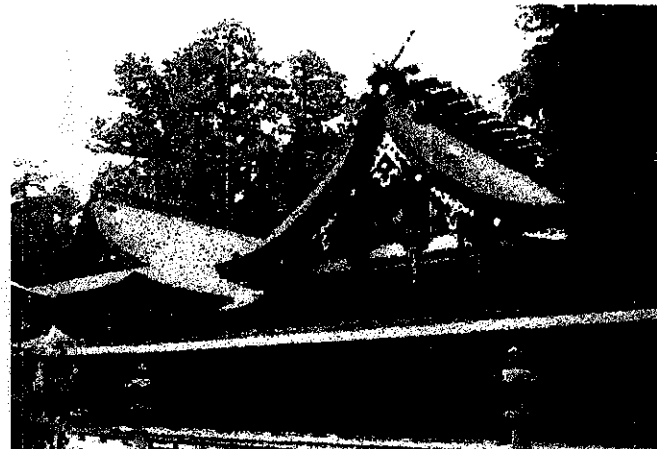




Haiden (Hall of Worship)



Honden (Main Shrine)



Romon (Tower Gate)

## Facts about KATORI-JINGU Shrine

**Location:** Katori, Sawara City, Chiba Prefecture

**Deity Enshrined:** Futsumushi-no-Okami (alias Iwainushi-no-Mikoto)

**Deity's Achievements:** Under the command of Amaterasu-Omikami (Great Divinity Illuminating Heaven), Futsumushi-no-Okami, in cooperation with the God of Kashima, successfully talked Okuninushi-no-Mikoto, the God of Izumo Province (presently, Shimane Prefecture), into peacefully reverting the country to the Imperial descendants and laid the ground for the creation of Japan by vanquishing all the dissenting deities. Futsumushi-no-Okami also was instrumental in completing the difficult task of developing the eastern provinces, thereby contributing greatly to the creation of a peaceful nation in Japan, securing stability and welfare for the people.

**Deity's Virtues:** Deeply revered, from the ancient times, by the Imperial Household as a guardian shrine of the Japanese nation, Katori-Jingu (one of the selected shrines honored by the title of *jingu*) was the "Number One Shrine" of the Province of Shimofusa (presently, parts of Chiba and Ibaraki prefectures). In the Meiji era and after, the shrine was accorded the title of *kanpei taisha*, the highest title Shinto shrines could aspire to. Today, Katori-Jingu is one of the shrines whose ceremonies are conducted under Imperial guidances.

Shrines all over the country, including Kasuga-Taisha of Nara and Shiogama-Jinja of the Tohoku district, are dedicated to the same deity as that of Katori-Jingu. Long referred to as the "lower shrine" to Ise-Jingu's "upper shrine", Katori-Jingu has, for centuries, been the center of veneration for people of all walks of life as the seat of the god of industries (agriculture, commerce and manufacturing), marine safety, wish fulfillment, good matrimony and smooth childbirth. Because of his extraordinary military prowess, the God of Katori-Jingu has also been venerated as a guardian of peace, diplomacy, victory and traffic safety as well as a protection against misfortunes.

**Shrine Constructions:** Ancient documents handed down in the shrine state that the pillars of Katori-Jingu were first erected in the 18th year of the reign of Japan's first emperor, Jimmu.

The shrine celebrated, with great festivities, the 2600th anniversary of its founding in the 33rd year of Showa (1958). In the olden times, the custom had it that the main shrine of Katori-Jingu be rebuilt every 20 years as in the case of Ise-Jingu. The custom, however, was since discontinued and the present shrine structures (main shrine, tower gate and hall for sacred dances) were built in the 13th year of Genroku (1700) at the command of Tokugawa Tunayoshi. In the 15th year of Showa (1940), the reconstruction of the hall of worship and the repairment of the main shrine and other structures were carried out at government expense. In the three-year period from the 52nd year of Showa (1977), shrine structures were completely re-roofed and a fresh coat of *urushi* lacquer was applied to all the necessary parts. The shrine structures are of the so-called Gongen style with the main shrine (important cultural property), the middle shrine and the hall of worship closely connected with one another.

**Shrine Premises:** Katori-Jingu's premises, popularly known as the Kamegaseyama Hill, Otsuki Region, measuring 123,000 square meters in all, have been designated as a natural monument by the Chiba prefectural government. In addition to its immediate premises, the shrine holds considerable land space elsewhere. Densely covered with old Japanese cedar trees, the shrine premises are quiet, solemn and aweinspiring.

The view from the Sakura-no-Baba (Cherry Riding Ground) in the back of the shrine is truly spectacular as it commands the Suigo (Swampland) Quasi-National Park area, including Itako, famous for its iris flowers.

## 香取神宮について

場所 千葉県香取市香取1697

祭神 フツヌシノオオカミ

### 神話

日本の国が建国されるはるか以前の昔、地上にはたくさんの神々がそれぞれの国を持っていました。草や木も言葉をしゃべり、地上の世界は混沌としていました。それぞれの国を奪うために神々の争いが絶えず、乱れた状態でした。

天にいた天皇家の祖先である太陽の神、アマテラスオオミカミはこの状態を嘆き、神々を集めて相談をして国の統一を図りました。天から地上に2度にわたる使者を遣わしましたが、失敗をしてしまいました。そこで、再度神々が相談をして強い神を派遣することにしました。その神は、香取神宮の神と鹿島神宮の神でした。

香取の神と鹿島の神は、出雲という地方の海岸に降り立ち、大きな剣を砂浜にたてて、地上の神々と交渉を行いました。その結果、出雲の神々はアマテラスオオミカミに従うことを約束し、地上の平和の基礎が築かれました。

その後、アマテラスオオミカミの子孫である神が、奈良で初代天皇として即位をし、日本の建国を宣言しました。それが紀元前660年と伝えられています。香取神宮の建てられたのは、その18年後であると伝えています。

### 信仰

神話の通り、日本の建国を支えた神であることから、皇室の守り神とされています。また、香取神宮の神が強い神であるところから、古くから将軍やサムライが厚い信仰を持っていました。現在でも、武道やスポーツをする人からの信仰を集めています。

香取の神は古代より正しきものを守り、邪悪なものを追い払うという信仰から、家族の安全や交通安全などのお祈りをする人がたくさんお参りします。

### 文化財

香取神宮の本殿などは西暦1700年に建てられたもので、国の重要文化財です。また、約1500年前に中国で作成されたと思われる国宝の鏡があります。

### 自然

香取神宮の森は樹齢300年から1000年の杉で覆われています。その広さは約123,000㎡です。神社の信仰の形を神道（しんとう）と呼びますが、神道では神社のある山や森に神が宿っているとされ、木や草、すべての生き物も神聖なものとして無断で採ってはいけないことになっています。神道では森や山そのものが神々の住居なのです。