

Okitsu-miya Yohaisho

Okitsu-miya Yohaisho was built in the early eighteenth century to worship Okinoshima from afar. Since visiting Okinoshima is off-limits to most people, this smaller worship hall functions as a stand-in. Places to worship from a distance, known as *yohaisho*, are not uncommon in Japan, meant to provide a more convenient place of worship for priests who are unable to travel to a particular shrine in person.

On a clear day, you can see Okinoshima from here. Several times a year including festival times in spring and fall, the Okitsu-miya Yohaisho is opened and the view of Okinoshima is framed by its square windows. During the Edo period (1603–1867), the Shinto rituals of Okitsu-miya were often performed here, because the priests could not always get to Okinoshima. Today, the wives of the local fishermen offer prayers here for safety at sea when their husbands fish around Okinoshima. A path leads to an observation area above the Yohaisho with panoramic views of the Genkai Sea and the rugged coastline.