

Hanabushi Jinja Shrine

This small Shinto shrine, surrounded by trees, overlooks Matsushima Bay from the tip of Hogasaki Cape, not far from Hanabuchi Lighthouse. It is thought to have been established 2,400 years ago on the site where, according to legend, the god of Shiogama Jinja Shrine (located in the nearby city of Shiogama) descended from the heavens.

Another legend tells of two fishermen who were caught in a storm in the waters beyond the shrine. Their small boat sprung a leak, and in desperation, they prayed to the god of Hanabushi Shrine for help. To their surprise, the boat stopped flooding with water, and they made it safely back to shore. When they turned over the boat, they found that the hole had been plugged by a giant abalone (*awabi*).

This divine rescue is celebrated every year in July, when fishermen sail to a reef to pray to the god of Hanabushi Shrine by offering abalone. Afterwards, they return to the shrine, where *awabi* are cooked and distributed to those who come to witness the sacred ritual.