Shinto Prayer Etiquette (How to pray to Kami)

1. Bow twice deeply. 2. Clap your hands twice. 3. And bow once more deeply.

Temizu (How to purify your hands and mouth)

1. Take the dipper with your right hand and fill it with water. Pour some water over your left hand and rinse it.
2. Switch the dipper to your left hand and rinse your right hand.
3. Take the dipper with your right hand again and pour water into your left cupped hand and rinse your mouth. Please do not touch the dipper directly to your mouth.
4. Finally, rinse your left hand once more and dip the dipper so that the remaining water trickles down the handle to clean it.

Access

From Kyoto
2) JR Nara Line: JR Kyoto – JR Nara. Time: 40 minutes (one way)

From Osaka
2) JR Osaka Kansai Line: JR Osaka – JR Kyobashi. Time: 50 minutes (one way)

There are two ways to the jinja buildings from Keihan Yawatashi station; approx. 30 min. for each way.

From Keihan Yawatashi station:
1) Keihan Line: Keihan Yodoyabashi – Keihan Yawatashi. Time: 40 minutes (one way)
2) JR Osaka Kansai Line: JR Osaka – JR Kyobashi. Time: 50 minutes (one way)
3) From Osaka

Shokoshigami: 1) Keihan Line: Keihan Yodoyabashi – Keihan Yawatashi. Time: 40 minutes (one way)
2) JR Osaka Kansai Line: JR Osaka – JR Kyobashi. Time: 50 minutes (one way)

All of this site atop Mt. Otokoyama which has been designated as a “National Historic Site” and as one of Kyoto Prefecture’s “Historic Nature Conservation Areas”. There you can see many rare plants and animals.

From the top of Mt. Otokoyama, Iwashimizu Hachimangu overlooks Yawata city where three of Kyoto’s major rivers (the Kizu, Uji, and Katsura) meet and become the Yodo river, flowing south to Osaka. This made the area a key junction for transportation between Kyoto and Osaka during the time when boats were the most important method for shipping and travel. It was, therefore, a very important place for both commerce and politics.

The history of Iwashimizu Hachimangu dates back to about 1,150 years ago, early in the Heian period. In 859 (Jogan 1) a priest named Gyokeyo received an oracle at the Uia Hachimangu jinja stating that Hachiman-ekami would go to the top of Mt. Otokoyama near the capital (Kyoto) in order to protect the country. And Seiwa Tenno ordered the construction of Iwashimizu Hachimangu.

Thereafter many people from the Imperial Family and from the Imperial Court often visited Iwashimizu Hachimangu and prayed for the protection of the nation. Reigning and retired tennos have visited more than 240 times in total since Enyu Tenno, the 64th tennno, first visited. At one time, Iwashimizu Hachimangu was designated as one of the only two imperial mausoleums along with the Ise Jingu jinja.

In 1634, the third Shogun of the Edo period, Tokugawa Iemitsu, carried out the first major repairs on the jinja site (Kane 11). From then on, the buildings were consistently repaired every 30-40 years.

The excellently preserved condition of Iwashimizu Hachimangu is greatly due to the attention it received from the many samurai lords who governed the country such as Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the aforementioned Tokugawa Iemitsu. These famous leaders all worshipped Hachiman-ekami and conducted regular repairs to the buildings. As a result, the architectural characteristics were preserved and can be appreciated even today. Throughout history, new leaders followed the tradition of regular maintenance and repairs instead of tearing down the buildings and constructing new ones. These repairs were to express gratitude and respect to Hachiman-ekami, as well as to pass on techniques of craftsmanship from generation to generation.

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IWASHIMIZU-HACHIMANGU

Enshrined Deities

Iwashimizu Hachimangu is dedicated to 3 kami (deities) collectively known as Hachiman-ekami. “Hachiman-ekami” can refer to any of the 3 kami or to all 3 together. The 3 Hachiman-ekami are Ojin Tenno (an ancient Japanese Emperor), his mother Jingu Kogo (the Empress of Japan), and the goddess Himegami.

The Jinja Building

The jinja building of Iwashimizu Hachimangu is designated as one of the national treasures of Japan. The building stands on a stone foundation and from the outside has a stern, strong look, much like a castle. In contrast, the interiors are filled with vibrant decorations and artwork. The brilliantly colored sculptures are representative of the gorgeous interiors. The careful arrangement of plants and animals sculptures might make one feel as if they are visiting a zoo and a botanical garden at the same time.

Surrounding area

The forest surrounding the jinja is called “Chinju no Mori” meaning “the grove of a jinja”. The forest, with its many primeval trees is considered sacred and thought to be inhabited by many kami.

History

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It was not only tennos who revered Iwashimizu Hachimangu. After Genji (the Minamoto clan) and Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the aforementioned Tokugawa Iemitsu. These famous leaders all worshipped Hachiman-ekami and conducted regular repairs to the buildings. As a result, the architectural characteristics were preserved and can be appreciated even today. Throughout history, new leaders followed the tradition of regular maintenance and repairs instead of tearing down the buildings and constructing new ones. These repairs were to express gratitude and respect to Hachiman-ekami, as well as to pass on techniques of craftsmanship from generation to generation.

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It was not only tennos who revered Iwashimizu Hachimangu. After Genji (the Minamoto clan) defeated Heike (the Taara clan) and established the Rakshu (the Kamakura Shogunate), they worshipped Hachiman-ekami as their guardian deity. Thereafter, Iwashimizu Hachimangu came to be known as a “Bujin”, a guardian deity for Samurai, and Iwashimizu Hachimangu was visited by many famous samurai lords.