

## **Ubushina Shrine**

Ubushina Shrine stands on a hill at the edge of Komachi, a traditional neighborhood in the town of Utazu. Shadowed by tall trees, the shrine is thought to be quite ancient: the sanctuary's own records indicate that it moved to its current site in the year 807. The shrine buildings themselves have been reconstructed and repaired several times after being destroyed or damaged in earthquakes and fires, most recently in 1976. The current structures include a concrete worship hall (*haiden*) and a wooden main sanctuary (*honden*). The latter was moved to Ubushina Shrine in 1974 from Ise Grand Shrine in Mie Prefecture. The shrine buildings at Ise are rebuilt every 20 years for reasons both religious and practical, and it was on the occasion of one such rebuilding that the structure now serving as Ubushina's main sanctuary was moved to make room for a replacement. The relocated building is a registered Tangible Cultural Property. Behind it is a towering rock 5.5 meters high and 4 meters wide, which was the original object of worship here. In distant antiquity, rocks, trees, and other natural features were often worshiped as abodes of the divine, and the idea of enshrining deities in buildings was popularized only later. The shrine grounds also house a variety of sub-shrines and even an udon noodle restaurant.