

## 4. Tamatsushima Shrine (Vol. 7-1222)

### Monument Text

tamatsushima miredomoakazu ikanishite tsutsumimochiyukan minuhitonotame

### Explanation

This poem is from volume seven of the classical Japanese poetry collection *Man'yōshū* (poem number 1222), and is believed to have been composed in 724 on the occasion of Emperor Shōmu's visit to Tamatsushima in Kinokuni (present-day Wakayama Prefecture). "Unknown author" is written on the monument, but after further research, the author was identified as Fujiwara no Maetsukimi. This figure is thought to be one of the four sons of Fujiwara no Mahito, most likely being either Fujiwara no Fusasaki or Fujiwara no Maro.

After a difficult journey from Nara to Wakayama, Fujiwara no Maetsukimi lays his eyes upon the vast and pristine ocean stretching out before him for the first time.

Being overcome by its exquisite beauty, Fujiwara no Maetsukimi writes, "No matter how much I look upon it, I will never tire of this beautiful scenery of Tamatsushima. I would bundle it up and return with it to the capital for the sake of those who have not yet seen this sight." His surprise at such picturesque scenery and his pure-hearted desire to show it to others is expressed within this poem.