

Kurokawa Noh-no-Sato Ogi Kaikan

500 Years of Kurokawa Noh

A rich tradition of Japan's performing arts has been passed down in the Tsuruoka area, in Yamagata Prefecture. Kurokawa Noh is the local form of the classical dance-drama performed in Kurokawa for more than 500 years. It is based on the traditions of *sarugaku* noh, a form of theater predating noh. It was originally made successful by actor, playwright, and critic Zeami (1363–1443). Although Kurokawa Noh is similar to the five schools of Noh, (Kanze, Konparu, Hosho, Kongo, and Kita), it has some unique characteristics.

As part of the local culture of Kurokawa, noh is performed for the deities enshrined in Kasuga Jinja Shrine. The actors are not professional. Most are farmers and all are shrine parishioners. Two all-male troupes have performed and passed down this cultural asset from generation to generation.

It is not clear how noh came to Kurokawa. There is one theory that Prince Ogawa, the third son of Emperor Gokomatsu (1377–1433) stayed in the local area and taught the local people *sarugaku*. In the fourteenth century, the Muto family, who were influential local landholders, supported *sarugaku*. They donated some land to Kasuga Jinja Shrine and built some of its halls. Sakai Tadakatsu (1587–1662), who was appointed daimyo of the Dewa Shonai domain by the Tokugawa shogunate in 1622, also became a strong supporter. Generations of his family continued to support Kurokawa Noh, allowing the art form to enjoy significant growth. Kurokawa Noh was designated an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1976.

Festivals held throughout the year in Kurokawa feature Kurokawa Noh. The main performance occurs in February during Ogi Festival, held to celebrate the New Year in the old Japanese lunar-solar calendar and to pray for peace and a bountiful harvest in the coming year. Two special performances are also held each year. Candlelight noh (Rosoku Noh) is held in mid-October and torchlight noh on the water (Suien no Noh) is held in August.

Use of the Kurokawa District Revitalization Center Facilities
(Fees per hour)

Multipurpose Hall: ¥ 1,050

Training Room 1: ¥ 520

Training Room 2: ¥ 520

Audio-Visual Room: ¥ 520

Kitchen/Food Prep: ¥ 520

Training Room 2: ¥ 520

Other Facilities: ¥ 520

Use of heating/cooling systems will incur a 20 percent additional charge.

Available for use: 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.

(CENTER PANEL)

Kurokawa Noh-no-Sato Ogi Kaikan (Kurokawa Noh Village Ogi Hall) is a culture center maintained by the Kurokawa Noh Preservation Society. It offers opportunities to experience Kurokawa Noh first-hand. It displays some photos of noh masks and costumes, providing insight into the rich history, background, and traditions of this performing art. Visitors can also learn about the history of the village of Kurokawa and enjoy interaction with members of the community.

BACK PANELS
(LEFT PANEL)

Events featuring performances of Kurokawa Noh:

March 23 - Kasuga Jinja Shrine Prayer Festival
Starts 10:00 a.m.

May 3 - Kasuga Jinja Shrine Annual Festival
Starts 10:00 a.m.

July 15 - Hanamatsuri Flower Festival at Mt. Haguro
Starts 10:00 a.m.

August - Suien no Noh (torchlight noh on the water)
Starts 6:00 p.m.

October – Rosoku Noh(noh by candlelight)
Starts 12:00 a.m.

November 23 - Kasuga Jinja Shrine Niiname-sai (Harvest Festival)
Starts 10:00 a.m.

February 1–2 Kasuga Jinja Shrine Ogi Festival (to celebrate the lunar New Year and pray for peaceful, bountiful year)
First day starts 6:00 p.m.
Second day starts 9:00 a.m.