

Ogi Festival: Stomping of the Earth

NOTE: This corresponds to a museum exhibit where content will be accessed by scanning a QR code.

One of the rituals of Kasuga Jinja Shrine's Ogi Festival is *daichifumi* (stomping on the earth). It is a dance performed by boys usually about five years old who are selected from the families of the *toya* (lay officiants) of the upper and lower troupes of the shrine.

The boy representing the upper troupe dress in a gold headdress with black headband and black robe, while the boy representing the lower troupe is dressed in a red robe that is later covered with a longer overgarment, and a black headdress with a red headband.

Daichifumi is based on a Shinto ritual called *henbai* (special stamping of the feet believed to have magical powers). It is performed to awaken the spirits of the earth and suppress evil spirits. As the Ogi Festival is held on February 1 and 2, which are the dates of New Year in the old Japanese lunar-solar calendar, the ritual is also performed as a prayer for peace and a good harvest in the year ahead.

The boy from the upper troupe stomps his feet in a choreographed ritual marking the four cardinal directions, while the boy from the lower troupe stomps in the diagonal directions, which represent the five elements.

During the Ogi Festival, the ritual is performed three times: once on February 1 for the *toya* of each troupe, once on the following morning, and once on the shrine's noh stage for the members of both troupes.