

The Sword Collection

The Shiogama Shrine Museum houses a splendid collection of swords. All of these swords were presented to the deities of the shrine by generations of the Date family, who ruled the Sendai domain (which encompassed present-day Miyagi Prefecture) during the Edo period (1603–1867). Records show that 39 swords were presented; 35 are displayed in the museum.

Each new ruler ceremonially presented three swords, one for each of the deities enshrined in Shiogama Jinja Shrine: Shiotsuchi Oji no Kami, who taught people the secret of salt-making, and the warrior deities Takemikazuchi no Kami and Futsunushi no Kami. It was thought that the gods would look favorably upon and protect the person who gifted the swords.

The swords show the evolution of sword-making during the period the Date family ruled the Sendai area. The intricate designs on the scabbards and guards, as well as the beauty of the *hamon* (edge patterns on the blade), are a testament to the skill of the Sendai domain's swordsmiths.

In addition to the swords, the museum collection includes armor and helmets worn by lords of the Sendai domain, along with a wealth of maps, scrolls, and a large wooden board carved with tricky mathematical puzzles.