

Origins of Cape Mihonosaki

The eastern tip of the Shimane Peninsula, now referred to as Cape Jizozaki, was formerly called Cape Mihonosaki. The *Izumo no Kuni Fudoki*, an eighth-century text describing local culture and legends, includes a story known as the “Land-Pulling Myth.” In this story, one of the native gods of Izumo believed his country to be small, and so used a rope to pull in extra land. The parts he managed to drag in later became Cape Mihonosaki and Cape Hinomisaki. Local legends also relate that Kotoshironushi (the god enshrined at Miho Shrine, also known as Ebisu) enjoyed fishing on the islands Jinogozen and Okinogozen. These two islands are visible 4 km offshore through the shrine’s torii gate and are still considered part of Miho Shrine’s precincts today. Ceremonies performed every year on the 5th of May by the island residents honor Kotoshironushi and his wife.

During summer, dynamic sunrises can be seen over the sea surrounding Okinogozen Island. The outline of the island changes minutely with air pressure and humidity, and local fishermen use the shape to predict the upcoming weather and decide whether to go out fishing or not that day. According to ancient stories recorded in the annals of Miho Shrine, an echo of kagura (sacred dances performed at shrines) music is said to resonate from the ocean floor around Okinogozen Island, marking this spot as mystical space that transcends the realm of everyday experience. A place of worship was built on the cape in 1973.

This area is part of the Shimane Peninsula and Shinjiko Nakaumi Estuary Geopark.