

Unzen Onsen Town Religious History Trail: Onsen-jinja Shrine

Onsen-jinja Shrine, also called Shimengū Shrine, has existed on Unzen since the early 700s. Four deities are worshipped here, known collectively as the Oshimen:

Shirahiwake no Mikoto, Takehiwake no Mikoto, Toyohiwake no Mikoto, and Toyokujihinewake no Mikoto. The Oshimen, venerated as the protectors of Kyushu, are mentioned along with Shimengū Shrine in the *Kojiki*, one of the first written accounts of the Japanese creation myth.

Shimengū is the head shrine of the 17 smaller Onsen–Shimen shrines on the Shimabara Peninsula. As part of the temple-shrine complex that first developed on Unzen, Shimengū has been the spiritual center of the region for more than a thousand years.