

## **Hyakumangoku Festival**

The Hyakumangoku Festival, held the first weekend in June, is Kanazawa's biggest celebration of the year. This festival is a chance to experience many traditions that have been handed down from the era of the Kaga domain, which lasted from 1583 to 1869 and included present-day Ishikawa. The event commemorates the entry of Maeda Toshiie (1537–1599), the first lord of the Kaga domain, into Kanazawa Castle on June 14, 1583.

The Hyakumangoku Parade, the festival's main event, takes place on Saturday afternoon and runs from the east exit of Kanazawa Station to Kanazawa Castle. Exuberant taiko drum performances in front of the Tsuzumimon Gate mark the beginning of the parade. Then, an actor on horseback playing Maeda Toshiie leads a procession of participants dressed as sixteenth-century samurai, noblemen, and princesses. The parade's arrival at the castle is celebrated with historical re-enactments and lion dancing.

Another highlight is the Hyakumangoku Dancing Parade on Saturday evening, in which more than 12,000 people dressed in traditional *yukata* perform festival dances along Kanazawa's main streets. Spectators are encouraged to join in the festive atmosphere. After dark on Saturday night, outdoor Noh performances are held by torchlight.

*Hyakumangoku* means "one million *oku* of rice" (one *oku* was considered enough rice to feed one person for a year). It is a reference to the wealth and culture of the Kaga domain and the ruling Maeda family.