

## **Kinkasan Island**

Kinkasan (Mt. Kinka) is a sparsely inhabited island off the coast of the Oshika Peninsula that is accessible by ferry from Ishinomaki. It can be seen rising majestically in the distance from many scenic spots along the Michinoku Coastal Trail.

Kinkasan (literally “golden mountain”) is considered one of the most sacred places in the Tohoku region. Its Koganeyama-jinja Shrine (*koganeyama* also means “golden mountain”), thought to have been established in the eighth century, was built on one of Japan’s first gold mines, and the island features in many legends of wealth. It is said that if pilgrims visit Koganeyama-jinja Shrine three years in a row, all their financial woes will disappear. Visitors seeking additional luck wash their coins in the island’s natural spring or stay overnight at the shrine’s lodgings.

While Kinkasan has a sparse human population, it is home to hundreds of wild deer and wild monkeys. Beyond Koganeyama-jinja Shrine, a peaceful hiking trail runs up through towering beech and zelkova trees to the 445-meter-high summit of Mt. Kinka.