

## Oyamazumi Jinja Shrine

It is not known exactly when Oyamazumi Jinja Shrine was built, since many of its records were lost in a fire around the year 1600. The shrine's connection to Kuki Yoshitaka and Toba Castle, however, is well documented.

At the time Yoshitaka was building Toba Castle, this shrine to Oyamazumi, the kami (Shinto deity) of mountains and seas, was located on the hilltop where construction was taking place. After many incidents of the stone walls and foundations collapsing, he had the shrine moved to its current location. The problems ceased, and Yoshitaka was able to complete construction of the castle.

These days, the shrine is cared for by four different neighborhoods in Toba on a yearly rotating basis. Oyamazumi is known for two spring festivals: One features a dance where performers dress up as traditional costumes of lions and *tengu*, legendary kami with distinctive long noses. In the other, townsfolk carry a *mikoshi* (portable shrine) around town accompanied by traditional music.