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Culture Corner: *Shimenawa*

Magic Arcana
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We've already described on magicthegathering.com how the world design of Kamigawa was informed by considerable research by R&D into Japanese myth and culture.

Today we look at one example from a John Avon-illustrated, card-drawing land in *Saviors of Kamigawa*: **Mikokoro, Center of the Sea**.



Mikokoro is the crystalline outcropping in the center of the frame. See those ropes and zigzag strips hanging from the peaks? Let's take a look at the art description to learn more about them.

The art description of **Mikokoro, Center of the Sea** reads:

Show an island off the coast that consists of a single immense boulder of uncut crystal or diamond that juts out from the sea. The boulder is strung with shimenawa, huge ropes that designate a sacred site in Shinto. Perhaps the clouds have parted and a sunbeam hits the boulder from above, accentuating its holiness and power.

Those ropes are called *shimenawa*. In Shinto tradition, they are often made from straw and strung with zigzag strips of white paper called *gohei*.

And *gohei* you may have seen before... or have you already long-forgotten the term since *Champions*?

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