



# HIROSHIMA KAGURA PERFORMANCE

~ Hiroshima Prefectural Citizen's Culture Center ~



## Japan's Kagura

Kagura is a ceremony that conveys a feeling of gratitude for the bounty of nature. The ancestors of the Japanese people believed that everything that happened in the world was because of the gods. Therefore, in fall, harvested crops were offered in a holy place, preparations for festivals were completed, and the ceremony conveying gratitude to the gods came to be called "Kagura".

So, at the same time that Shinto Shrines were built around the country, Kagura spread as well, was continued by the Shinto priesthood and the local people, and has been preserved and passed on as a present day Japanese folk art in various places and forms.

## The special characteristics of Hiroshima Kagura

The Kagura you will see today is called "Geihoku Kagura"(Northern Hiroshima) and has been preserved and passed along in Hiroshima Prefecture through approximately 150 groups. Furthermore, numerous competitions have been held and at present, it is the type of Kagura gathering the most attention.

Though the performers have to study and work, they attend practice two to three times a week and perform at festivals and events on the weekends.

## Things to watch for

Please look carefully at the costumes with various embroideries on them.

The heavier ones can weigh up to 20 kg.

You will be able to take a close look after the performance during the commemorative photo session.

The Kagura musical accompaniment is performed by four Japanese instruments. However, there is no sheet music of the sounds. This is to ensure that every group's "sound" and "rhythm" are heard by the ears, remembered by the body and passed on.

## Photo Session

With players and costumes on stage from 8:45p.m.



**Join Us!**

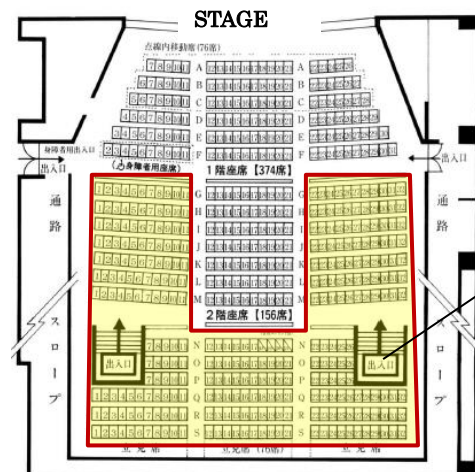
## Post Kagura photos

you take and make Kagura more popular



※Only those who are seated at yellow zone can take photos

※No Flash



# 【Ayanishi Kagura Troupe】

Asakita Ward, Hiroshima city

## Story line of the first program “Gojyo-no-Ohashi”

### ◆Curtain up 7pm

One moonlit night during the Heian period on the Gojo-no-Ohashi bridge in Kyoto, strong Benkei happened to come across a good-looking page, Shanao, playing elegant melody with his bamboo flute. He saw the sword on the boy's waist, wanted to make it his, and challenged him. Shanao jumped right and left escaping Benkei's blade of *Naginata*, long-handled sword. Finally Benkei used up all his energy and surrendered.

Shanao then was an eleven-year-old boy, while Benkei was a gigantic man. Shanao learned war strategy from Kiichi-hogan and was patronized by him at Mt. Kurama.

This boy Shanao became Minamoto Yoshitsune, younger brother of Minamoto Yoritomo who established Kamakura Shogunate, first military government after beating Tairano Kiyomori. The story is about the fateful encounter of later Yoshitsune and Benkei who remained loyal to Yoshitsune all through his life.



### Intermission: 7:40pm~8pm

## Story line of the second program “Akko-den” (The Legend of the Fox-demon)

### ◆Curtain up 8pm

Mid Heian Period (12<sup>th</sup> century) beautiful lady Tamamo-no-mae waits on Emperor Toba (1107-1123). Since she gets affection from the Emperor, a series of misfortunes fall on him.

The Emperor, distressed, has the yin-yang master Abe Yasuchika read the woman's fortune. Abe sees right through her facade. The white fox-demon Kinmô-kyûbi (gold fur, nine tails) debauched many kings in China and flew to Japan. The fox-demon flees to Nasuno-ga-hara, in Shimotsuke-no-kuni (modern Tochigi Prefecture), transforms into different persons and annoys the villagers. The demon once transforms into a beautiful lady, goes to Jûnenji temple where no women admitted and devours the monk Chinsai.

Finally the demon is caught and vanquished by the imperial court officials Miura-no-suke and Kazusa-no-suke, prominent archers.

