

Takasago Jinja Shrine Overview

Takasago Jinja Shrine is dedicated to Onamuchi no Mikoto, the deity of Takasago. The shrine is believed to be the original setting of the Noh play *Takasago* by Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1443), an actor, playwright, and composer of the traditional Japanese performing art of Noh, a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In the shrine grounds is a pine tree that is considered sacred; it is referred to in the play as “Aioi no Matsu” (twin pines) due to its two trunks merged at the roots. The spirits of the pines are said to be a legendary elderly couple named Jo and Uba; in the play, they represent marital happiness and longevity.

When the legend of Jo and Uba and the existence of the pines became widely known, Takasago became known as Musubi no Machi (“matrimony town”) due to the many legends related to the harmony of married couples in the area. Images of Jo and Uba are used in traditional wedding ceremonies; the seats for the bride and groom are called “Takasago.” With its theme of a long and happy marriage, the Noh play’s classical chant, “Yokyoku Takasago,” is famous nationwide as a wedding chant.

The main sanctuary (*honden*), offering hall (*heiden*), and worship hall (*haiden*) are in the center of the shrine grounds, with the Noh stage to the southeast of the main sanctuary. The shrine holds annual events, such as the Lantern Festival, when the shrine precinct is filled with 3,000 candles, and the Fall Festival, as well as a *kangetsu* (moon-viewing) Noh play.