

Sumiyoshi Shrine

Sumiyoshi Shrine enshrines three key Shinto gods: Sokotsutsu, Nakatsutsu, and Uwatsutsu, who are known collectively as the Sumiyoshi deities and are the protectors of the sea and seafarers. According to Japanese mythology, these gods were born as a result of the first act of purification, conducted by the creator deity Izanagi by immersing himself in water. The purification of Izanagi also resulted in the birth of many other deities, all of which are enshrined here. The importance of the sea in Japanese life and culture, as well as that of the purification myth in Shinto beliefs, is evidenced by the fact that there are more than 2,000 Sumiyoshi shrines throughout Japan.

When this shrine was founded is not clear, but it is thought to have been relocated several times over the centuries. Its grounds were significantly larger in the past, especially during the Meiji era (1868–1912), when the government of Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) institutionalized Shinto as the state religion and encouraged the worship and maintenance of sites such as Sumiyoshi shrines, which were associated with native mythology. By 1914, the shrine had become popular enough to warrant the extension of the tracks from the nearest railway station to the grounds. Until 1929, the members of a local youth association pushed carts along these tracks to transport devotees to the shrine.