

History of Eda Shrine

Eda Shrine is one of the oldest religious sites in Miyazaki, appearing in records that go back to the ninth century. From the Nara period (710–794) to the eleventh century, the settlement of Eda hosted one of the 16 post stations in the province of Hyuga (present-day Miyazaki Prefecture). These stations were government facilities set up at regular intervals along the official roads that connected the capital—first Nara, then Kyoto—with the provinces. The stations were staffed by educated officials and functioned as both administrative hubs and centers of intellectual exchange. It is thought that the Eda Shrine was originally built on the grounds of the Eda post station. This may also be why it enshrines the Shinto creator deities Izanagi and Izanami, who play significant roles in Japanese mythology. Government officials of the Nara period were required to study the authorized chronicles containing the foundation myths of Japan, which were first compiled into writing and officially endorsed at this time, and the officials stationed at Eda may well have influenced the selection of deities for the local shrine. The importance of the Eda post station declined in the twelfth century as the influence of the centralized state decreased, but the shrine continued to be maintained by the local community. It was severely damaged in an earthquake in 1662 and moved from its original location. The shrine attracted renewed attention after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The new government of Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) institutionalized Shinto as the state religion and encouraged the worship and maintenance of sites such as Eda Shrine, which were associated with native mythology.