ichihime, one of Susano-o’s wives and mother of Ukemochi no kami, the grain *kami* of Inari.

There is also an Oyamazumi who is the father of the wife of Ninigi. He sent two daughters, one of great beauty, Konohanasakuya (“blossoming tree–flower”), and one, Iwanagahime (“enduring rock”), who was ugly and thus rejected by Ninigi. So Oyamazumi placed a curse on the imperial line, saying that Iwanagahime was sent so that the imperial line would live long like the stone of the mountains, but because she had been rejected, the lives of emperors would be cut short like the blossoms of flowers.

Another Oyamazumi in the *Shoku Nibongi*, was said to have come to Japan from Korea. The entry is based on the *Iyo fudoki*, which is no longer extant and states that another name for the *kami* is Watashi okami (*uatasbi* means “crossing over”). Some scholars believe that this refers to the *kami* coming to Omishima from Settsu (present-day Osaka) during the reign of Emperor Nintoku (r. 313–99), and therefore relate it to the shrine. One final legend, also concerning the origin of the shrine, takes place in the time of Emperor Jinmu, when a descendant of the *kami* named Ochi no mikoto came to the islands in the Inland Sea (Seto Naikai) to pacify them in readiness for Jinmu’s crossing. The ancestor is said to have enshrined Oyamazumi here.

Of all the different deities named Oyamazumi, shrine tradition holds that the *kami* enshrined here is both the child of Izanagi and Izanami and the father of Konohanasakuya who was enshrined here by Ochi no mikoto. He is considered here as a *kami* of both mountains and water, connected to the protection of the all-important sea lanes. Omishima was probably considered a sacred island in ancient times and thereafter lent its name to shrines called Mishima, where Oyamazumi is usually enshrined. Today there are an estimated eleven thousand Mishima shrines, of which Mishima Taisha in Shizuoka is the best known.

Description: The Inland Sea lies between the main island of Honshu and the smaller island of Shikoku. It is bordered in the east by Osaka and the Kii Peninsula, and in the west by Kyushu. It contains some 950 small islands, scattered throughout. Omishima is located in a large cluster that lies in the narrow straits between the northwest outcropping of Shikoku and Hiroshima prefecture on Honshu. There is about a ten-foot difference in sea level between the eastern and western ends of the straits, which causes swift currents that once made navigation difficult and dangerous. As the Inland Sea was the main trade route connecting the capital, Kyushu, and the continental ports beyond, the islands and areas bordering the sea gave rise to a number of private navies called *suigun* or *kaizoku*. Such navies could help or hinder passage, and some turned to piracy. Mostly—as with one of the largest pirate/naval clans, the Murakami—they were available to the highest bidder. Pirates (also called *akuto*) were a problem from at least 838, when the central government ordered clans bordering the Inland Sea to pursue and arrest them.

One of the most famous figures was Fujiwara no Sumitomo, a scion of the famous Fujiwara clan who was sent to arrest pirates but became one instead. He was active from around 936, but was caught and beheaded in 941, after being chased to Kyushu. The so-called *wako* pirates wreaked havoc up and down the Korean and Chinese coasts, disrupting international relations, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. The Kono clan was one of those called on by the central government to counter the problem. They claimed descent from Emperor Kanmu and are thought to be a branch of the Ochi. The Ochi later took the name Mishima. Oyamazumi Jinja was long considered their ancestral shrine.

Today a series of bridges known as the Shimanami Kaido, or “coastal road,” connects Imabari City in Shikoku with Hiroshima Prefecture by crossing six islands, of which Omishima is the third from the Imabari side. To its north is an island called Ikuchijima, easily reached by boat from Mihara on the Honshu side, where an unusual temple named Kosanji is to be found in the port city of Setoda. The temple complex was begun in 1936, and its Amida Nyorai principal image was installed in 1948. It is a True Pure Land (Jodo Shinshu) Buddhism temple associated with Nishi Hon-*ganji* in Kyoto but it has no congregation. It was built by one man, a wealthy pipe manufacturer named Kanemoto Koso, to honor the memory of his mother. He obtained (for a price) Buddhist priesthood and the rights to a small temple named Kosanji. He had previously built the elaborate Choseikaku villa for his mother here in 1927 when she was alive and now sought to ensure her entry to paradise by building a magnificent temple. It is well described in *The Inland Sea* by Donald Richie, and a quote from the book sums up the situation: “The place is actually quite impressive. When kitsch becomes this grand it becomes art.” It may or may not be

art, but it is certainly grand spectacle. Among the numerous structures are “modified” reproductions of the *yomeimon* gate of Nikko Toshogu, Byodoin, the *romon* of Horyuji, the five-story pagoda of Muroji—the list goes on. There are some unique attractions as well, such as the Thousand Buddhas Hell Valley Cave, an incredible tunnel filled with rough lava stone and sculptures and the *miraishin no oka*, a sort of dazzling white marble mountain of a sculpture by artist Kuetani Itto. With its ¥1,200 admission fee, Kosanji may not be for everyone, but you might just find yourself captivated by the wonder of it all.

Festival: Otaue Matsuri, early June (the date varies each year). A rice-planting festival, of which there are thousands throughout the country. What makes this one interesting is that it is accompanied by one-man sumo wrestling, in which a combatant competes with the unseen *kami* of rice. The wrestler pretends to grasp the belt of his divine opponent and jostle with him, as a referee monitors them. Three bouts are held, with the wrestler defeated in two of them. The *kami*’s victory ensures a good harvest.

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CALENDAR OF MATSURI

[FESTIVALS]

This is a very brief list and description of some typical and especially interesting *matsuri* all around Japan. Some appear in the book under their respective shrines but most do not. The days on which some festivals are held varies each year because they are based on the old lunar calendar, which was observed in Japan up until 1873. Also, please note that some events are not annual, therefore the years in which they are held are included. Finally, certain festivals such as New Year and Setsubun are conducted at almost every shrine and temple in the country and therefore no particular shrine is listed for these occasions. In any event, it is always best to consult the shrine or the local tourism bureau for exact dates and times.

January

1st–3rd | Hatsumode (New Year) – Generally begins on midnight of New Years Eve but events are held during the first 3 to 5 days of the month at every shrine and temple. In terms of the number of visitors, the big 3 in the Kanto area (Eastern Japan) are Meiji Jingu (Tokyo), Naritasan Temple (Chiba) and Kawasaki Daishi (Kanagawa). In the Kansai area (Western-central Japan) they are Fushimi Inari (Kyoto), Sumiyoshi Taisha (Osaka) and Ikuta Jinja (Hyogo)

3rd | Tamaseseri Matsuri, Hakozaikigu, Fukuoka City – Men dressed only in loincloths are doused with water as they compete for large wooden balls symbolizing the “tide rising” and “tide lowering” jewels that were a present from the Dragon King to Jingu Kogo.

10th | Lucky Man Festival, such as the one at Nishinomiya Ebisu Jinja, in Hyogo – These are festivals to the kami of good fortune, Ebisu, held around the 10th at many shrines throughout Japan. Typically, entrants gather outside the gates of the shrine from early

in the morning. At Nishinomiya, the big wooden doors are flung open at 6 A.M., and 6,000 runners dash the 250 yards from the gate to the *haiden*. The first three people to reach are declared the “Lucky Men” (*fuku otoko*) for the year.

15th | Dosojin Fire Festival, such as the one at Kosuge Jinja, Nozawa Onsen, Nagano – Fire festivals are held throughout the country at this time of year. They are purification-fertility festivals usually taking the form of a huge bonfire consisting of talismans and decorations from the previous year, brought to the shrine or temple for burning. At Kosuge Jinja, one of the major fire festivals, men of the ages of 25 and 42, the so-called *yakudoshi* (“unlucky age”), build a large shrine of wood. Later, the 25-year-olds try to defend the shrine using long poles, as the older gentlemen try to burn it down with torches. (Hint: it always gets burned down in the end!)

February

3rd | Setsubun Festival – Held at shrines and temples throughout the country. Ceremonies and performances are held, climaxed by packets

of beans being tossed to the attending crowds. The beans are later used at home to throw at the *oni* (devils) to chase them away (and welcome in good luck for the year). Under the old lunar calendar, Setsubun (“Seasonal Division”) was considered as New Year’s Eve.

2nd week of February, lasting for seven days | Sapporo Snow Festival. Sapporo City central mall, Hokkaido — This is not in fact a Shinto festival—though it seems like it should be. Still, it is the largest winter festival with 400 or so massive sculptures of ice and snow filling the city’s central mall.

6th | Oto Matsuri (Fire Torch Festival), Kumano Hayatama Taisha, Kamikura Jinja, Wakayama — Hundreds of people carrying lighted torches descend the 538 stone steps from Kamikura Jinja, creating a giant river of fire on the mountain. One of the most famous fire festivals in Japan.

March

1st–14th | Shuni-e (Second-Month) Ceremony, Todaiji Temple (Nigatsu-do hall), Nara City, Nara — Various preparations and austerities performed by eleven designated monks. Ten monks run around the Nigatsu-do Hall with lighted torches, dropping cinders on the crowd below, between 6 and 7 P.M. every night (eleven on the night of the 12th). This is a festival of repentance begun in the 8th century and held continuously since then.

Around the 2nd (dates vary each year) | Konomiya Hadaka (naked man) Festival, Konomiya Jinja, Inazawa City, Aichi — A festival begun in the 8th century to ward off evil spirits causing plague, the true name is Naoi Shinji (“Evil Expelling rite”). One man called the *shin otoko* (“god man”) is chosen to be a scapegoat while hundreds of men in loincloths try to touch him and literally “rub off” their misfortune on to him. His protectors douse the men with water in an attempt to keep him from being

crushed. On the following morning, the *shin otoko*, carrying a “mud cake” on his back (symbolizing the impurities he has taken off of others), is chased away from the shrine and the mud cake is buried. This is one of the most famous of many naked man festivals held throughout the winter months.

3rd | Hina Matsuri (Doll Festival) also called “Girls Day” — A display of dolls in Heian period costume, conducted at temples and shrines throughout the country. This also began as a festival for removing evil spirits by having them entrapped in dolls (*bitogata*) and floated away. Some shrines still maintain this original custom.

15th | Hounen Matsuri, Tagata Jinja, Komaki, Nagoya — A fertility festival dubbed the “penis festival” because huge wooden phallus are paraded (*bounen* means “rich harvest”), along with a large number of “less endowed” members. A “hugely” popular festival and one of many such phallus festivals throughout Japan.

April

2nd–4th (Upper Shrine) and 9th–11th (Lower Shrine) | Suwa Taisha Onbashira Festival, Suwa City, Nagano — Be aware that this festival is held once every 6 years (2016, 2022, etc.). Huge poles are erected at each shrine (sixteen in all). But first they must be brought down from the mountain. This is done by a large number of men, sometimes pulling, sometimes wading across rivers, and sometimes riding the huge logs down precipitous slopes. One of the most arduous and dangerous festivals in Japan.

1st Friday to Sunday in April | Mikumano Shrine Big Festival, Mikumano Jinja, Kakegawa City, Shizuoka — Thirteen huge floats called *neri* with large, intricate dolls atop them are paraded to the accompaniment of music and dance. One of the many Gion-style festivals.

2nd weekend in April | Doronko Festival, Wakamiya Hachimangu Shrine, Nagahama, Kochi City, Kochi — A festival begun to celebrate the ending of a plague. Begins with a planting festival, after which women smear mud on the faces of men to keep them healthy throughout the year. In addition to this, a group of men in loincloths go splashing and frolicking through a pool of mud. Also considered a fertility festival, such *dorokake* (mud slinging) festivals, are held in many shrines throughout Japan.

Second to the third Sunday of April | Kamakura Spring Festival, Tsurugaoka Hachimangu, Kamakura, Kanagawa. — Many events are held during this one-week period. Highlights include a parade of hundreds of people in Kamakura-era dress, classic dance performances and mounted horseback archery (*yabusame*) on the final day of the festival. Tsurugaoka Hachimangu has one of the most famous displays of this ancient tradition in all Japan.

13th–17th | Yayoi Festival, Futarasan Shrine, Nikko City, Tochigi — A festival begun in the 8th century. Thirteen portable shrines are paraded by people in period costume to celebrate the coming of spring.

14th–15th and October 9th–10th | Takayama Matsuri, Takayama Hie Jinja (spring) and Hachiman Jinja (fall), Takayama, Gifu — Held in both spring and fall, about twelve tall floats called *yatai* are paraded through the streets. Each float contains a number of men hidden inside, who manipulate some magnificent *karakuri ningyo* puppets that perform on the top of the *yatai*. Different *yatai* are displayed in the spring and fall festivals.

15th | Toka Festival, Kikka festival October 15th, Itsukushima Jinja, Miyajima, Hiroshima — A performance of court dance and music (*gagaku*) handed down since the twelfth century.

26th–May 21st (approximate dates) | Matsumae Sakura (cherry blossom) Festival, Matsumae Park (Matsumae Castle), Hokkaido — Not a Shinto festival but one of the best places in Japan to view cherry blossoms with about 10,000 trees. Paper lanterns are hung under the trees and the castle is illuminated. Cherry blossom festivals of the formal and informal type are omnipresent at this time of year.

3rd Saturday in April–2nd Sunday in May | Wisteria Festival, Kameido Tenmangu, Tokyo — Various events are held under the wisteria blossoms that hang from the trellises over the pond in front of the shrine. Recalls the Edo-period prints of Hiroshige and Hokusai.

May

2nd–3rd | Ome Taisai, Sumiyoshi Jinja, Ome City, Tokyo — Twelve floats that are actually moving stages transport musicians and dancers through the streets. Fixed stages are also set up along the streets and when a float passes the top half called the *mawari butai*, pivots to face the fixed stage and the musicians have a sort of battle called *seriai*. The climax comes when about six floats gather at one corner and have intense music and dance battles. A fabulous festival from the Edo period and very similar in style to the Kawagoe Matsuri in Saitama.

3rd–4th | Hakata Dontaku, Hakata, Fukuoka — Not a Shinto festival but a huge procession featuring about 12,000 *matsubayashi* folk musicians and people in costume, with people clapping wooden *shamoji* rice ladles. Fukuoka's biggest festival attracting about 2 million visitors.

Nearest Saturday and Sunday to the 15th | Kanda Matsuri, Kanda Myojin, Tokyo — One of Tokyo's major festivals, features some 200 *mikoshi* and *dasbi* floats. Held every year but the large-scale, famous festival is held only every other year on odd-number years 2013, 2015, etc.

Mid-May | Otabi Matsuri, Ubashi Jinja Moto-ori Hiyoshi Jinja, Komatsu City, Ishikawa — For four days, large, elaborate floats called *bikiyama* are wheeled through the streets. These *bikiyama*, made in 1766, are actually small stages where kabuki by child actors is held from about 5 each night. One of the biggest festivals in the area.

15th | Aoi Matsuri (Aoi Festival) Kami-gamo and Shimogamo Jinja, Kyoto — More than 1,000 years old, this is one of the three biggest festivals of Kyoto. Over 500 people in period costume make a procession from the Kyoto Imperial Palace to Shimogamo Jinja. Here rites are carried out before the procession moves to Kamigamo Jinja. Horseback archery is held in the afternoon. Designated an Intangible Cultural Property.

17th–18th | Shunki Reitaisai (Grand Spring Festival), Nikko Toshogu, Nikko, Tochigi — On the 18th a procession of 1000 people in Edo period costume reenact the journey of Tokugawa Ieyasu's spirit from Kunoan Toshogu to its enshrinement at Nikko in the early 17th century. A magnificent spectacle in a magnificent setting.

3rd Saturday and Sunday | Aoba Festival, Aoba Jinja, Sendai City, Miyagi — One of the largest festivals in Sendai featuring thousands of dancers in colorful costumes, sporting fans and doing the “Sparrow Dance” (*susume odori*). Also a procession of men in samurai armor and large floats called *yamaboko*.

3rd weekend in May | Sanja Matsuri, Asakusa Jinja, Tokyo — One of Tokyo's major festivals with 10,000 participants and 100 *mikoshi*. This three-day festival attracts over 2 million people and is one of Tokyo's cultural landmarks.

19th–21st | Mikuni Festival, Sakai City, Fukui — Six floats about 18 feet tall and carrying musicians are adorned with huge dolls in the garb of Edo-period warriors. One of the three biggest festivals in the area.

June

10th–16th | Sanno Matsuri, Akasaka Hie Jinja, Tokyo — Held every two years on even-numbered years (2014, 2016, etc.), one of Tokyo's oldest festivals. A parade of *mikoshi*, several old *dashi* with large figures, and a procession of people in period dress.

2nd Saturday in June | Chagu Chagu Umakko (Horse Festival), Onikoshi-sozen Jinja to Hachiman Jinja, Morioka City, Iwate — A 200-year-old procession of around 100 horses in colorful raiment and bells. The event began as a reward for the horses after the toil of planting season. Best viewed in Takizawa-mura. Actually, Chagu Chagu festivals are held in a number of shrines around the country.

July

1st–31st and especially July 17th | Gion Matsuri, Yasaka Jinja, Kyoto — The origin of all Gion Festivals begun in 869, and one of Kyoto's largest festivals. Many events included in this month-long festival, but the highlight is the 17th with a procession of the *boko* and *yamaboko* floats that define this festival. The *Hoko* are 82 feet tall with 30–40 people pulling and turning these two and one half-ton floats. The *yamaboko* feature life-size historical figures. On the night of the 14th–16th, the floats are on display, illuminated by paper lanterns, and some old houses open their doors and display precious folding screens and other objects.

1st–15th | Hakata Gion Yamakasa, Kushida Jinja and other places around Fukuoka, Kyushu — The focus of this festival are the 53-foot tall *kazariyamalasa* floats, two of which are on display all year round at Kushida Jinja, and the smaller *kakiyamamakasa*. The latter weigh about one ton and are carried on the shoulders of bearers. The last day, seven of these *kakiyama* are raced down a three-mile course in a festivity known as Oiyama. This festival, begun

in 1241 to ward off a plague, is now Fukuoka's largest festival.

2nd weekend in July | Narita Gion Matsuri, Shinshoji Temple, Narita City, Chiba — Though Gion festivals are usually associated with shrines, this one is connected to Naritasan Shinshoji Temple. A 300-year-old festival, ten large floats filled with musicians and portable stages for dancing parade through the streets. Shinshoji is one of the oldest temples in the Kanto region, dating from 940.

7th | Tanabata Festival — Originally held on the 7th day of the 7th month by the old lunar calendar (which actually puts it in August or September) — Held throughout the country, this festival is derived from a Chinese legend of the “Weaver Princess” Orihime Boshi (the star Vega) and her husband Kengyuu Boshi (the star Altair). The legend states that they were separated by the Milky Way and could only meet once each year on this day. Not a Shinto festival, it is often celebrated at shrines but primarily as a secular event. Paper streamers or tree branches are put up and small strips of paper attached to strings are tied to them, along with the wishes written on them.

1st Friday after July 9 (including July 9) to Sunday | Sawara Summer Matsuri, Yasaka Jinja, Sawara City, Chiba — A traditional style Gion festival of the Kanto Plain, with 10 huge floats filled with musicians and sporting 16-foot-tall dolls on top. These carefully crafted dolls are depictions of historical and mythical heroes and animals. Sawara is a charming city that was once a thriving port, shipping goods up and down the Tone River to Tokyo. It retains a certain amount of this old Edo charm.

A number of days from mid-July to the first week of September | Gujo Odori, Gujo Hachiman City, Gifu — Dance, dance, dance! Thirty-one nights of dancing in this 400-year-old festival. Ten traditional dances are performed in the streets with everybody joining in. These are slow dances, representing some

activity such as harvesting rice or a samurai riding a horse. During Obon (the Buddhist festival of the dead), dancing goes on all night long.

14th | Nachi no Himatsuri, Nachi Taisha, Kumano, Wakayama — Twelve huge 110-pound torches are carried up and down the stone steps to the shrine by men dressed in white, and used to purify twelve 20-foot-tall portable shrines in their midst. The festival comes to a climax at the foot of the 440-foot Nachi Falls.

Sometime between July and August (date varies) | Kangen Sai, Itsukushima Jinja, Hiroshima — Boats ferry *mikoshi* and performers to a number of smaller shrines around the island. At night, performances of ancient music and dance are held in front of the main shrine.

20th–22nd | Uchiwa Matsuri, Saitama Yasaka Jinja, Kumagaya City, Saitama — Twelve large floats filled with flute and drum players parade through the town. The climax on the 22nd features all the floats gathered together in front of Kumagaya Station for a raucous competition. Uchiwa (fans), the theme of the festival, are distributed to visitors.

22nd–24th | Warei Taisai and Ushi-Oni Festival, Warei Jinja, Uwajima, Ehime-ken — This is a sea fearer's festival that began in the 8th century. *Mikoshi* are hauled through the Sukagawa River with lots of jostling and splashing during this evening festival. In the daytime a procession of large floats in the shape of behemoths is part of the Ushi-Oni (“cattle demon”) Matsuri. These monsters also face off in the river, recalling the Japanese-style bullfighting called *togyu* for which Uwajima is famous. *Togyu* matches are held in January, April and August.

24th–25th | Tenma Tenjin Matsuri, Osaka Tenmangu, Osaka — A festival in a great fleet of boats on the Yokobori and Dotonburi rivers in Osaka. One of Osaka's biggest festivals with processions including the *ganyji* red-hooded young men playing on a big *taiko* drum, and a large boat-shaped float called the Dondoko

bune. At night, large stages with towers of lanterns move slowly down the river with performing dancers aboard.

4th Friday through Sunday in July | Tobata Gion Yamagasa Festival, Kitakyushu, Fukuoka — Thirty-three-foot-tall pyramids of red lanterns are hauled through the streets on the shoulders of about 100 bearers in Kitakyushu's biggest festival. The floats look entirely different during the day, when they are festooned with flags. Designated an Important Intangible Folk Culture by the Japanese government.

Last Sunday in July | Peiron Boat Race, Nagasaki — This is not a Shinto festival but one adopted from Chinese tradition. Up to 30 dragon boats with as many as 30 oarsmen each race three quarters of a mile around Nagasaki Harbor in this 300-year-old event.

31st–August 4th | Hachinohe Sansha Taisai, Shinra Jinja, Ogami Jinja, and Shinmeigu, Hachinohe City, Aomori — This Festival of the Three Shrines dates back to 1721. Twenty-seven large colorful floats (a new one is added each year), virtually exploding with decorations full of dragons and wizards, give claim to it being Japan's biggest float festival. These incredible floats are accompanied by musicians, singers, dancers, men in samurai dress on horseback, and the *mikoshi* of the three shrines.

August

1st | Ofune Festival, Suwa Taisha, Shimosuwu, Nagano — This festival celebrates the transfer of the *kami* of Suwa Akinomiya (Autumn shrine) to Harunomiya (Spring shrine). This is followed by a large "boat" over 26 feet long and 14 feet wide made of green brushwood and decorated with colored cloth and figures of an old man and old woman. It is also loaded with celebrants. Another, more sedate festival in February returns the *kami* to the Harunomiya. This is the largest annual festival in Suwa.

1st–4th | Morioka Sansa Odori, Mitsui-shi Jinja, Morioka City, Iwate — A huge dance festival with dancers some 5,000 of them sporting drums. The legend goes that a devil terrorizing the area round Morioka, was made to leave by the power of the local *kami*, and promised to never return. As a sign of this pledge, the devil left his handprint on three stones and the name of the region, Iwate ("stone-hand") was born from then. The people were so happy, the celebrated the *kami* with the Sansa Odori.

2nd–7th | Nebuta Matsuri, Aomori City, Aomori — The most magnificent festival of light in Japan. The origins of the festival are vague but thought to be connected with Tanabata, which often occurred in August by the lunar calendar. The custom of floating lighted paper lanterns down the river (*neburi nagashi*) to send evil spirits away grew into larger and larger lanterns. These are now 16-foot-tall floats of enormous and vigorous three-dimensional figures of warriors and devils. Brightly lit and artistically executed, they are accompanied by musicians and dancers in a whirlwind of color and sound. There are a number of other *nebuta*-type festivals in Aomori such as the Hirosaki Nebuta Matsuri featuring 60 large and small fan-shaped, painted and illuminated floats, and the Noshiro Nebu Nagashi with its huge castle-shaped illuminated floats.

3rd–6th | Akita Kanto Festival, Akita City, Akita — A Kanto is a 40-foot-tall array of 46 lanterns weighing about 110 pounds each. They are built of bamboo frames and the bearers hoist them on the palm of the hand, the forehead, shoulder, and any other precarious place you can think of. The spectacle of 200 of these lantern towers drifting through the night, accompanied by flutes and drums is an incredible sensory saturation. Begun in the 18th century, it is now considered one of the big 3 festivals of the Tohoku region.

5th–7th | Yamagata Hanagasa Festival, Yamagata City — Not a Shinto festival, and not very old (dating from 1964), but this festival of

10,000 dancers and 1 million visitors makes the Yamagata Hanagasa one of the biggest festivals in the Tohoku region.

6th–8th | Tanabata Festival Sendai City, Miyagi – The biggest festival in Sendai and one of the big 3 festivals of the Tohoku region, with over 2 million visitors. Huge decorative paper streamers hang along Chuo Street, creating a tunnel of swaying color. A rather sedate festival for the most part, but a parade is held at night and fireworks on the night of the 5th.

9th–12th | Yosakoi Matsuri, Kochi, Shikoku – Not a Shinto festival but a variation on the Awa Odori of Tokushima, which is basically an Obon dance. Unlike most dance festivals (this one began in 1954), the Yosakoi is almost a free-for-all, with each group of up to 150 dancers and about 10,000 dancers in all having their own costumes and their own dance routine. What unites them is that all dancers must use the traditional *naruko* wooden clappers, and all must contain some part of the original “Yosakoi Naruko Dancing” theme music. Yosakoi festivals are now held in many places throughout Japan.

12th–15th | Awa odori Tokushima City, Tokushima – One of the largest and most famous dancing festivals in Japan. Said to date from 1586 it is originally an Obon dance for the Buddhist “Festival of the Dead.” The sometimes elegant, sometimes comical dance is a little difficult to master but the sound and rhythm is infectious. The famous lyrics state, “Dancers are fools and watchers are fools so why not dance?” Tokyo’s Koenji section now has the second-largest Awa odori in Japan, with 12,000 dancers on the last Saturday and Sunday of August.

Three or four days around August 15th, main event held every 3 years (2014, 2017, etc.) | Furukawa Matsuri, Tomioka Hachimangu, Tokyo – One of the largest shrine festivals in Tokyo. Also called the *mizukake* (“water-throwing”) festival, as onlookers are invited to douse the tens of thou-

sands of participants with bucketfuls of water as they pass by.

14th–15th | Mantoro Matsuri, Kasuga Taisha, Nara – Also called the Obon Mantoro Festival in which the 3000 stone and bronze lanterns of Kasuga Taisha are lit each night from 6 P.M. A rather sedate and stately festival. The lanterns are also lit on Setsubun, February 3rd.

16th | Daimonji Okuribi (Daimonji Bonfire), Nyoigatake (Daimonjiyama), Kyoto – For many observers this Buddhist festival is more of a distant event, and without the proper viewing position, it can go by unnoticed except for the throngs of onlookers in downtown Kyoto. Huge Chinese characters depicting the word *dai* (big or great) and five other characters and shapes are lit on the slopes of the mountains surrounding the city after sundown and burn for about 30 minutes.

September

1st–3rd | Owara Kaze no bon, Yatsuo Town, Toyama – This is another Obon festival (literally “Obon in the wind”) although it comes a bit later than most and probably mixed with a harvest festival at some point in its history. This three hundred-year-old festival only became popular rather recently. It involves dancing at night in lantern-filled streets to a slow and melancholy music played on the shamisen.

3rd Saturday and Sunday | Obama Hojo-e Matsuri, Hachiman Jinja, Obama City, Fukui – Although *hojo-e* festivals are held throughout Japan, and especially at Buddhist temples and Hachiman shrines, this one is somewhat unique. For one thing the releasing of fish and birds into the wild, which forms the basis of the typical *hojo-e*, is not held here. Instead there are *dasbi* floats and a number of interesting performances including a famous lion dance.

12th–18th | Hojo-ya (Hojo-e) Festival, Hakozaikigu, Fukuoka – One of the three

largest festivals in the Hakata area of Fukuoka, with stalls lining the approach to the shrine selling Hakata's famous ramen and many other dishes. On September 18th birds and fish are released into the wild in a 1000-year-old event designed to show reverence for life. *Mikoshi* are paraded on the 12th.

Saturday and Sunday around the 15th (dates vary) | Kashiwada Danjiri, Kashiwada, Osaka – Thirty-five *danjiri* (12-foot-tall, 4-ton carts made entirely of zelkova wood) are pulled through the streets by 500 to 1000 people, sometimes at breakneck speed. As they whip around tight corners they often go crashing into buildings as the pullers go tumbling amid the screams and cries of onlookers. Beautifully lit at night. A dynamic festival begun in the 18th century.

October

7th | Matsuyama Fall Festival, Isaniwa Jinja and Yu Jinja, Matsuyama, Ehime – The festival actually begins on the 5th and is held in various places and shrines. The main event of the festival is the exciting clash between the eight 1–2 ton *mikoshi* that gather in a plaza near the famous Dogo Onsen. Two *mikoshi* at a time face off and ram each other trying to knock over or push back the opponent. The opposing groups begin by taunting each other with rhythmic shouts of “*motekoi motekoi*” (“bring it on”), before the forward rush and the frightening impact.

7th–9th | Nagasaki Suwa Matsuri, Nagasaki Suwa Jinja, Nagasaki – Also called Okunchi or Kunchi, this was a small local festival of Suwa Jinja until 1634 when, by order of Tokugawa Ieyasu, it came under government sponsorship and grew into a much more important festival. Although this was actually part of Christian suppression (Nagasaki had the largest Christian community), today it is a festival of music, performance, and elaborate floats. A long,

broad stairway leading to the shrine is thronged with people as the *mikoshi* move in procession through the streets.

2nd Friday to Sunday | Sawara Autumn Matsuri, Suwa Jinja, Sawara City, Chiba – For a description, please see the entry for July. The festival is held twice a year with the basic difference being that the autumn festival contains 14 different floats.

Between the 8th–17th | Saijo Aki Matsuri, Saijo City, Ehime – Actually a festival of four shrines and involving about 150 *danjiri*, *taikodai*, and *mikoshi*. The schedule is the following (dates vary each year): Kamo Shrine 8th–9th; Iwaoka Shrine 14th–15th; Isono Shrine 15th–16th; Izumi Shrine 16th–17th. The highlight is the evening procession of floats on the night of the 15th. These large floats are covered with lanterns, making a very impressive sight. On the 16th, the floats gather at the bank of the Kamo River where one of the *mikoshi* and a number of floats are hauled into the river. This festival overlaps the famous Taiko Matsuri in neighboring Niihama City.

14th–15th | Nada no Kenka (“fighting”) Matsuri, Matsubara Hachiman Shrine, Himeji City – A procession of seven 1.5-ton *yatai* floats and a face-off (*neri awase*) of smaller *mikoshi*. The *yatai* look like *mikoshi* at first glance, but they contain four men playing drums, and sport large, dangling *shimenawa*. On the 15th, the action heats up with the *yatai* jostling each other (though less intensely than the crashing *mikoshi*). One *yatai* with a man drumming inside is intentionally dropped to the ground without the drummer missing a beat. Surrounding the *yatai* and *mikoshi* are men with 7-foot bamboo poles, topped with colorful *shide* cut paper in the form of a chrysanthemum. These are used to push on the *yatai* or just hoisted around it. In addition, lion dance performers accompany each *yatai*. There are a number of *kenka matsuri* around Japan. This is the largest and most famous.

16th | Mifune Festival, Kumano Hayatama Taisha, Shingu, Wakayama — The shrine's *mikoshi* is transported by the ornate red *shinkosen* boat to the *otabisbo* in this 1800-year old festival. Nine *bayabune* boats lead the *mikoshi* in a race from the Kumanogawa River to circle Mifunejima Island, with a crew of eleven men each. A man dressed as a seaman in a *moro-tobune* boat does a sacred *hari-bari* dance with a red oar, which is offered to the *kami*. This is the finale of the Kumano Hayatama Grand festival held from the 15th.

16th–18th | Niihama Taiko Matsuri, Niihama City, Ehime — Next-door to Saijo City and overlapping with the tail end of that big *matsuri*, the Niihama Matsuri features 47 2.5-ton floats called *taikodai*. A *taiko* is usually a drum, but these are richly decorated floats, each carried by about 150 men. These unique floats are narrow at the base and big on top, with huge tassels hanging from four corners and a rounded fabric top (*tenmaku*) that looks like a giant pincushion. Climax on the 18th when all 50 floats get together to out-jostle each other.

22nd | Jidai Matsuri, Heian Jingu, Kyoto — This festival began in 1894 to coincide with the opening of Heian Jingu and the 1,000th anniversary of Kyoto as the capital of Japan. A procession of 2000 people in the dress of every age from the Heian to the Edo period, displaying the exquisite traditional handcrafts for which the city is famous. One of Kyoto's largest and grandest festivals.

22nd–24th | Ton-Ten-Ton Festival, Imari Jinja, Imari City, Saga — Also called Imari Kunchi, this is another of the major “fighting” festivals, this time in Kyushu. One *aramikoshi* and one *danjiri*, representing two older shrines, Kokitsu Jinja and Totoshima Jinja (the shrines were merged in 1962), square off and battle several times over this three-day festival. The name *ton-ten-ton* comes from the sound of the drum that accompanies the battle. Kokitsu enshrined a *kami* of the harvest, and Totoshima a *kami* of

abundant fish catches, so the winner of the battle determines which will be superior—crops or fish—in the coming year. The last match takes place on the 24th next to the Imari River, with both *mikoshi* going into the drink at the end of the battle (*kawaotoshi*). First one out is the winner.

3rd Saturday and Sunday | Kawagoe Matsuri, Kawagoe Hikawa Jinja, Saitama

— This extravagant festival dating from 1648 is another of the classic Edo period *gion*-type festivals. Fifteen *dasbi*, about 26-feet-tall, carry musicians playing *kandabayashi* music, while performers in costume representing folk figures and animals do emphatic dances. The *dasbi* sport larger-than-life-size dolls of mythical and historical figures on the top. These figures can be retracted into the level below. The *dasbi* mimic those of the great Sanno and Kanda festivals of the Edo period. Amazing music and dance battles ensue when these *dasbi* are brought face to face.

November

2nd–4th | Karatsu Kunchi Festival, Karatsu Jinja, Karatsu City, Saga — Fourteen comical and colorful *bikiyama* floats in the shape of *kabuto* (samurai helmet), *shishido*, sea bream, and dragons are pulled through the streets at a quick pace, to the rhythm of music and the cries of “*enya, enya*.” The floats used today were originally donated to the shrine in the 19th century but are kept freshly lacquered and gold-leafed to look new. The night procession sees all the floats illuminated and on the 3rd, the floats are pulled through the sands along Nishinohama beach.

December

2nd–3rd | Chichibu Yomatsuri (“Night Festival”) Chichibu Jinja, Chichibu, Saitama — Six 33-foot-tall, 10-ton floats are pulled through the streets to the accompaniment of flutes and drums. These beautifully carved and

polychromed floats, hung with richly brocaded fabrics, have stages where kabuki is performed in the afternoon. Each one could be compared to a small house on wheels, akin to a gorgeous gypsy wagon. At night they are hung with four tiers of lanterns. The climax of the event comes when these behemoths are pulled up a steep slope to the *otabisbo* to end the festival, closely by a magnificent fireworks display.

31st | Gion Okera Matsuri (Okera Mair)
Yasaka Shrine, Kyoto — Straw ropes are brought to Yasaka Shrine where they are lit in a holy fire burning in the lanterns of the shrine. The custom is to take the smoldering ember home and light a fire to cook *zoni*, a sort of soup particular to the New Year holiday. Eating this *zoni* will ensure good health for the coming year.

G L O S S A R Y

Aidono – A separate altar(s) or room(s) within the *bonden* for the purpose of enshrining *kami* who are subordinate to but very close to the main *kami*.

Amatsukami, Kunutsukami – *Kami* born of heaven that reside in heaven or descended to earth are called Amatsukami. *Kami* born on earth are Kunutsukami and generally lower in status. The distinction is not always so clear-cut as it sounds.

Ame no mihashira – “Pillar of Heaven” was erected or existed between heaven and earth and was circled by Izanami and Izanagi in their courtship ritual, and used as a means to travel between heaven and earth. It may be related to the *Shin no mihashira* (heart) pillar that stands under Ise Jingu as well as inside Izumo Taisha. The concept of a “cosmic center” or “axis mundi” (a pole, a tree, a mountain, etc.) is common to many cultures.

Aramitama, Nigimitama – Aramitama is the rough, authoritative, or active character of a *kami*. Nigimitama is the peaceful and harmonious character or aspect of the *kami* or spirit. These different characters are sometimes considered as different *kami* and enshrined in different places or amalgamated with different *kami* and Buddhas.

Asagutsu – Black wooden and lacquered clogs worn as formal footwear by shrine priests.

Ashihara no nakatsukuni – Literally “central land of reed plains” used in the *Kojiki* to mean “the human world,” “Japan.”

Banshin – A general term referring to deities of foreign lands that were brought to and worshipped in Japan. This includes the ancestral *kami* of immigrants, as well as imported Hindu and Buddhist deities.

Budo – General term for Japanese martial arts.

Bunrei – Dividing the spirit of a *kami* for the purpose of enshrining in another location. The deity is invited or entreated to a new location (*kanjo*) and the deity may be referred to as a *kanjokami* or *bunshi*.

Chokusaisha – Shrines that observe rituals involving a visit by an Imperial messenger (*chokushi*) delivering an offering from the emperor to the *kami* of that shrine. There are currently 16 such shrines in Japan.

Clan (*seishi* or *shi*) – Members of an extended family, which in ancient times included family and non-family members, retainers, and others, with no limitation on size, but generally related to a specific location.

Dosojin – *Kami* of the roads and crossroads, also including *sai no kami*, *kojin*, and other phallic deities. The *dosojin* protect people on the roads as well protecting towns from spirits of pestilence. Often depicted in male/female pairs, in ancient times fertility and the ability to procreate were considered protection against disease and death.

Gagaku – Ancient court music often performed in conjunction with *bugaku*, costumed dance. Originally imported from China perhaps in the 6th century, involving strong Chinese and Asian

influences and once performed only for the emperor's court.

Gyoji saho — Also *Jinja saishiki gyoji sabo*. The basic rules and protocols for the conduct of priests and for the correct conduct of shrine rituals, as specified by the organizing body of Shinto shrines, Jinja Honcho.

Harae (Harai) — Purifying the spirit of a human or an object through ritual, prayers (*norito*) or ritual acts such as ablutions (*misogi*). Also an exorcism of evil or unclean spirits. A “Great Purification” (*obarae*) is generally a special ceremony conducted at specified times of the year.

Hitogata — An effigy made of straw or paper in the shape of a human, used to remove impurities from people and send them away—usually by floating down a river. Sometimes also used to cast spells.

Imikotoba — Usually defined as “taboo words” but actually meaning euphemistic words used in front of the sacred shrine maiden of Ise Jingu called the *sao* or *saigu*, to avoid speaking taboo words. Taboo words related to Buddhism, and code words were substituted in their place. For example *nakago* (middle child) was substituted for *Hotoke* (Buddha), *kaminaga* (long-hair) for monk, etc.

Iwasaka — Also *yuniwa*. A place where a deity is worshipped in nature. A place is cleared and surrounded with stones. Or else an *iwakura* (stone altar) is erected for the same purpose. *Iwakura* are also naturally occurring stones revered as a place where the *kami* descends.

Jindo, tama, mono — Words used in the past to mean Shinto or *kami*. Also used for other concepts such as “soul” or “spirit.” *Tama* is a spiritual force that dwells in humans but also in nature and in *kami*. Also the word *tamasbi* refers to “soul” or “spirit” and *mitama* is an honorific often applied to *kami*.

Jinguji — A Buddhist temple on the grounds of a shrine for the purpose of performing sutra read-

ings and rituals to a Buddhist deity and “gaining merit” which could be transferred to the *kami* of the neighboring shrine to aid in its enlightenment.

Jinja Honcho — Association of Shinto Shrines, umbrella organization for shrine regulations established in 1946.

Jukyou — Confucianism

Kagura — A ritual offering to the *kami* of ancient dance, song, and/or music. At one time it also involved possession of the performer by the *kami*.

Kannagara — Basically defined as being in accord with the way of the *kami*. Similar, in essence, to living in grace or on the path laid down by the creator.

Kannushi — Also Shinshoku. A general term for a Shinto priest

Kegare — A pollution that attaches itself to the body and must be cleansed by *harae*.

Kotodama — “Word spirit or soul.” The concept that words have a soul or inherent power, which can be activated by proper recitation, and that the mere reciting of the word can cause an action to happen.

Koushi — Japanese name for Confucius.

Kyuchu sanden — “Inner sanctuary.” Three shrine buildings on the grounds of the Imperial Palace used by the emperor. Consists of the Koreiden to the west, where the spirits of past emperors and members of the Imperial family are worshipped; the Kashikodokoro (also Naijiodokoro) in the center, where Amaterasu omikami is worshipped; and the Shinden to the east—a Meiji era combination of the ancient Hasshinden (where eight deities believed to protect the emperor are worshipped) and the Tenjinchigi, where the *kami* of heaven and earth are worshipped.

Magatsubi — Also *magatsubi no kami*. The “crooked” or “bent” spirit or *kami*. The equiv-

alent of evil. One goal of Shinto can be said to be “making the crooked straight.” The modern interpreter of the *Kojiki*, Motoori Norinaga, considered *magatsubi no kami* (born from Izanagi’s ablutions after returning from Yomi) to be the root of all evil.

Mairi – Also *omairi*, *junpai* and *sanpai*. Pilgrimage or the act of going to a sacred place or from one sacred place to another. Includes *okage-mairi* (lit. “in praise of” or “for the sake of”) that usually refers to the mass pilgrimages to Ise in the mid-17th to 19th centuries. Also *nukemairi* referring to pilgrimages of the same period in which the pilgrim did not have the necessary permissions to leave his village. Also called *meguri*.

Makoto – Also *makoto no kokoro*. The quality of purity of heart, conscientiousness, loyalty considered a prime virtue by Shinto.

Misogi – The practice of ablution in water. One of the most important purification and training practices of Shinto and Shugendo. Often conducted under a waterfall but some consider ablutions in the sea or river as the original style of practice.

Miyadera – A shrine established by Buddhist monks and enshrining a *kami*. Buddhist ritual was followed and the enshrined deity was not offered meat or fish (Buddhist food offerings were vegetarian due to the avowed Buddhist prohibition against killing living things). Most *miyadera* became Shinto shrines during the Meiji period.

Musubi – The “creative force” given also to the names of *kami* considered the original creators of the universe. Also means “to bind together” as in a relationship (*enmusubi*).

Naorai – A meal shared by shrine priests and worshippers who have participated in a festival. The concept is based on the ancient practice of eating and drinking with the *kami*. Food served to the *kami* at the shrine is removed after the ceremony and shared with participants.

Ne no kuni – Defined as the “land of roots” and usually used as a synonym for *yomi*. Also mixed with conceptions of *tokoyo no kuni* (the land under or across the sea, home of the Dragon King) and the concept of a place of rebirth (as from the roots of a plant). Generally speaking, there is no concept of hell in Shinto and moving to the land of the dead is not punishment. Conversely, good souls do not ascend to heaven. Essentially, the souls of the dead live among us, helping us or hurting us as we help or hurt them. The concept of hell (*jigoku*) entered Japan through Buddhism, which takes an entirely different view of the afterlife. Both Shinto and Buddhism also saw *tokoyo no kuni* as a magical place from which great gifts could be obtained.

Nijunisha – “Twenty-two Shrines,” an elite group of shrines that received offerings from the Imperial House during the Heian period. Originally, all the 3,132 shrines listed in the 10th century *Engishiki* (“rules and procedures of the Engi era”) received offerings but the system was too costly and too unwieldy. The number was reduced to 16 but gradually increased to 22. Today 16 shrines continue to receive gifts from the Imperial Household Agency.

Norito – Ritual prayers offered in praise of the *kami* or to entreat it for help. Some ancient *norito* from the 10th century are still used and serve as a model for the style of *norito* that are written by priests today.

Oshi – A teacher/guide who was attached to some major shrines, especially in the medieval to premodern periods. The *osbi* led worshippers through shrine ground and provided prayers and lodgings. There were also *sendatsu* who played a similar role but subordinate to the *osbi*. This organization of guide and worshipper became the basis of religious confraternities (*ko*) in the Edo period. Many confraternities became New Religions in the Meiji period when Shinto was declared a non-religion by the government.

Otaue — *Taue* means “rice planting” and *O* is an honorific. Rice and religion were always closely related in Japan, with the object of prayer focused on the *kami* of rice, field, water, etc. *Otaue* is a rice-planting ritual carried out at most shrines.

Otera — Common word for a Buddhist temple in general. Specific buildings include the *kondo* or *bondo* (“golden hall or “original hall”) housing the principle image of the temple *gojunoto* (“five-story pagoda”) usually housing a relic of the Buddha or sacred scrolls and many others.

Reisai — Also *Taisai*. The main festival of a shrine usually held on a day with special significance to that shrine, such as its founding day.

Saisei ichi — “Unification of Rites and Rule,” a concept that stems from antiquity, whereby the emperor was both secular and spiritual head of the nation. This concept was used to promote total fealty to the emperor in the Meiji era. The concept grew out of the idea of *matsurigoto*, which carried both the meaning of government and *matsuri* or religious observance in ancient Japan.

Sakaki — *Cleyera japonica*, a broadleaf evergreen native to Japan that is mentioned as a sacred tree from ancient times. The plant used in most Shinto rituals.

Sama — A term of great respect attached to a name of a higher level of order than the common *san*.

Saniwa — Originally meaning a sacred place or plot of ground, later came to mean one who receives or interprets oracles received by a person possessed of a *kami*. Also refers to one who plays the *koto* (Japanese zither).

Sanshu no shinki — The “Three Imperial Regalia” considered the possessions of the emperor and symbols of authority, handed down from Amaterasu omikami. Receiving these symbols is equivalent to acceding to the throne. The three are the *yatano kagami* mirror, *yasakani no magatama* seal-jewel, and the *kusanagi no tsurugi* sword.

Seijo — Also *shojo*. “Purity” and other qualities such as *shojiki* and *seichoku* (honesty, sincerity, uprightness), are considered important qualities in Shinto.

Shamen — One who communicates with or is possessed (*kamigakari*) by spirits also called *saniwa*, *ogamiya*, *kamisan*, *itako*, *yuta*, *gomiso*, and other names. There are variations between the functions and methods, of such shamens, with some primarily mediums. Some were male (esp. practitioners of Shugendo) but most were female.

Shaso — Also *Betto* and other names. A Buddhist monk assigned to pray to Buddha for the soul of a *kami* at a Jinguji. *Shaso* were allowed to marry and had a status below that of a monk but above that of a shrine priest.

Shinbutsu bunri — A religious policy of the Meiji government from 1868 that prohibited the mixing of Buddhism and Shinto including monks performing rites and rituals for the *kami*, temples on shrine grounds, and required the removal of all Buddhist statues and buildings from Shinto shrines. This policy also led to the mass destruction and confiscation of Buddhist properties and other forms of repression known as *haibutsu kishaku*.

Shinbutsu shugyo, Shinbutsu bunrei — The amalgamation and the forced separation of Buddhism and Shinto. The amalgamation happened over a thousand years, the separation—conducted by the Meiji government—overnight.

Shinjubutsu ichi — Also *sankyo-ichi*, the unity of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shinto. Originally formulated by Chan Buddhist monks in China as the unity between Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism as a way of countering the anti-Buddhist thought of some Confucianists. The concept was brought to Japan during the Kamakura period by Chinese monks, where Taoism was replaced by Shinto and the concept was used at different times to reverse the dominant position of Buddhism *bonji-suijaku* thought

(*shinpon butsujaku*—*kami* as “original ground” and Buddhas as “trace”). It was later reintroduced to counter Confucian-Shinto forms of anti-Buddhist thought.

Shinbutsu shugo — The amalgamation of *kami*, Buddhist, and other deities that developed over time into a complex matrix of belief sometimes called *kenmitsu* (“exoteric-esoteric”) Buddhism. This was neither a policy nor a doctrine but the result of various melding of worship and mythology, language and custom, that took place over many centuries.

Shinsen - Food offered to the *kami*.

Shubatsu - A ceremony of purification undertaken by priests before serving food to the *kami*.

Shinsosai — A Shinto funeral.

Takamanohara — Also Takamagahara, usually translated as the “plain of high heaven.” The place where the *kami* first emerged and where the heavenly *kami* (*amatsugami*) dwell, somewhere above the world of humans.

Takusen — Also *shintaku*. An oracle or divine message received from a deity.

Tama — Spirit or soul contained in humans, objects and *kami*. Also, a round object and often used to mean “jewel.”

Tamafuri — To “shake the *tama*” or invigorate the soul, through literal shaking of the body, etc.

Tamagaki — Also *mizugaki*, a fence surrounding a sacred space such as the *bonden* of a shrine, usually constructed of vertical slats of wood, painted or unpainted. A *sukasbigaki* is an open-work fence, often with a diagonal lattice or other decorative effects, and usually covered by a roof.

Tamagushi — A sprig of the *sakaki* tree, to which *shide* paper streamers have been attached, used as an offering to the *kami*.

Tamashizume — To quiet the soul or pacify a spirit.

Tatami — A semi-hard flooring material made of a woven long grass such as *kaya* or Suzuki. The size of one tatami mat (about 2.8–5.7 feet) is called one *jo* and is used as a unit of measurement in house construction. More commonly, the space of two *jo*, called one *tsubo* (about 35.5 square feet), is used as a standard unit of measurement for construction and rental prices. The size of one tatami mat varies somewhat by region and has shrunk over the years such that one tatami from the Edo period is much larger than one tatami today.

Tsumi — Sin or forbidden behavior such as a crime.

Ujigami — Usually thought of as the ancestral or protective *kami* (tutelary) of a clan. *Ubusu-nagami* are protective *kami* of a certain geographic area. *Chinjugami* are *kami* residing in one specific piece of land and protecting that land or a specific building. The lines between the three gradually faded and were merged into *ujigami*.

Yin-Yang — (Jp. *In-Yō*) A Chinese philosophy/science describing the activities of opposing but complementary forces. Combined in Japan with “Five Element Theory” (*gogyō*) and other influences. The 5-stories of the *gojunoto* (Japanese pagoda) also relate to the five elements.

Yomi no kuni — The land of the dead, the underworld. Not clearly defined but considered to be a land of darkness and pollution.

Yorishiro — A place to which the *kami* descends. Typically, a branch of a tree (*bimorogi*) with *shide* zig-zag paper streamer attached was stood on purified ground. Other *yorishiro* include sand cones, trees, rocks, and pillars.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Joseph: I would like to acknowledge my co-author, John Dougill. His quick and sure hand, as well as his simple good cheer, kept me from falling off the edge on a number of occasions. I would like to thank Timothy Takemoto, owner of the Shinto ML, for introducing me to John. I'd also like to thank editors Elizabeth Floyd and Chikako Imoto for their hard work on a very large volume of material. A special acknowledgement goes to long-time editor, friend, and now agent, Barry Lancet, who believed in this project throughout. Barry ushered it along until my former publisher, Kodansha International, suddenly closed its doors just as this book was being readied for print. Thanks to his efforts the book has been blessed with a new home at the University of Hawai'i Press under the able guidance of acquisitions editor Nadine Little. Finally, I would like to thank all the shrines and priests who gave freely of their time to answer my questions, as well as contributing books, pamphlets, and photos for my education and for this book. I would especially like to thank Katsuji Iwahashi of the International Division of the Association of Shinto Shrines for his kind support.

John: I would just like to thank Yuriko Suzuki for her time, assistance, and cooperation in compiling the research material for the book.

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