

Teini-gu and Teisan-gu

The Munakata Taisha shrines cover a vast area including two islands as well as a shrine precinct on the mainland of Kyushu. It is not possible to visit all three shrines, since Okitsu-miya on Okinoshima is off-limits to the public. Nakatsu-miya on the island of Oshima is open to the public but only accessible by ferry. To allow worshipers convenient access to all three shrines, two subsidiary shrines venerating the deities of the island shrines have been built behind Hetsu-miya, where the youngest deity, Ichikishimahime no Kami, is enshrined.

Travel Protection

Teini-gu venerates the eldest sister deity, Tagorihime no Kami, and Teisan-gu venerates the middle sister deity, Tagitsuhime no Kami. In Japanese myth, these three daughters of the sun goddess, Amaterasu Omikami, were known to protect sea routes, and later came to be revered for protecting all travel routes. In this way, the sister deities have come to represent safe travel across all modes of transportation.

A Connection with Ise Jingu

These subsidiary shrines at Hetsu-miya were relocated from Ise Jingu (venerating Amaterasu Omikami) in 1978. They were dismantled during construction of new shrine buildings, which happens every 20 years at Ise. These buildings are examples of *yuitsu shinmei zukuri*, an ancient style of architecture unique to Ise Jingu, characterized by a steeply sloped thatched or shingled roof with forked wooden finials and metal-capped wooden billets.