

Hayama-jinja Shrine and Isono-jinja Shrine

Hayama-jinja Shrine and Isono-jinja Shrine are two sacred sites on Mt. Ishimine that share a long history. Hayama-jinja Shrine was established in the Muromachi period (1392–1573) and received patronage from Date Masamune (1567–1636), the erudite head of the Date family who ruled the region. The shrine is known for its Ogatsu Hoin Kagura, a local tradition of music and dance performed to entertain the gods (*kagura*) that is characterized by ornate masks and elaborate costumes. Ogatsu Hoin Kagura has been designated an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property. Although the shrine was badly damaged by the tsunami in 2011, it was completely rebuilt by 2019.

Isono-jinja Shrine, established in the Nara period (710–794), lies deeper within the cedar forest at the summit of Mt. Ishimine, about a 40-minute hike from Hayama-jinja Shrine. For centuries, ascetics have made the journey to the mountaintop to worship at Isono-jinja Shrine's most sacred feature, a large boulder about 7 meters tall and 3 meters wide whose shape resembles an *eboshi*, a type of cap worn by aristocrats in the Heian period (794–1185). The shrine is dedicated to a deity who protects travelers.