

## Mitomo Shrine

The Shinto deity Sukunabiko no Mikoto, the god of medicine and knowledge, is worshipped at the Mitomo Shrine. In the *Kojiki*, the oldest written record of ancient Japanese history published in 712, Sukunabiko no Mikoto helped Onamuchi no Mikoto, one of the principal deities worshipped at Nikko Futarasan Shrine, to rule Japan.

Although the shrine's exact age remains unknown, the stone water basin used for ritual purification is engraved with the Chinese characters for 1753. From this, it is thought that the Mitomo Shrine has stood here for at least 250 years. Visitors customarily wash their hands at the stone water basin in front of the shrine before offering a prayer. This practice is believed to purify the worshipper, and also shows respect to the Shinto deities.