

Yoshiwara Tachifuri

Yoshiwara Tachifuri is a traditional folk performance put on in the Yoshiwara district of Maizuru. It is a combination of dance, theater, and ritual that closely resembles a martial art demonstration. A series of performers dance in pairs while wielding, spinning, and jumping over their swords and staffs, enacting battle scenes from the siege of Tanabe in 1600. During this conflict, fishermen from the local area helped the gravely outnumbered forces of Hosokawa Yusai, also known as Hosokawa Fujitaka (1534–1610), to defend Tanabe Castle. Records show that the performance has been held in the region since at least the middle of the Edo period (1603–1867).

Yoshiwara Tachifuri is performed to the music of flutes and drums. While older dancers perform with the blades of their swords exposed, the youngest performers, who may be children as young as nursery-school age, carry poles with paper tassels on either end. Performances last for approximately one hour and are held at six locations, including Asashiro Jinja Shrine and Maizuru Park, the former site of Tanabe Castle. As they move between venues, the dancers follow a portable Shinto shrine procession. Yoshiwara Tachifuri is held once every four years, on November 3.