

Tsuchizaki Shinmeisha Shrine

Tsuchizaki Shinmeisha Shrine is dedicated to Amaterasu Ōmikami, the Shinto sun deity who is considered the ancestor of the imperial family. The shrine's most important annual festival is the Tsuchizaki Minato Hikiyama Matsuri, which is renowned for its two-day parade of large wooden floats pulled through the streets. Although the main festival activities are held on July 20 and 21, various rituals and offerings begin in May and last through September. The festival was inscribed as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2016.

The shrine was established in 1620 by Kawaguchi Sōjiro (dates unknown), the *kimoiri*, or town head, of Tsuchizaki. Kawaguchi received a request for a shrine from residents who were concerned that there was no place near the port to pray and was granted permission from the daimyo lord Satake Yoshinobu (1570–1633) to build Tsuchizaki Shinmeisha Shrine. The shrine was constructed on the former site of Minato Castle, the seat of

government of the daimyo lord who had preceded Satake.