

## **Main Sanctuary (Honden)**

Kushifuru Shrine was built in 1694 on Kushifuru Peak, long believed to be the sacred site of the descent of certain *kami* deities to earth. It is dedicated to Ninigi no Mikoto, who was entrusted with the rule of Japan according to Japanese myth. Other *kami* are also revered here, including Takemikazuchi, the martial *kami* whose “contest of strength” is fabled to be the origin of Japan’s national sport, sumo.

The Main Sanctuary’s intricate wood carvings were created by artisans of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The inclusion of phoenix and dragon motifs shows a strong influence from Chinese mythology.

## **Peak of the Four Imperial Sons (Shiojigamine)**

According to Takachiho area legend, this location was the birthplace and residence of the mythological first emperor of Japan, Emperor Jimmu, and his three older siblings, Itsuse no Mikoto, Inahi no Mikoto, and Mikeiri no Mikoto. Emperor Jimmu is said to have lived here until he set out for the ancient Yamato Province (present-day Nara Prefecture) at age 45. His military efforts laid the foundations for the Japanese imperial dynasty.

In Japanese mythology, the four imperial sons were direct descendants of Ninigi no Mikoto, who descended from the heavens to bring order to Japan, and are considered *kami* deities themselves. They appear in mythological episodes and local legends. One well-known Takachiho legend, for example, features Mikeiri, who aided the local people by defeating the fearsome *kami* deity Kihachi and burying him in pieces. The site where the four brothers are said to have been born is fenced off as a sacred area.

## **Far Precinct of the Heavenly Realm (Takamagahara)**

It is said that, after their descent to earth, the *kami* deities climbed atop this hill and prayed to the heavens from afar. This area is now considered a spiritual spot that connects heaven and earth, where visitors can honor these *kami* deities at the small shrine located here.