

Fudokutsu and Namikiri Shrine

The Fudokutsu is a seaside cave much like the one that houses the main sanctuary of Udo Shrine, only smaller. This cavern has been a site of worship for centuries, later for local fishermen, but originally for ascetic monks, who practiced spiritual discipline by spending extended periods of time in challenging conditions far from civilization. The present shrine is dedicated to the deities of the sea but is typical of the pre-1868 period of Japanese history, when no clear distinction was made between Shinto and Buddhism. The nominally Shinto structure is decorated with Buddhist symbols. Next to it, under a stone shelter, stands a statue of Fudo Myo-o, one of the Five Wisdom Kings of Buddhism who is believed to protect the faithful and to guide followers with the fierce love of a parent. This particular carving depicts Namikiri Fudo Myo-o, the “wave-breaking” manifestation of the deity, the protector of seafarers. The Fudokutsu can be reached on foot in less than 30 minutes by way of a hillside trail from Udo Shrine.