

## **Shiraishi Beach**

Shiraishi Beach, an isolated beach north of the city of Fukutsu, is known for its white sand, clear water, and direct view of Okinoshima, a sacred island that has been worshipped since ancient times. For centuries, rituals were held on this beach to venerate the deities of Okinoshima and pray for a good harvest.

Every summer at the end of the rice planting season, people would gather at Shiraishi Beach to celebrate. They spread tatami mats on the sand and performed a simple ceremony, making offerings of sake and *sekihan* (rice cooked with azuki beans) in the direction of Okinoshima. After the ceremony, the participants would eat together. These traditions continued until the mid-twentieth century.

The beach is open for swimming between July and August. Outside of the swimming season, the narrow road to the beach is closed to traffic.