

Inasehagi-jinja Shrine

Tucked against the hills in southwestern Sagiura, Inasehagi-jinja Shrine has a long and distinguished history. The shrine's principal deity, Inasehagi, is recorded in Japan's creation myths, and this shrine is mentioned in the region's earliest written history, the *Izumo fudoki* of 733.

Inasehagi-jinja Shrine is an auxiliary shrine of Izumo Grand Shrine, and the two are linked in the prevailing legend. Inasehagi was instrumental in the mythological agreement that transferred control of the land from the deity Ōkuninushi, enshrined at Izumo, to the sun goddess Amaterasu and her descendants. For this reason, Ōkuninushi—under the alternate name of Yachihoko—is one of the secondary deities enshrined at Inasehagi. Moreover, the line of head priests at Izumo Grand Shrine is said to be descended from Inasehagi's father, the god Amenohohi.

Connections between Izumo and Inasehagi are reflected in many of the auxiliary shrine's structural details. The postures of the *komainu*, the lion-like guardian figures at its entrance, are unique to shrines associated with Izumo. Inasehagi's main sanctuary, like the one at Izumo, is constructed of unfinished wood, elevated on stilts, and surrounded by a wooden-slat fence. Every 20 years, Izumo Grand Shrine undergoes periodic reconstruction (*sengū*), during which Inasehagi-jinja Shrine is rebuilt as well. In 1744, leftover materials from the Izumo reconstruction were used to repair Inasehagi-jinja, further strengthening the link between the two shrines.

The deity Inasehagi is known for his efficacy against smallpox, and carrying a pebble from this shrine in one's clothes is said to ward off the disease. Records show that Emperor Momozono (1741–1762) donated two paper lanterns decorated with the royal chrysanthemum crest in gratitude after his two sons recovered from smallpox. Inasehagi-jinja Shrine's annual festival is held on October 8.
