

"Omamori" Charms

Various other lucky charms are also available.



Success Talisman
for wishing things going well



Health and Longevity Talisman
for good health and a long life



Traffic Safety Ball Talisman
for road safety



Good-luck Amulet
bringing happiness for couples
and the birth of babies



Household Altar
for workplace safety
and vehicle safety



"Ema" Votive Tablet
You can write your wish freely
on it and can hang it
on the board or take it home.



Front entrance's torii gate
and stone steps



East entrance's torii gate
with the shrine's name tablet



Portable shrines (*mikoshi*) of
Shiogama-jinja Shrine and
Shiwahiko-jinja Shrine respectively



志波彦神社
鹽竈神社

しおがまさま



SHIWAHIKO-JINJA SHRINE



SHIOGAMA-JINJA SHRINE

1-1 Ichimoriyama, Shiogama, Miyagi, Japan 985-8510

phone: 022-367-1611

fax: 022-365-5530

website: <http://www.shiogamajinja.jp/>

Major Annual Festivals

Hote Matsuri
(fire prevention festival on March 10)



Carrying a portable
shrine (*mikoshi*) down
the front entrance

Shiogama Minato Matsuri
(maritime festival on the 3rd Monday of July)



Gozasen (sacred boat)

Shiogama-jinja Reisai (main festival on July 10)



Ancient special ritual to pray for the prosperity of the Imperial Family
and for the peace and security of the people

History and Beliefs

Shiwahiko-jinja Shrine

Shiogama-jinja Shrine



From the surrounding areas of Shiwahiko-jinja Shrine, you can see the city of Shiogama and, beyond that, the beautiful Matsushima bay area, one of the three most famed seascapes in Japan.

Since ancient times, the area where the two shrines are located has been regarded as a sacred place where deity festivals have been held by local residents. Their devotion eventually resulted in the construction of the shrine buildings. The shrines and their most astounding styles of Shinto architecture have passed down the history and culture of Tohoku Region to the present day. One of the world's three richest fishery grounds is off the coast of Shiogama where warm and cold currents meet. There are also variety of plants including a designated natural treasure "Shiogama-zakura" cherry trees, which form the sacred shrine forest filled with natural vitality.

Shiwahiko-jinja Shrine overlooks the sea of Matsushima. It is dedicated to *Shiwahiko-no-Kami*, a guardian deity (*kami*) of the surrounding area. It is unknown when the deity was first worshipped. However, a description about this deity is found in an official document compiled in 927.

It is said that this deity went along with the deities of Shiogama-jinja Shrine. The deity has been worshipped as a deity of agriculture, land development, and increase of production.

The current main shrine which was built in 1938 is brilliantly lacquered in black and vermilion. This shrine and the gate are designated as cultural assets of Shiogama City.



Japanese Deities



What is Shinto? / What are Shinto shrines (*jinja*)?

From ancient times, Japanese ancestors considered that divinity existed in the nature, such as in mountains, rivers, seas, plants, and living things, thinking that the nature beyond human knowledge gives them many good things. They led a

life with awe, respect and gratitude for nature. The Shinto religion arose spontaneously from these Japanese ideas of deities, and myriads of deities are being worshipped. Shinto beliefs mean coexisting with nature, honoring ancestors, and living in harmony with people. Purity and honesty are Shinto's highest principles. Shinto shrines are located near villages to worship deities dwelling deep in the forests. Basically, shrines should be in the nature, as the shrine's surrounding areas are called "*Chinju-no-mori*" (sacred shrine forests). Because the Japanese have placed importance on the *Chinju-no-mori*, they have maintained lush greenery and nature on their land.



The exact year in which the shrines were built is unknown. However, a description about the shrine's history is found in an official document compiled in 820. The three deities reside in three separate sanctuaries of this shrine: *Shiotsuchi-Oji-no-Kami* (Ocean Deity and Salt Manufacture Deity) in the *betsugu* (special sanctuary), *Tatemikazuchi-no-Kami* (War Deity) in the *sagu* (left sanctuary), and *Futsunushi-no-Kami* (War Deity) in the *ugu* (right sanctuary). These deities have been deeply worshipped as guardian deities of Mutsu Province which is present-day Fukushima, Miyagi, Iwate, and Aomori Prefecture.

The shrine is well-known to bring luck to those seeking protection of fishery and salt business, longevity, safety of their family, road safety, protection from evil and victory in battle. It is especially important to mention that expectant mothers come from all over Japan to offer prayers for an easy delivery.

The current shrines were built in 1704. The architectural style consisting of three sanctuaries and two halls of worship, and the layout of shrine buildings cannot be found anywhere else in Japan. Fourteen buildings including the main shrines and the stone *torii* gate were designated as a national important cultural property in 2002.



How to Worship



The central area of the approach to a hall of worship is called "*Sei-chu*" and reserved for deities, so you should avoid walking on it. Most shrines have large wooden offering boxes. You may place a money offering in the box to show your gratitude and sincerity to the deities. There are no rules as to how much you should offer. It is more important to put your heart into making your offering. If there is a bell with a rope, rattle the bell by shaking the rope. After you give an offering and ring the bell (no rules about which should be done first), calm your mind and stand up straight. Then, deeply bow twice. Clap



twice with your hands at chest level and pray. Lastly bow once deeply. When you pray, make sure first to give thanks to the deities for living happy days. Make a wish after that when you have one. The basic idea of Shinto is to show your gratitude to deities. The manner of worship represents this idea in tangible forms.

