

Zendeko Dance & Hyūtan Mawashi

This festival is held at Oka Tenmangū Shrine on September 25 from 7:30 p.m. and is designated an Intangible Folk Cultural Property by Ōmuta City. Its origins are unknown, but it is thought to have begun in the Edo period (1603–1867).

The Zendeko Dance is performed by young women and girls wearing kimono and straw hats decorated with floral pompoms. Each one spins a bamboo tube filled with six coins in her right hand, stopping every few steps to tap the tube on her body. The dance is thought to represent rice cultivation and is intended to be a prayer for a good harvest.

The Hyūtan Mawashi dance follows. Boys and men with ink-smearred faces, dressed in old-fashioned work kimono and sandals, perform a stooped, shuffling dance. They slap the sake gourds they hold in their left hands with the fans they hold with their right and perform comical movements. This

dance is said to have been inspired by a story of a man carrying a sake-filled gourd staggering into a shrine to pray. It is thought to be dedicated to the rainmaking deity.

The shrine is about 10 minutes by car from Shin-Ōmura Station, but there is no parking nearby. There is limited bus service.