

Fushimi and *Fujimi*

The Japanese language uses a relatively small number of vowel and consonant sounds and subsequently contains many homophones. Naturally, this creates many opportunities for wordplay and punning, and Japanese literature is rife with clever turns of phrase. For example, the word *fujimi*, which means “immortal” or “invulnerable,” is written using three Chinese characters that can also be read as *fushimi*. Therefore, Fushimi is *fujimi*, or immortal. It isn’t hard to see how this link was drawn: the town of Fushimi has seen its castles razed to the ground and the homes of both elite and commoner destroyed by fire. Yet Fushimi still thrives, and pure spring water flows out of the ground as it always has.