

## 2. Tamatsushima Shrine (Vol. 6-917)

### Monument Text

yasumishishi wagoōkimino tokomiyato tsukaematsureru saikanoyu sogainimiyuru okitsushima  
kiyokinagisani kazefukeba shiranamisawaki shiofureba tamamokaritsutsu kamiyoyori shikazotōtoki  
tamatsushimayama

### Explanation

This poem is from volume six of the classical Japanese poetry collection *Man'yōshū* (poem number 917). Within *Man'yōshū*, there are two different types of poems: *chōka* and *hanka*. *Chōka* are longer poems based on phrases of five and seven syllables, and *hanka* are short poems of a 5-7-5-7-7 syllable pattern also referred to as *tanka*. The poem on this monument is a *chōka*, and the two on the monument to the left are *hanka*.

In 724, Emperor Shōmu visited Tamatsushima in Kinokuni (present-day Wakayama Prefecture) for a period of around 14 days, and this poem praising both the emperor and the areas of Wakanoura and Tamatsushima was composed and read at an official ceremony by Yamabe no Akahito, one who was in the company of the emperor. It paints a vivid picture of the many islands that can be seen from the imperial villa in Saika, the view of the changing tides, and the motion of those harvesting seaweed. The poem ends with, “Tamatsushima has had this sacredness since the age of the gods.”

The officials present were taken by Akahito’s sonorous recitation of this poem, and thought deeply upon the nobility of the emperor and the sacredness of the land.

The inscription on the monument is the work of Inukai Takashi, who loved Wakayama and worked towards its preservation as a place connected to *Man'yōshū*.