

Tatsunogozen Shrine

Tatsunogozen Shrine is the main Shinto sanctuary in Yunotsu and enshrines deities related to the town's two main sources of prosperity: the sea and the hot springs. Local people have been coming here to pray for good luck and safety at sea, and for the health benefits of bathing since ancient times: the shrine was officially founded in 1532, but its site was a place of worship long before that. The original object of reverence, a rock thought to resemble a roaring dragon, can be seen protruding from the cliffside just above the small main sanctuary (*honden*). In distant antiquity, rocks, trees, and other natural features were often worshiped as abodes of the divine, and the idea of enshrining deities in buildings was popularized only later. The structure at the foot of the cliff is the worship hall (*haiden*), which is unusually large because it was designed to accommodate performances of *kagura* dances to honor Shinto deities. Iwami Kagura remains a popular folk tradition in the region. The ceremonial dances are performed in the worship hall every Saturday evening, when visitors also have the opportunity to view the *ema* paintings featuring boats and other maritime motifs displayed in the hall.