

Orihata-jinja Shrine

Orihata-jinja Shrine overlooks Kanazaki, the largest fishing port in the Munakata area. The main deity venerated here is Takenouchi no Sukune no Mikoto, a legendary statesman who is said to have served five emperors, as well as the empress-regent Jingu. According to legend, the empress-regent reigned from 201 to 269, and she and Takenouchi no Sukune sailed from Kanazaki on an expedition to Korea.

At the base of the steps leading up to the shrine is a massive rock, bound with ropes called *shimenawa*, indicating its sacred status. The rock was originally submerged offshore, and according to local legend, it was long thought to be an ancient bell, lost on a sea voyage from Korea.

From the top of the shrine steps, visitors can enjoy sweeping views across the fishing port and Kanazaki Beach. Behind the shrine is a subtropical forest with over 20 species of trees, including giant oak, yew plum pine (*Podocarpus macrophyllus*), sweet viburnum, camphor, and *sakaki* (*Cleyera japonica*), a plant traditionally used in Shinto ceremonies.

To the left of the main approach to Orihata-jinja is a small shrine dedicated to Ebisu, a deity who protects fishermen. Local fishermen and *ama* divers worship here. *Ama* divers—typically women—free dive to gather sea urchins, abalone, and other shellfish from the sea floor. The Kanazaki area has a long tradition of *ama* divers, and there is a monument to them nearby.