



A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SUIMU SHRINE

- 1. Shrine Deity: Takateruhime no mikoto**
The daughter of Onamuchi no mikoto, she is known as both the ancestral deity of cultivation and flood control and the divine protectress of food, clothing and shelter.
- 2. Shrine Name: Suimu Shrine**
At various times in the past the shrine has also been referred to as Suimu Daimyojin, Suimu Tenno and Suimugu. The name "Suimu" was originally written with different characters which meant "guardian spirit of water."
- 3. Cognate Shrines**
The grounds of Suimu Shrine also contain smaller associated shrines such as Amaterasu Kotajingu, Hachimangu, Kasuga Jinja, Kiso no Miya (Kiso County memorial to the war dead), local ancestral shrines and a shrine to the neighborhood deities of Kiso Fukushima City.
- 4. Shrine Structures and Lands**
The shrine's main buildings -- including the worship hall, main hall and Kagura dance hall -- are constructed in the Shimeizai ("deity") style and date from between 1874 to 1880. The offertory place, treasury and shrine office were built in the 1930's and 40's. The total area of these buildings is approximately 389 square meters (1283 square feet). In addition, other buildings owned by the shrine have a combined area of approximately 105 square meters (344 square feet). The shrine compound covers 4,366 square meters (14,310 square feet) and its buildings are encircled by a thick growth of Japanese cypress and cryptomeria, many of which are over one thousand years in age. The shrine also owns 16,500 square meters (4 acres) of wooded mountainside which adjoins the compound and together with it constitutes one large forest.
- 5. Shrine History**
It is unclear precisely when the deity was enshrined and the Suimu Shrine established in Kiso, though the consecration of Gifu prefecture's Nida Ichinomiya Minashi Shrine (from whence the deity came) is said to date from the Koan Period (1278-1287). We know from current records that as of the shrine building restoration carried out in June 1357 by Ichigo no kami Fujiwara Ieari (Kiso Ieari, feudal lord of Kiso), Suimu Shrine was deeply venerated as the sacred guardian of the Kiso lineage and tutelary shrine of the Kiso area. In the Tenso Period (1573-1592), the Kiso clan moved to Shimofusa and the Kiso region came under the rule of the Yamamura magistrates, administrators of the feudal province of Bishu. The Yamamura were as profoundly devout as the Kiso, frequently contributing to shrine building repairs and rendering offers of labor and tax proceeds from eleven neighboring villages. Moreover, successive generations of the Bishu family made grants of tax-free land which enlarged shrine properties originally contributed by the Kiso. This state of affairs continued until the Meiji Restoration (1867), whereupon the Yamamura clan moved to Mino and Suimu Shrine came to serve the parishioners of Kiso Fukushima alone. Veneration was strong in neighboring towns and villages as well, however: in November of 1872 the shrine was elevated to the rank of Sonsha ("hamlet shrine"), in March of 1924 to Gosha ("village shrine") and finally to Kensha ("prefectural shrine") in December of 1935. In April, 1946 Suimu Shrine separated from state administration and currently belongs to the Head Agency of Shrines as an incorporated religious institution.