

Morihisa Shrine and Its Strangler Fig Tree

Legend has it that when the Taira clan was defeated in the twelfth century, Taira no Morihisa, the warrior after whom this shrine is named, was saved from certain beheading in Kamakura thanks to his worship of Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion. Morihisa's reading of the Lotus Sutra was rewarded and his prayer for help was answered, the story goes, when a great light struck the sword of his would-be executioner and broke it in two. Morihisa died years later in 1202 onboard a ship bound for Yakushima, and his spirit was enshrined here.

Of photogenic note at this sanctuary is the strangler fig tree, believed to be more than 100 years old. The columnar tree that is its host has become hollow—look for the spot where you can see through to the other side.

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To book a village tour in Harumaki, visit yakushima.jp online or the Yakushima Environmental and Cultural Village Center in person at:

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