[List of Works / As of 4 January, 2026]

Thematic Exhibition

KAMI

The Myriad Deities of Japan

From: Sunday, 4 January 2026
To: Sunday, 1 February 2026

Organizer:
Tokugawa Art Museum and Hōsa Bunko Library

Remarks:

*The exhibits may be changed due to various reasons without notice.
*The order of exhibits in this list do not necessarily correspond to the order of exhibition.

Foreword

Throughout Japan, various deities known as *kami* are enshrined as protectors of the land and the people who inhabit it. In ancient times, people formed communities and prayed to these *kami*, offering thanks for the blessings that they brought. From these original ancestral deities, new tribes of deities emerged, and with them groups of people formed to dedicate their prayers to specific *kami* endowed with their own specialties. This exhibition explores the relationship between the Japanese people and the *kami*, focusing on the places where these deities are enshrined, the people who worship them, and the various festivals that are held in their honor.

Part 1

The Realm of the *Kami*

Section 1: Amaterasu Ōmikami

[Divine Blessings]
National security, Abundant harvest, etc.

Reigning over the heavenly realm of Takamagahara, Amaterasu Ōmikami is the supreme deity among the Japanese kami. She appears in Japanese mythology as the Sun Goddess, who illuminates earth and the heavens and is regarded as the ancestral deity of the Japanese Imperial Family.

Ise Jingū

The Inner Shrine of the Ise Grand Shrine complex, which is dedicated to Amaterasu Ōmikami, houses the divine Yata-no-Kagami, the Eight-Span Mirror that serves as the vessel for her *kami* spirit and constitutes one of the Three Sacred Treasures that form the imperial regalia of Japan. The Outer Shrine is dedicated to Toyo’ukehime-no-Mikoto, the deity of agriculture and industry.

Given Amaterasu Ōmikami’s position as the supreme deity of the myriad Japanese *kami* and the nationwide reach of the Ise Grand Shrine, shrines dedicated to her, known as Shinmei shrines, are scattered throughout Japan.

1
Nihon-shoki, The Chronicles of Ancient Japan.
One of 15 books, ink on paper.
Edo period, 1669.
Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya

2
The Origin of Amano Iwato Kagura Performance.
Picture by the 3rd Utagawa Toyokuni.
Edo period, 19th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

3
Guidebook of Ise Jingū Shrine and Famous Sites in Ise District.
Edited by Shitomi Kangetsu.
Edo period, 1797.
Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya

4
Uhō-dōji Shintō Deity, in plain wooden miniature shrine.
Muromachi period, 16th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

5
Uhō-dōji Shintō Deity.
Muromachi period, 16th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

6
Waka Poem on *Shikishi* Paper.
By the 2nd Tokugawa Shogun Hidetada.
Momoyama-Edo period, 16th-17th c.
Owned by the Fujita family and Morikawa Nyoshun'an Kan'ichirō.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

7
Letter from Kuki Moritaka addressed to Takigawa Tadayuki.
On Tokugawa Yoshinao's visit to Ise Jingū shrine.
Edo period, 1630.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

Atsuta Shrine

Second to the Ise Grand Shrine, Atsuta Shrine is also dedicated to Amaterasu Ōmikami. It is home to the divine Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi sword, another of the Three Sacred Treasures of the imperial regalia. Yamatotakeru-no-Mikoto, who was responsible for bringing the sword to the Owari region, is enshrined as an auxiliary deity at Atsuta Shrine.

8
View of Atsuta Shrine.
Traditionally attributed to Kanō Katanobu.
Muromachi period, 16th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

9
Notes and Illustration of Annual Rituals in the Atsuta Jingū Shrine: "Toshi-no-ichi."
Edo period, 19th c.
Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya

10
Atsutasha-Tōka, from "Zokugakusha-Sōsho" vol. 22.
Edo period, 19th c.
Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya

11
Eave-end Round Tiles with family crests from the Nobunaga-bei Wall at Atsuta Shrine.
Edo period, 17th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

12
Calligraphy "Atsuta Jingū."
By the 14th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshikatsu.
Meiji period, 19th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

13
Portrait of Yamato Takeru no Mikoto.
By Kawasaki Chitora.
Meiji period, 19th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

Section 2: Kasuga Myōjin

[Divine Blessings]
Protection of the nation, Excellence in martial arts, Road safety, etc.

Famed as the tutelary shrine of the Fujiwara clan, Kasuga Grand Shrine, located at the foot of Mount Mikasa in Nara, enshrines four deities: Takemikazuchi-no-Mikoto, Futsunushi-no-Mikoto, Amanokoyane-no-Mikoto, and Himegami, who are collectively known as Kasuga Myōjin. Takemikazuchi-no-Mikoto and Futsunushi-no-Mikoto were patron deities of the martial arts who are said to have arrived in Nara from the eastern provinces riding on the backs of deer. Amanokoyane-no-Mikoto and his consort Himegami came to Nara from Hiraoka Shrine in Kawachi Province and were revered as tutelary deities of the Nakatomi clan, who oversaw sacred shrine rites, then later as protectors of the Fujiwara clan. Since Kasuga Grand Shrine held land throughout Japan, shrines dedicated to the Kasuga deities and place names containing the word Kasuga can be found throughout the country.

14
View of Kasuga Shrine.
Kamakura-Nanbokuchō period, 14th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

15
Deity of the Kasuga Shrine on a Deer.
Muromachi period, 16th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

16
Volume 10 of Legend and Miracles of Kasuga Shrine, replica.
Edo period, 19th c.
Inherited by the Awa Hachisuka family.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

17
Incense Stick Stand, deer shape, gilded copper.
Muromachi period, 15th-16th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

18
Tsuigasane Stand for Rice Grain,
crane holding pine spray design, *maki-e* lacquer.
Muromachi period, 15th c.
Private Collection

Section 3: Hachiman Shin

[Divine Blessings]
Protection of the nation, Victory in battle, Road safety

Hachiman Shin is the deified form of the 15th Emperor, Ōjin (also known as Hondawake-no-Mikoto). Enshrined in Usa, Kyushu, Hachiman saved the nation from crisis by delivering an oracle related to the construction of the Great Buddha at Tōdaiji Temple in the Nara period. Entering the medieval era, he became revered as the tutelary deity of the Minamoto clan, who relied on his powers to protect the land, further leading to deep veneration of Hachiman as the guardian deity of the warrior class. In addition, since Empress Jingū, mother of Emperor Ōjin, is enshrined alongside Hachiman, he also became venerated as a deity of safe childbirth. Widespread worship among the warrior class led to the establishment of numerous Hachiman shrines, and today Hachiman is worshipped by those seeking success and victory in their various endeavors.

19
Hachiman Deity in the Guise of a Buddhist Monk (copy).
Edo period, 18th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

20
Takusen Oracle of Hachiman Deity.
By the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.
Edo period, 17th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

21
Tablet for Hachimangū Shrine.
Calligraphy by the 6th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Tsugutomo.
Edo period, 17th-18th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

22
Tablet of Hachimangū Shrine, from Model Calligraphy
Collection “Shingaku Honshi.”
By Jimyōin Motoatsu and Niwata Shigetsugu.
Edo period, 1797.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

23
Nagashibata Banner, dove design in embroidery.
Edo period, 18th-19th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

24
Gunsen Fan for Military Leader,
design of a dragon and doves.
Edo period, 17th c.
Owned by the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

25
Portrait of Takenouchi no Sukune.
By Kimura Kinshū.
Edo-Taishō period, 19th-20th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

26
Takusen Oracle of Ise Jingū Shrine, Hachimangū, and Kasuga Shrine.

Traditionally attributed to Matsudaira Kiyoyasu.
Muromachi period, 16th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

Section 4: Tennō Shrine (Gozu Tennō)

[Divine Blessings]
Dispelling epidemics, Healing illness, Household safety, etc.

Originally introduced to Japan as the guardian deity of the ancient Indian Jetavana Monastery (Jp. Gion Shōja), Gozu Tennō was primarily revered in urban areas as a deity who warded off epidemics. In Japan, he is equated with Susano'o-no-Mikoto, the younger brother of Amaterasu Ōmikami, and is also the enshrined deity of Kyoto's Yasaka Shrine, which was originally called Kanshin'in Gion-sha. Worship of Gozu Tennō spread to Gion shrines and Tennō shrines scattered throughout the country. Following the enactment of the Meiji-era order for the separation of Shinto and Buddhism, the name of the deity enshrined in many of these shrines was changed from Gozu Tennō to Susano'o-no-Mikoto. However, traces of the original deity remain in associated festival names and place names containing the word Tennō.

27
Festival of the Tsushima Shrine.
Edo period, 18th c.
Inherited by the Tsushima Ban family.
Donated by the Okaya family.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

28
Festival of Nagoya Ten'nō Shrine.
Edo period, 18th-19th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

29
Nagoya Bonten Festival Floats for Exorcising, 1st volume.
Edo period, 18th-19th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

Section 5: Kumano Gongen (Kumano-no-Ōkami)

[Divine Blessings]
Healing of illness, Bringing good fortune and dispelling misfortune, Household safety, Longevity, etc.

Kumano-no-Ōkami is the collective name for the deities enshrined at the three Kumano shrines in Kii Province: Kumano Hongū Taisha, Kumano Hayatama Taisha, and Kumano Nachi Taisha. They are also known as the Kumano Gongen and serve as the principal deities of Kumano shrines scattered throughout Japan. The primary deity of Kumano Hongū Taisha is Ketsumiko-no-Kami, the deity of Kumano Hayatama Taisha is Kumanohayatamao-no-Kami, and the deity of Kumano Nachi Taisha is Kumanomusubi-no-Kami. Mount Kumano was known since ancient times as a training ground for the ascetic practice of Shugendō, but from the late Heian period onward, it began to attract the devotion of emperors and nobles and, through the missionary activities of Shugendō practitioners, it gradually gained a following among people from a broad range of social strata.

30
Pledge of Loyalty to the Tokugawa Shogun,
addressed to Tokugawa Shogunate Staffs.
Edo period, 1716.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

31
Draft of the Pledge of Loyalty to the Shogun.
By the 4th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshimichi.
Edo period, 1712.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

Part 2
From Human to Deity

Section 1: Tenjin (Sugawara no Michizane)

[Divine Blessings]
Protection of the nation, Academic achievement

Sugawara no Michizane (845–903) was a scholar and statesman active in the early Heian period who was banished to Dazaifu in Kyushu as a result of the scheming of a rival, Fujiwara no Tokihira. Two years after his exile, Michizane passed away in despair. In Kyoto, inauspicious events, including droughts, floods, epidemics, and lightning strikes on the imperial palace, followed in succession. Emperor Daigo believed these to be the actions of Michizane's vengeful spirit and dedicated a shrine to him in the capital to appease his wrath. In consideration of his exceptional scholarly achievements, from the Kamakura period onward, Michizane came to be venerated as the god of learning, waka poetry, and calligraphic mastery, and is worshipped for these merits to this day. Tenjin faith is a classic example of "vengeful spirit worship," which stems from the belief that the spirits of those who died untimely deaths can bring misfortune and that comforting, appeasing, and deifying these spirits averts calamity and brings peace and prosperity.

32
Portrait of Sugawara no Michizane.
Painted and inscripted by Emperor Kōkaku.
Edo period, 18th-19th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

33
Calligraphy, Name of Sugawara no Michizane as a Shintō Deity.
By the 2nd lord of Owari, Tokugawa Mitsutomo.
Edo period, 17th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

Section 2: Kakinomoto no Ōkami (Kakinomoto Myōjin / Kakinomoto no Hitomaro)

[Divine Blessings]
Mastery of poetry, Academic success, Marital harmony, Safe childbirth, Protection from fire, etc.

Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (dates unknown) was a poet who served the imperial court during the Nara period and came to be revered after his death as the "Patron Saint of Poetry" by nobles, poets, and scholars. At poetry gatherings, portraits of Hitomaro were hung up and idolized, and he came to be regarded as a deity who presided over these gatherings.

Shrines dedicated to Hitomaro exist throughout Japan still today. He is worshipped not only for help in improving one's poetry skills and achieving academic success; he has also become a deity of marital harmony due to his many love poems, as a deity of fire prevention because his name sounds like the words "fire-stopping" (*hi tomaru*), and as a deity of safe childbirth because his name sounds like the words "person-birthing" (*hito umaru*).

34
Portrait of Kakinomoto no Hitomaro.
Picture and inscription traditionally attributed to Emperor Gosai.
Edo period, 17th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

35
Portrait of the Poet Kakinomoto no Hitomaro.
By Kanō Tan'yū.
Edo period, 1669.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

Section 3: Tōshōgū (Tōshō Daigongen / Tokugawa Ieyasu)

[Divine Blessings]
National peace and stability, Bringing good fortune and dispelling misfortune, Success and personal advancement

Tokugawa Ieyasu, the shogun who ended the Warring States period and established the era of peace that would be known as the Edo period, died on April 17, 1616, and was buried at Mt. Kunōsan in Shizuoka. One year later, the imperial court granted him the divine title of Tōshō Daigongen. With this posthumous deification, shrines to Tōshō were established throughout the fiefdoms of domanial lords across Japan and were granted the title of "Tōshōgū" shrines.

Tokugawa Yoshinao, Ieyasu's ninth son and founder of the Owari Tokugawa family, was deeply devoted to Tōshō Daigongen. As evidence of this, he was the first daimyo to establish a shrine dedicated to Tōshō Daigongen, which he had built in Nagoya in 1620. Subsequently, this shrine became the central place of worship of the Owari Tokugawa family.

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Portrait of Tokugawa Ieyasu as Shintō Deity “Tōshō-daigongen.”
Copied by Sakurai Seikō.
Shōwa period, 1937.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

37
Portrait of Tokugawa Ieyasu.
Picture and inscription by the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.
Edo period, 17th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

38
Tokugawa Ieyasu at the Battle of Nagakute (1584.)
Traditionally attributed to Kanō Yasunobu.
Edo period, 17th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

39
Tokugawa Ieyasu and His Sixteen Retainers.
Edo period, 18th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

40
Festival of Nagoya Tōshōgū Shrine, extract scenes of festival parade at Nagoya downtown.
By Mori Takamasa.
Edo period, 1822.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

41
Owari-meisho-zue, Guidebook of Famous Places in Owari, Vol.1.
Edited by Okada Kei and Noguchi Michinao.
Illustration by Odagiri Shunkō and others.
Edo period, 1844.
Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya

42
Festival of Nikkō Tōshōgū Shrine.
Edo period, 19th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum

43
Festival of Kishū Tōshōgū Shrine.
Edo period, 18th c.
The Tokugawa Art Museum