

Geta Matsuri Festival

This traditional New Year's rite is held at Yatsushiro Jinja Shrine well before dawn on the morning of January 1. Island men holding poles made of *medake* bamboo work together to raise a heavy ring woven from local tree bark. The higher they are able to raise the ring on the slippery bamboo poles, the better the forecast of the coming year's catch. As the sky brightens just before dawn, they drop the ring to the ground in a gesture symbolizing the replacement of the previous year's sun with a new one.