

Omoto-sha

Tamomi no Sukune was the first head priest of Sumiyoshi Taisha. Empress-regent Jingū entrusted him with the building of the first Sumiyoshi shrine at the beginning of the third century after she had a vision of the three deities called the Sumiyoshi Sanjin.

Omoto-sha is a small shrine representing the devotion of Tamomi no Sukune and his wife Ichihime no Mikoto to the deities and each other. It is inside the building used to prepare food offerings for the Sumiyoshi Sanjin and Jingū. Omoto means “attendant” and refers to Tamomi no Sukune’s role as a servant of the deities.

Today, the shrine is frequented by people looking for love or wanting spiritual support in their romantic relationships. Visitors may purchase small wooden plaques (*ema*), write down their prayers and wishes for love, and hang the plaques up outside the shrine to be fulfilled by Tamomi no Sukune and Ichihime no Mikoto. There are two kinds of clay charm associated with Omoto-sha available at Sumiyoshi Taisha. One, called a *hadaka bina*, depicts a naked man and woman. It is thought to represent an ideal marital relationship in which the couple has no secrets. The other is called *omoto ningyō* and depicts a husband and wife in classical dress. It is thought to ensure happy relationships.