

Ushirono Float Festival

The Ushirono Float Festival (Ushirono no Yatai Gyoji) is one of a number of celebrations that take place at Shinto shrines throughout the former town of Kaya (now part of the present-day town of Yosano) during the annual Kayadani Festival. In the Ushirono district, six floats are paraded through the streets, carrying children on small but ornately decorated stages. The children play festival music on flutes, drums, and other traditional instruments. They pause to perform a dedication to the local deity at the approach to Atago Jinja Shrine, where a crowd waits to shower the performers with presents of money wrapped in paper.

Four of the floats present musical performances and one holds a kabuki performance. The kabuki actors are local children who practice for about two months leading up to the festival. It is extremely rare to see small children wearing Edo-period costumes and performing this traditional artform.

The Ushirono Float Festival has been registered as an Intangible Folk Cultural Property by Kyoto Prefecture; its history stretches back over 200 years, and many of the floats themselves are very old as well. The parade and performances are held on both days of the festival, on the last Saturday and Sunday in April.