

Pray to the Deities of Ise-jingu Shrine

Toyoukekotai-jingu Shrine (Outer Shrine of Ise)

This Shrine is called the Handa-Miya/Handa-Gosho Daijingu Shrine named after this area formerly known as 'Handa', and serves as the Outer Shrine of Ise, whereas Daijingu Shrine serves as the Inner Shrine of it.



Built to commemorate its 1300th anniversary.



This family crest is the same as the hollyhock crest of the Mito Tokugawa clan.



The interior of the front shrine. Wedding ceremonies are also held here.



The front shrine, reconstructed in 1994.

Ancient Pilgrimage

1. Location for Ritual Water Cleansing (*Chozuya*)

It is customary to cleanse oneself before visiting, at this place for purifying the mind and body.

2. Front Shrine (*Haiden*)

The ritual for visiting is to bow one's head twice, clap twice, then bow one's head once.

On January 15th, the '*Tsutsugayu Ritual*' is performed to predict the crop conditions for the coming year.

3. Main Shrine (*Honden*)

The architectural style is called '*shinmei-zukuri*', and is the same as Ise Shrine.

4. Portable Shrine House (*Mikoshisha*)

In recent years, portable shrines donated by many local visitors to the shrine have been collected.



Notice the Roof of the Main Shrine

The timber which extends in a cross-section over both ends of the roof is called '*chigi*'. The cut ends at the top of the *chigi* are horizontal to indicate a female deity (for the Inner Shrine) and vertical to indicate a male deity (for the Outer Shrine). Rounded pieces of timber rather like *katsubushu* (dried bonito) are placed on the ridge between the two ends of the *chigi*, and these '*katsuogi*' are a feature.

Tsutsugayu Ritual

6am, January 15th. Five serves of rice and one serve of adzuki beans are placed in a Nabe pot, along with reed pipes, and they are cooked over a hearth. When the adzuki beans are ready, a ceremony of examining the pipes is performed, and the crop conditions for the coming year are divined depending on how many adzuki beans are in the pipes.

'Joshu Handa Goshō Daijingu Engi'

Written by Maruyama Yoshizumi, vassal of Mitsukuni

This 8m20cm scroll of historical writings exists at the Toyoukekotai-jingu Shrine, and is designated as an important cultural asset of Tokai.



Ise-jingu Shrine – one of the birthplaces of the Japanese 'soul'

Ise-jingu Shrine in the Mie prefecture is often called 'Mr. Ise' (*O-Ise-san*) or 'Mr. Grand Shrine' (*Daijingu-san*), and is the most sacred shrine in Japan, centering around Kotaijingu Shrine and Toyoukedaijingu Shrine. Kotaijingu Shrine is also called '*Naiku*' (Inner Shrine), and it deifies Amaterasu-Omikami, a female deity and the sun goddess who gave birth to all life; she is the patron deity of all Japanese people, and the ancestral god of the Imperial Household. Toyoukedaijingu Shrine is also called '*Geku*' (Outer Shrine), and deifies Toyouke-Omikami, who oversees food for Amaterasu-Omikami. He is also a guardian deity who bestows his blessing on all the necessities of life, including rice, the staple food of the Japanese. Within Tokai village there is both the **Daijingu Shrine**, which is the Inner Shrine of Ise-jingu Shrine, and the **Toyoukekotai-jingu Shrine**, which is the Outer Shrine. Even from a national perspective, the fact that an Inner Shrine and an Outer Shrine exist independently within a single municipality is an extremely rare case.



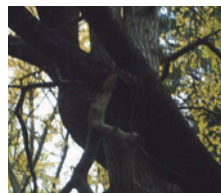
A view of the first '*torii*' gate from Shirakata Park. It is called the 'pond beneath Toyoke-Kotai Shrine', where the reflections of the '*torii*' gate in the surface of the water are beautiful.



Climb the stone stairs and pass through the second '*torii*' gate to reach the Front Shrine, and behind that the Main Shrine. This is a structure from around 1698, roughly 300 years ago.



It is said that Shirakata Castle was formerly in this area, and the foundations remain even now.



Mysteriously, the cherry blossom and maidenhair trees live nestled close together. These are on the left side of the shrine grounds.

Pray to the Deities of Ise-jingu Shrine

Daijingu Shrine (Inner Shrine)

Deifying the Goddess Amaterasu, it is the largest sacred grounds in the Hitachi province, possessing an ancient history with its establishment in 708; the place names such as 'Muramatsu' and 'Akogi' are titles which have their origin in the restoration to the emperor of the divided deities, as the 'Great Ise' of the Eastern provinces.

Pass through the first 'torii' gate and right there is a sacred power spot.



Climb the stone steps to see the front shrine directly ahead.



The roof has a simple gabled style, and the 'sixteen chrysanthemum crest', which is the crest of the Daijingu Shrine, shines in gold in the center of the black roof and on the carrier poles.



The former 'Yansamachi' Festival was held with the Daijingu Shrine as its focus.



The main shrine is inside the front shrine. Follow this path further and you will come out on Muramatsu beach.



Since ancient times, it has been a custom to pay one's respects to the first sunrise on New Year's Day at Muramatsu beach.

Ancient Pilgrimage

1 Second Torii Gate (*Ni-No-Torii*)

This is referred to as the deity 'torii' gate, representative of Ise Shrine. Its feature is the way the second set of horizontal crosspieces do not penetrate through nor protrude beyond the two support pillars.

2 Location for Ritual Water Cleansing (*Chozuya*)

A place for purifying the mind and body. It is customary to cleanse oneself before visiting.

3 Front Shrine (*Haiden*)

The ritual for visiting is to bow one's head twice, clap twice, then bow one's head once. Festivals are held here, such as the Kinensai for a good harvest (February 17th) and the Reisai or annual festival (April 7th).

4 Main Shrine (*Honden*)

The Main Shrine is done in the oldest architectural style in Japan, called 'shinmei-zukuri'. It has a tidy aspect to it, enclosed by the sacred grove.

5 Portable Shrine House (*Mikoshisha*)

Portable Shrines and Tengu that appear in the Tokai Festival are collected here, and can be visited.

6 Muramatsu Beach (*Muramatsu Kaigan*)

Pass through the passage on the right side of the Front Shrine, and there is a path that leads to Muramatsu beach, where you can pay respects to the first sunrise, from a sandy beach overlooking the ocean.

Ise-jingu Shrine – one of the birthplaces of the Japanese 'soul' Ise-jingu Shrine in the Mie prefecture is often called 'Mr. Ise' (*O-Ise-san*) or 'Mr. Grand Shrine' (*Daijingu-san*), and is the most sacred shrine in Japan, centering around Kotajingu Shrine and Toyokedajingu Shrine. Kotajingu Shrine is also called 'Naiku' (Inner Shrine), and it deifies Amaterasu-Omikami, a female deity and the sun goddess who gave birth to all life; she is the patron deity of all Japanese people, and the ancestral god of the Imperial Household.

The **Daijingu Shrine** is the Inner Shrine of Ise-jingu Shrine. Even from a national perspective, the fact that an Inner Shrine and an Outer Shrine exist independently within a single municipality is an extremely rare case.



Pass through the first 'torii' gate and follow the path to where the second 'torii' gate stands solemnly. From here you can walk to the Front Shrine.



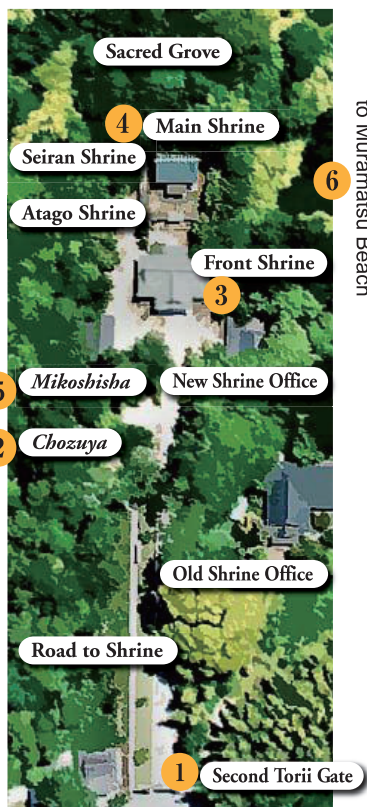
Ascend the stone stairs and the Chozuya is on the right, where you can purify yourself.



Moss covered stones stand silent beside the Chozuya. What could be the origin of these stones...? Are they power stones?



After visiting the Front Shrine, the Portable Shrine House is on the left. Here you can see Tengu masks and portable shrines.



to Muramatsu Beach

Notice the Tengu

The 'Tengu' in the Portable Shrine House are a personification of the god Sarutahiko. It is said that he was the guide when the god Ninigi-no-Mikoto descended to earth.

Prospering Since Ancient Times Through the 'Juusan-Mairi'

Muramatsu-san Kokuzo-do Temple

This temple deifies Kokuzo-Bosatsu (Akasagarbha), the bodhisattva of learning and wisdom, and has one of Japan's 3 greatest bodhisattva images. 'Juusan-Mairi' is held in the year when the year of the Japanese Zodiac (*Eto*) in which you were born first comes around again (age 12). It is to show gratitude for the fact that both your body and soul have grown up and reached adulthood. It is also called 'Chie-Mairi' or 'Chie-Mora'.



At the Main Building you are greeted by the Ox and the Tiger.



Is that a cat on the roof of the Main Building...? Guardian deities for those born in the years of the Ox and the Tiger are called Kokuzo-Bosatsu, and statues of the Ox and the Tiger sit on the roof.



A three-storied pagoda enveloped by autumn colors. Listen for the beautiful sound of the wind, whispering through the bells that hang in the corners of the eaves.



The idol is enshrined within. This interior two-storied pagoda has a lower storey that is square, and an upper storey that is circular, and is unique in the North of this prefecture.



In March, 1900 there was an accidental fire in a house in front of the gate, but luckily the idol and Shoki-Reishin avoided disaster.

Ancient Pilgrimage

1 Location for Ritual Water Cleansing (*Chozuya*)

A place for purifying the mind and body. It is customary to cleanse oneself before visiting.

2 Nio Gate (*Nio-Mon*)

The Nio statues of 'Ah' and 'Un' are enshrined in the left and right of the Nio Gate.

3 Main Building (*Hondo*)

When visiting, one puts one's hands together and recites '*Namu Kokuzo-Bosatsu*' (praise to Akasagarbha) three times.

4 Three-Storeyed Pagoda (*Sanju-No-Toh*)

Go up the stairs behind the Main Building to find the Three-Storeyed-Pagoda, where the Dainichi-Nyorai (Vairocana) is enshrined.

5 Inner Sanctuary (*Oku-No-In*)

This pagoda is a temple for esoteric Buddhism, called a '*Tahoto*', or two-storeyed pagoda. Kokuzo-Bosatsu, the deity of this temple, is enshrined within.

6 Temple for the God Shoki (*Shoki-Reishin-Do*)

It is told that at a time when there was a widespread disease epidemic, the epidemic subsided when a picture of the god Shoki was dedicated here. This votive picture of the god Shoki has become a designated cultural asset of Tokai.

Etiquette at the *Chozuya*

1) Take the ladle in your right hand, fill it with water, put it over your left hand and cleanse your left hand. 2) Switch the ladle to your left hand, and cleanse your right hand in the same way. 3) Take the ladle in your right hand, pour water into your left hand, and rinse your mouth. 4) Pour water over your right hand once more. 5) Raise up the ladle so that water flows down the handle, then turn it over and put it down.

Stone Monument for 100 Views of Ibaraki

A stone monument (for Muramatsu Kokuzoson) has been erected at the entrance before the gate, as it is one of the hundred picturesque locations selected by Ibaraki prefecture.

Poem Monument for Bocho Yamamura



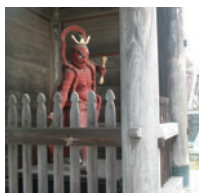
This poem monument, sitting peacefully, was created by Bocho Yamamura, who loved the scenery of this region, and says 'oh great earth, oh living things, in that darkness drifts the scent of ancient times'. Transcribed by Bocho, written by Saisei, autumn, 1939.



Stone Monument for Satoru Sato: an inscription of a poem composed from a deep interest in the Muramatsu mountain haze; it is called the 'Wet Stone' as it is constantly wet through all four seasons.



Take up water with the ladle, and cleanse your left hand, right hand, and mouth.

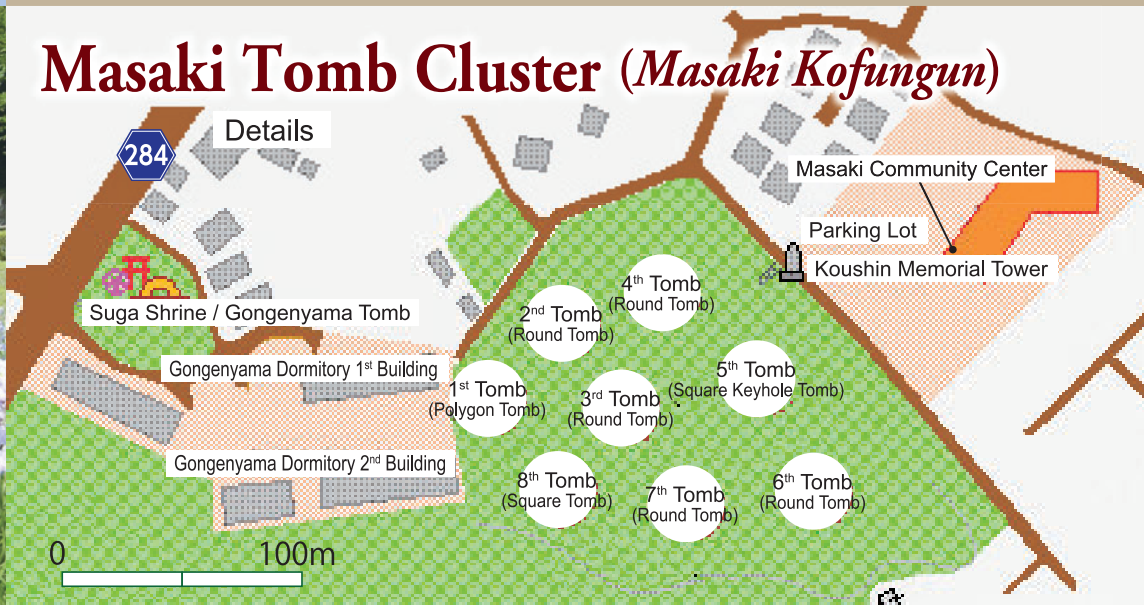


Ascend the stone steps to find the Nio statues in the Nio Gate. The Nio statues, who are the guardian deities of the temple, have their mouths in the shape of 'ah' and 'un' respectively.



Pass through the Nio Gate and the eel memorial monument stands quietly on the right side. Kokuzo-Bosatsu is kin to the eel.

Masaki Tomb Cluster (*Masaki Kofungun*)



Within the village on the left side is the Gongenyama Tomb (a keyhole-shaped tomb, and a designated cultural asset of Tokai) which is the largest of the tombs.



Earthenware excavated from the 5th tomb (the square keyhole tomb) in the Masaki Tomb Cluster. It has an opening in its base.

The Masaki Tomb Cluster is situated on the south side of the Masaki Community Center. There are 8 tombs in existence in the tomb cluster, which are a variety of shapes, including a square keyhole tomb, a polygon tomb, a square tomb, and round tombs. The 5th tomb in the Masaki Tomb Cluster (the square keyhole tomb) is from the early Kofun era (late 3rd century to early 4th century) and is ranked as one of the oldest tombs still remaining in Ibaraki prefecture. The 4th tomb (a round tomb) is thought to be from the latter half of the Kofun era (mid 7th century) while the 1st tomb (the polygon tomb) is thought to be from the late Kofun era (early 8th century), showing that this area was a burial area for a long period of time, from early until late in the Kofun era.



A glimpse of the Masaki Lantern Festival. Enjoy a mystical world lit by lantern light, different to that of the Tomb Cluster in daylight.



This is a festival displaying paper lanterns created by local primary school children.

Ishigami Castle Ruins Park



Japanese iris

Ishigami Castle Ruins Park conceals romanticism within itself. Ishigami Castle was a medieval mountain castle from the first half of the 1400s until 1602, fortified using the leading edge of the mountain and commanding a view of the Kujigawa River.

The Onozaki clan were the lords of Ishigami Castle, and were founded by Fujiwara-no-Hidesato, who was successful during the repression of the Taira-no-Masakado Rebellion. They prospered for generations during the Sengoku (Warring States) period as chief vassals of the Satake family, however they accompanied the Satake family when they relocated to Aida under orders from Tokugawa Ieyasu, and so the castle was abandoned. More than 400 years have passed since then, yet its state of preservation as a medieval castle is one of the best in Ibaraki prefecture. (The size of its core area is approximately 40,000m²)

Slowly wander through it all, including Choshoin, the family temple of the castle lords, and Sumiyoshi-jinja Shrine, their prayer shrine, and you may be able to slip back in time to the romanticism of the Middle Ages.

The cherry blossoms in the Castle Ruins Park offer a view of the courtyard in full bloom, so it is an ideal location for cherry blossom viewing. The hydrangea blooming on both sides of the walking paths increase every year, and other flowers provide enjoyment for visitors, such as the pale hued Japanese iris blooming near the parking lot, and the magnificent red spider lilies during the week of the autumn equinox.



Available for download from the Tokai Sightseeing Guide Homepage



Cherry Blossoms



Moat and Embankment