

Oshima

Oshima is a short ferry ride from the port of Konominato on Kyushu. The island is compact and easy to explore on foot, with hiking paths connecting the main sites. It is located midway between Kyushu and the sacred island of Okinoshima, where Tagorihime no Kami, the eldest daughter of the sun goddess Amaterasu, is enshrined. Because of its spiritual importance, Okinoshima is off-limits to the public. As such, Oshima is the closest visitors can get to Okinoshima.

Nakatsu-miya Shrine

The islands of Okinoshima and Oshima form a visual line to Munakata on the coast, where the Hetsu-miya Shrine is located. Oshima is home to Nakatsu-miya Shrine, an important seventeenth-century shrine on the south side of the island, at the base of Mt. Mitake. This shrine venerates Tagitsuhime no Kami, the second of the three daughters of Amaterasu. Nakatsu-miya and the island of Oshima act as a connection between the main shrine on Kyushu and the distant island of Okinoshima.

Okitsu-miya Yohaisho

On the opposite side of the island, there is a worship hall (*yohaisho*) on a cliff top facing Okinoshima. The hall is known as the Okitsu-miya Yohaisho and it is the nearest visitors can get to Okitsu-miya Shrine on Okinoshima. Visitors are welcome at the Yohaisho year round; the shrine doors are opened a few times a year including for the spring and autumn festivals, offering a perfectly framed view of Okinoshima.

The legend of the horseshoe rock

Not far from Okitsu-miya Yohaisho is a flat rocky outcrop called Batei-iwa, named for the horseshoe-shaped impressions on its surface. According to legend, the marks were imprinted on the rock when a horse carrying Tagorihime no Kami jumped from the rock to Okinoshima. A short distance from Batei-iwa is the Windmill Observation Tower and Cannon Fort Site. Used during World War II for observation, the Cannon Fort Site offers a spectacular view of Okinoshima on a clear day.