

The Kuromaru Odori Sculpture

This five-part, life-size sculpture depicts the Kuromaru Odori, one of three dances that celebrate Lord Omura Sumikore (dates unknown) regaining control of the Omura domain in battle in 1480.

The main parts are worked in bronze, depicting dancers in festival costume: two schoolboys hold cymbals and strikers; three adult male figures carry taiko drums. The drummers have towering floral garlands fixed to their backs that fan out like the ribs of a parasol. Typically, these are made of split bamboo adorned with paper flowers; here they are rendered in steel. In the Kuromaru Odori, each floral spray weighs around 60 kilograms and measures 5 meters in diameter. It is believed that passing beneath the ribs of the garlands brings good fortune.

The dance is performed several times a year, including at the autumn festival in Omura Park, along with two other traditional Omura City dances. Historical accounts show that the dances have changed little since they were first performed.

The Kuromaru Odori was registered as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage event in 2022 and is an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property of Japan. The sculpture was created in 1992 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Omura as a city in 1942.