

Okuni Jinja Shrine Buildings

The precincts of Okuni Jinja Shrine contain a number of buildings, with the inner sanctuary, known as the *honden*, at its heart. This is where Okuninushi no Mikoto, a god of agriculture and nation building and a central deity in Shinto, is enshrined and worshipped. The *honden* is built in the *taisha-zukuri* style, with the gabled roof adorned on both ends by forked finials composed of two crossed poles. *Taisha-zukuri* is the oldest method of shrine construction, and is thought to have originated from ancient palaces that were used for worship.

Roof of structures built in the *taisha-zukuri* style are normally thatched or shingled with tree bark. The roofs at Okuni Jinja are shingled with bark from hinoki cypress trees, which grow in the forests surrounding the shrine. The bark is carefully removed from the tree, dried, then laid onto the roof. The new bark that later grows back on the tree can be harvested as well, making *taisha-zukuri* a naturally sustainable style of construction that has been in use for over 1,300 years. Okuni Jinja is rebuilt every 30 to 60 years, ensuring that its architectural style is preserved from generation to generation.