Deities of Isonokami Jingū Shrine

Isonokami Jingū enshrines a number of Shinto kami deities. The protection and veneration of kami has been seen as crucial to the prosperity and safety of the country throughout Japan's history.

Principal Deities

Futsu no Mitama no Ōkami

This kami embodies the spiritual power of the Futsu no Mitama sword. The divine blade was carried by the powerful deity Takemikazuchi no Ōkami, who granted it to Emperor Jinmu, the semi-mythological first emperor of Japan. The sword's power healed Jinmu when he was on the brink of death, and he went on to establish the kingdom that became Japan.

Furu no Mitama no Ōkami

This kami embodies the restorative power of the Tokusa no Kandakara, a set of 10 artifacts held by heavenly deities known as the Amatsukami. The artifacts were granted to Nigihayahi no Mikoto (see right) and are central to the shrine's "spirit-shaking" ritual (*chinkonsai*).

Futsushi Mitama no Ōkami

This kami embodies the spiritual power of the Ame no Totsuka no Tsurugi sword, a divine blade wielded by Susanoo no Mikoto, the deity of storms. An ancient myth records how Susanoo used the sword to slay Yamato no Orochi, a fearsome eight-headed serpent.

Secondary Deities

Umashimaji no Mikoto

Umashimaji is the son of the deity Nigihayahi no Mikoto, who descended from the heavens in a stone boat. After his father gave him the 10 artifacts

known as the Tokusa no Kandakara, Umashimaji is said to have instructed Emperor Jinmu in the “spirit-shaking” ritual for which Isonokami Jingū would later be known. He is the tutelary deity and purported founder of the Mononobe clan, who were closely connected to the shrine.

Inishiki no Mikoto

The deified spirit of Inishiki Irihiko, son of Emperor Suinin and brother of Emperor Keikō. Inishiki’s father tasked him with making 1,000 swords to be enshrined at Isonokami Jingū. Inishiki later became the keeper of the shrine’s storehouse.

Shirakawa Tennō

The deified spirit of Emperor Shirakawa (1053–1129), who showed great reverence for Isonokami Jingū. In 1081, he donated the shrine’s current worship hall (p. XX).

Ichikawa Omi no Mikoto

The deified spirit of Ichikawa Omi, a descendant of Emperor Kōshō and the first overseer of Isonokami Jingū. His son Furu no Sukune later founded a branch of the Mononobe clan.