



# 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.



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

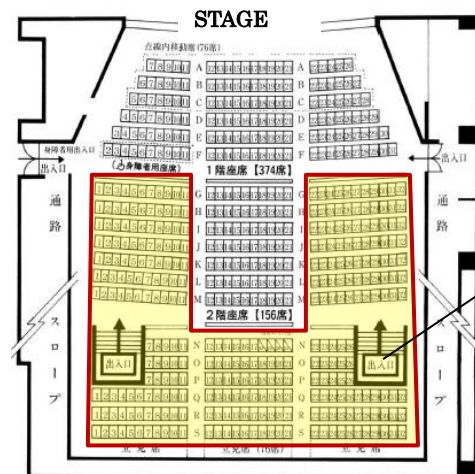
※No Flash

**Join Us!**



Post Kagura photos

you take and make Kagura more popular



Photography Zone

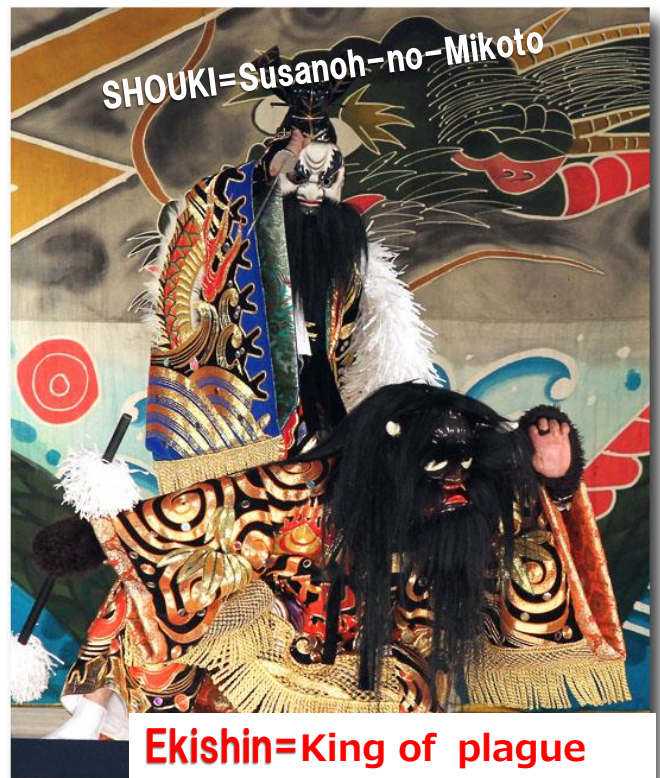
# 【Yasuno Kagura Troupe】

Akiohta-town Yamagata-county

## Story line of the first program “Shouki”

### ◆Curtain up 7pm

Shouki is the god who fights against plagues. The story is handed down both in China and in Japan. *Bingo Fudoki* (record of regional climate and culture of Bingo Province) has the following story. One night a shabby-looking man asked for a night's lodging at a poor farmer's home. The family gave best possible hospitality to the man. When leaving, the man gave them a hoop made of cogon grass and told them to wear it around waist. Later when plagues became prevalent, the family survived. The program Shouki has its origin from this legend. Susano no Mikoto exiled from Takamagahara (the heaven), goes to China and turns into the god known as Shouki. Shouki fights against Daiekishin (Plague Demon) who tries to take away people's life with plagues. Shouki captures the invisible Plague Demon with his large hoop of cogon grass held in his left hand and vanquishes the Demon with a sword held in his right hand.



**Intermission: 7:40pm~8pm**

## Story line of the second program “Yamauba”

### ◆Curtain up 8pm

Minamoto no Raiko and Watanabe no Tsuna are dispatched with the royal command to beat out bandits in Agero, Echigo Province (present Niigata). They get lost in the mountain. They find the only one light deep in the mountain, and ask for one night accommodation. Mother and child living in the house are none other than bandits themselves. They were expelled from the capital, cursed their painful situation, had grudge to everybody, and had done many bad things in Agero. They are Yamauba and her child, Kaidomaru.

Yamauba and Kaidomaru without knowing about Raiko famous for his heroic acts try to attack him. They are badly beaten. Yamauba deserts Kaidomaru and flees. However she returns soon and tells him her tale of woe, and asks him to save her son's life at the cost of her own life. Raiko feels sorry about their fate, saves the boy's life and allows him to be his follower and takes him back to the capital. Kaidomaru later changes his name to Sakata no Kintoki, becomes one of the four most powerful *samurais* working for Raiko.

