

# Map of Tsuruga (Traditional Events Ver.)

## —Carrying on Cultural Traditions—

### 1 Keihi Shrine Annual Festival (September 2nd, 3rd, 4th.) (Keihi Shrine)

Locals affectionately refer to Keihi Shrine's Annual Festival as Keisan Matsuri. It begins on September 2nd with a festival-eve vigil in Kagura. During the vigil the children put on a show of traditional dance. On September 3rd Keihi Shrine's Horen or imperial carriage is paraded through town and Mikoshi or portable shrines are pulled along by adults and children. Following a solemn grand ceremony at the inner shrine on the 4th, the townspeople turn out to see the traditional festival floats which are brought out. The festival has a long history as it is said to have begun when the shrine was built in its current place on 4th August 702 (lunar calendar).

In the Edo period this festival came to be preceded by the Gochou ceremony which was held in every town of the shrine's parish. At one time the order of the floats was formally decided. It is said that preparations for Keisan Festival begin with the Gochou ceremony which is currently held on June 16th.



Gohoren



Yoiyama

### The History of Tsuruga's Festival Floats

Tsuruga's tradition of festival floats is said to have begun around the end of the Muromachi era 400 years ago. Every year on August 3rd to 4th,

six of the twelve neighborhoods took turns to bring out the floats. The largest float which was brought out was over 10m high.

Depending on the year as few as 30 and as many as 50 floats took part, including smaller floats pulled by businesses and individuals.

### Revival of the Festival Floats

In 1873 individual floats were abolished and those which were brought out through the town were made smaller in size. The floats were paraded on September 4th by all twelve neighborhoods.

Most of the floats were burnt down during an air raid on July 12th 1945. With the assistance of a large number of people the three remaining floats known as (A), (B), (C) as well as three further floats (D), (E), (F) were restored in 1994. In 1997 'Port of Tsuruga Festival Float Hall' was completed allowing people to see the floats anytime.



(A) Goshonozushi Yama



(B) Kanegazushi Yama



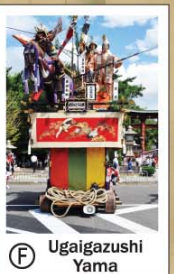
(C) Toujinbashi Yama



(D) Higashimachi Yama



(E) Kanjamachi Yama



(F) Ugaigazushi Yama



### 2 Azo Sumo Jinku (Sumo Folk songs) (Third Sunday in September) (Tokura Hachiman Shrine, Azo) Prefectural Intangible Cultural Property

This event is accompanied by a lively sumo song. Wrestlers from ten families wearing ornately decorated kashira mawashi or sumo belts step into the ring for the ceremonial sumo dance in the shrine grounds. The decorative mawashi are family heirlooms which have been handed down through the 10 local old families.



### 3 Akasaki Shishimai (Lion Dance) (Third Sunday in September) (Hachiman Shrine, Akasaki) Prefectural Intangible Cultural Property

Starting in the morning, a lion dance is performed calling at all the local houses followed by an offering made at Hachiman Shrine. The elements of the dance are 'The Bell Dance', 'The Staff Dance', 'Crab Collecting', 'Sleeping', 'High Mountains' and the 'Conclusion of the Festivities'. It's a very lively dance which also involves a jester. It is a highly skilled dance which is difficult to learn.



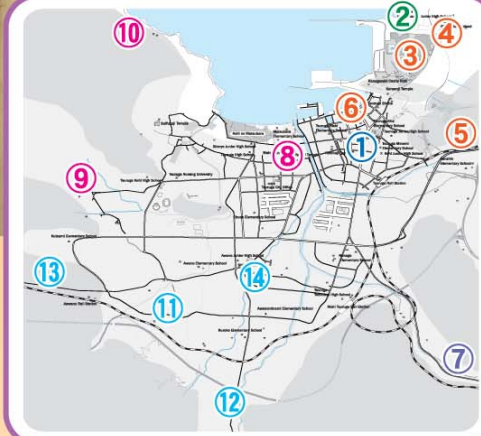
### 4 Yamano Kanko (December 9th) (Hachiman Shrine Akasaki)

Yamano Kanko is a thanksgiving festival for the Mountain God. Elementary school boys run up the mountain paths either wearing a fundoshi or pants with a fundoshi. They rub water on their bodies which has been used to wash rice and call out, 'Yaamano kanko no maatsuri ja!' as they run.



### 5 Taiko Odori (Drum Dance) (August 16th, 17th, 23rd) (Suwa Shrine, Ikenokochi) Prefectural Cultural Asset

The dance takes place in the grounds of Suwa Shrine, Ikenokochi on the evening of August 16th every year and is watched by local residents. The dance is lead in four different ways. It is said to have started as a way to console the Dragon God who had stood on a snake.



### 6 Tsuruga Nishimachi Tug-of-War (Third Sunday in January) (Aioi, Prefectural Intangible Cultural Property)

A New Year's event: two people dressed as the Gods Ebisu (god of fishing) and Daitoku (god of farming) walk through the town before the start of the tug-of-war event. Locals take sides pulling a 50m rope, 20 cm in diameter. If the Eastern Ebisu team wins it foretells a big catch and if the Western Daitoku team wins it foretells a bumper harvest.



### 7 Tone, Keihi Shrine Spring and Autumn Festivals (First Sunday in April and December) (Keihi Shrine, Tone Municipal Intangible Cultural Property)

Children carrying bundles of straw and sticks parade from the community center to the shrine lead by a flag bearer. The leader calls 'Ujounohana izurenosotou' and the children reply in unison with 'Gyoi!!'. For the Autumn festival many tools and offerings are prepared and children take part again to give thanks for a good harvest. Locals gather early in the morning for a grand rice cake making event. When the offerings are ready, they are carried to the shrine and laid out before the altar.



### 8 Matsushima Sashi Odori (Obon / Autumn Festival) (Matsushima cho, Municipal Intangible Cultural Property)

Sashi Odori is one of the dances in Matsushima town. The dance is based on the actions of a fisherman repairing and drying his nets. Repairing the net is also called sashi or piercing the net hence the name sashi odori.



### 9 Kutsumi Rice Planting Festival (May 5th) (Shirokikhiko Shrine 'Male Shrine', Kutsumi Shrine, 'Female Shrine')

This ritual, to pray for the successful planting and harvest of rice, takes place in two shrines. In the past people would never plant the rice until after this event. An offering is made at Hiko shrine with the Gohai or wooden wand with paper streamers. Then Owanai (traditional dance in Eastern Wakasa Area) and Lion Dance are performed and a song to pray for a good harvest.



### 10 Dengaragan (February 1st) (Hachiman Shrine)

10m long juzu or prayer beads are passed around and rattled in the order, from men, to women, to children. After they have been passed around a tug-of-war match takes place between the children and adults as they pray for a bumper catch and good health. It is said that if the children win it will be a bumper fishing season.



### 11 Nosaka Danose Festival (The nearest Sunday to January 8th, lunar calendar) (Nosaka Shrine, Nosaka Municipal Intangible Cultural Property)

A group of men wearing cotton kimonos perform a dance which mimics farm work. In a song about tilling the rice paddies they clap along singing 'Danosenosenoya!' and beat the drum as if tilling the rice field. In the rice planting song, they hold a bunch of cedar branches meant to represent young rice plants and jump up pretending to plant the rice. The festival is to pray for a safe and bountiful harvest that year.



### 12 Hatsu Uma Festival (First Day of the Horse in February) (Inari Shrine, Yama Municipal Intangible Cultural Property)

This festival takes place on the first day of the horse known as Hatsuuma, according to the lunar calendar. It's celebrated at Inari Shrines all over Japan. At Inari Shrine in Yama, Hatsu Uma is a festival to pray for crops in which girls walk under the offering. It is also a ritual for parishioners.



### 13 Higan Festival (Around March 30th) (Hachiman Shrine, Seki Prefectural Intangible Cultural Property)

The festival used to take place on the first day of the spring equinox week. It celebrates newcomers to the area, people who have become the head of a household and the changeover of local organizers. It is an important festival which maintains many religious rituals and dances.



### 14 Stena Odori - Folk Dance (Obon, Autumn Festival) (Municipal Intangible Cultural Property)

Stena Odori is the most popular bon odori or folk dance throughout Tsuruga. The lyrics tell the story of Shibata, an influential rice farmer from Ichino. It is commonly known as the 'Shibata Lead'.