

Takojima Kiriko Festival

History

According to the 'Ishikawa Prefecture Suzu Publication' (issued in 1923), "It is written in the Sandai Jitsuroku (Japanese historical files) that on August 24, 873, the rank of *Jugoi* (Junior Fifth Rank) was offered to the Noto Region's Takakurahiko Shrine, which was at the *Jugoinoge* (Junior Fifth Rank, Lower Grade) at that time. The tradition of washing ships to be sent to Nagahama Inlet to welcome imperial messengers on August 10, the boat rituals and festival on the 11th, the Naorai banquet and boat-surrounding ritual still continue on the 12th..." It is believed that these events that took place on August 10 to 12 were the origins of the present Takakurahiko Shrine Autumn Festival.

Dates

September 10 to 11

Location

Within Takakurahiko Shrine grounds and the Takojima-machi area



Duration to the festival venue

■ Approximately 60 minutes by car from Noto Airport (interchange)

*These contents are based on 2015 information.

Inquiries

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2015
The Japan Heritage Promotion Project
文化庁



Takojima Kiriko Festival

Japan Heritage

The Noto Peninsula: Where the Light Dances
-The exciting Kiriko Festivals-



Dates

September 10 to 11

Location

Takojima-machi, Suzu City



Festival schedule

● September 10

In the morning Each *kiriko* is taken out from the lantern shed in each town. Paper lanterns, *otoko-matsu* (black pine), *shimenawa* (sacred straw ropes), sake barrels and *gohei* (wooden wands) are attached.

13:00 The *kiriko* depart their district to head towards Takakurahiko Shrine, where each undergoes a purification ritual. After performances of sacred lantern music, dance, and the children's *kiriko* drums, the *kiriko* depart to parade through each respective district.

18:00 Each household invites relatives, friends and acquaintances to their house for a *Yobare* banquet.

21:00 The *kiriko* make their rounds. The gathering spot and route changes every year.

24:00 All participants go back to their districts to end the first day.

● September 11

9:00 All *kiriko* gather at the shrine. Before the sacred transfer of the *mikoshi* (portable shrine) mounds of decorative sand (salt) are lined up in the center of the road at regular intervals of 1.5 meters. The drum floats, *mikoshi* and *kiriko* make their rounds in this order.

The route in which they parade changes every year.
21:00 The procession enters the shrine
22:00 The Hayafune Noh farce is performed.
24:00 Participants return to their respective districts, marking the end of the festival.

*Times for each event are estimates.

The number of *kiriko* and their workmanship

There were seven *kiriko* until the Taisho era. (One each for the Suwa-machi, Maehama, Kaizou, Shima no Chi, Nakamachi, Nakawaki and Wakihamachi districts.) In 1928, Kaizou, Nakamachi and Waki divided into three districts each, making the number of *kiriko* 13. In 1932, Imamachi joined. In 1962, Sakaemachi joined, and in 1965, Asahi-machi joined, making the total 16. The *kiriko* were large (11.4 meters, or longer than six tatami mats) before powerlines, but after powerlines were introduced in the Taisho era, all *kiriko* became a unified six meters (slightly longer than three tatami mats). As the *kiriko* size grew smaller, each district started to compete with elaborate decorations for each *kiriko*, embellishing them with ornate carvings and gold foil, with an overall lacquer finish.

Festival music, songs

The chant during the *kiriko* parade is "Aayoiyasaa, sakayossai". The music is performed by bamboo flutes, gongs and drums. There is usually one bamboo flutist, two players for the large

and small drums, and one playing the gongs. There are two songs performed, one for when moving and one when standing still.

Relations with other *kiriko* festivals

Kiriko are originally thought of as tools to light up the path the *mikoshi* would take. They are usually organized to come before, or before and after the *mikoshi*. However, in the Takojima Festival, all *kiriko* come after the *mikoshi*. It is said that repeated delays of the *mikoshi* arrival to the shrine resulted in the *kiriko* falling back after the *mikoshi*.

Characteristics

The *kiriko* carriers have their faces in white makeup painted like a monkey oracle. There are a few *shishi* (dancing lions) positioned around the *mikoshi*, but they do not do their customary dance – they loiter around and, among other actions, lie down, trying to interfere with the progress of the *mikoshi*.

The Hayafune Noh farce that is performed within Takakurahiko Shrine is a designated intangible folk cultural asset of Ishikawa Prefecture.