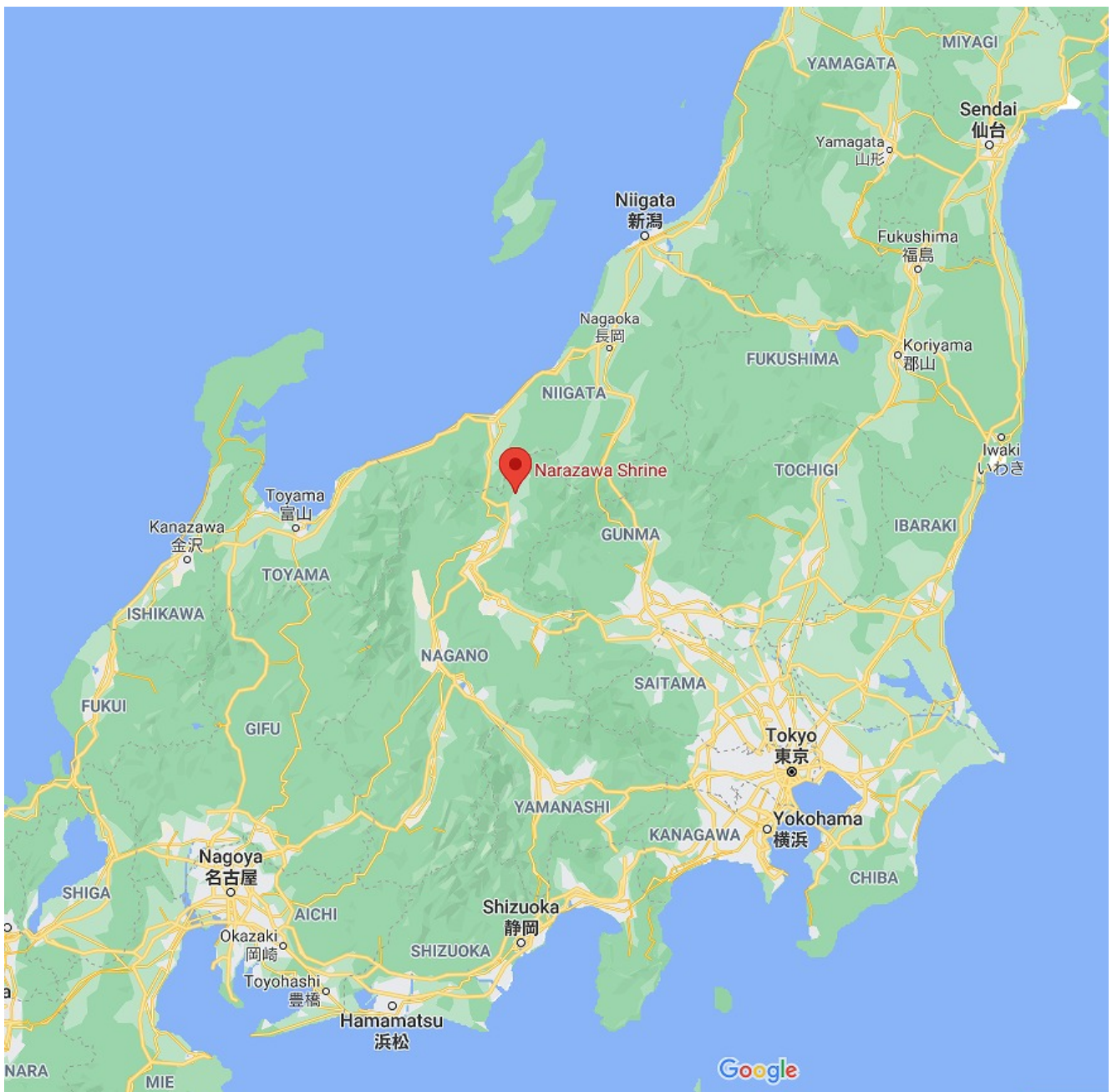


Narasawa shrine festival ~Tengu swings big torch

Date: the 3rd Saturday and Sunday, September (every year)

Location: Iiyama Narasawa, Iiyama city, Nagano prefecture around the Narasawa shrine

Access: It's about ten minutes walk from Iiyama station (JR Iiyama line or Shinkansen)





Fire has fascinated people since its discovery. Therefore, there are many festivals that use fire. https://www.google.com/search?q=japanese+fire+festival&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwj0o4uE1JPwAhUaE4gKHccaB8cQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=fire+festival+Ja&gs_lcp=CgNpbWcQARgBMgIIADIGCAAQCBAeMgYIABAIEB4yBggAEAoQGDIECAAQGDogCAAQBBA1ogUIABCxAzoICAAQsQMqgwE6BwgAELEDEAQ6BAgAEAQ6CggAELEDEIMBEAQ6BAgAEENQoZ8EW02CBWDTpgVoAXAAeAGAAVWIAeUNkgECMjSYAQcGaqGqAQtnd3Mtd2l6LWltZ7ABAMABAQ&sclient=img&ei=HF6CYM6lEJqmoATHtZy4DA&bih=900&biw=1902 Among them, this site introduces a magnificent festival in Nagano Prefecture, where Tengu wields large torches.

Surrounded by mountains on all sides and close to Tokyo,

Nagano Prefecture has been known as a summer resort and a ski resort. Iiyama City, although a mountainous area, is not too badly accessible from Tokyo, too. It only takes about 1 hour and 40 minutes to get there by Shinkansen. The cost is about 8-9,000 yen (as of 2021). If you take the highway bus, you can get to Nagano Station and then take the JR train, which costs about 6,000 yen.

These are the kinds of places where the performing arts tend to remain. A number of festivals still exist in this area. One of the most famous is the “Narasawa Shrine Festival”. First of all, please look at the following pictures.



<https://www.city.iiyama.nagano.jp/assets/files/shomu/koho/26/26.10/1.pdf>

This is the “Great Torch of Tengu” that makes the festival so famous.

When people see this, they wonder what the heck they are

doing. What the hell are you doing? It is true that at festivals, things often happen that don't make sense. But this just makes it look like they are trying to start a fire.

The festival takes place in the form of a group of people going around the village to sanctify it. Then, while celebrating newly built houses, etc., they proceed to the shrine while cutting the closures set up in several places. At that time, they perform a variety of entertainments. The Tengu wielding the torch is also a move to cut through this barrier.

Let's take a closer look. The festival takes place over two days, but the performances are the same on both days. But the starting point and the course are different, although the ending point for both days is the shrine. The group forms a circle when they come to a place where there is a barrier rope. They perform



a barrier of a rope

<http://airborn-foozin-hikarat77.blog.jp/tag/%E5%A5%88%E8%89%AF%E6%B2%A2%E7%A5%9E%E7%A4%BE>



the group of the performers

<http://airborn-foozin-hikarat77.blog.jp/archives/12349340.html>
l(A)



the dance of "Kotengu"

from same as above A



<https://ameblo.jp/mto193914/entry-12308256417.html>(B)

the dance of “Kotengu”. Also known as “Yumitengu”. In this dance, a red-faced Tengu with a bow and arrow tries to shoot arrows in all directions, but a black-faced Karasu Tengu stops him. The words are spoken, the music continues to play, and the young people around the dance continue to call out to each other.



from source A



from source A

And the lion dance. Finally, a large torch is lit, and the Tengu swings it as he heads toward the barrier rope. The power of the flames makes it easier to cut the rope, and at the end he cuts it off with his sword. It started around 6:00 p.m. and ended around 1:00 a.m. with the last performance at the shrine.

This has become one of the representative arts of the area, and is performed every year at the Snow Festival held in February, too.

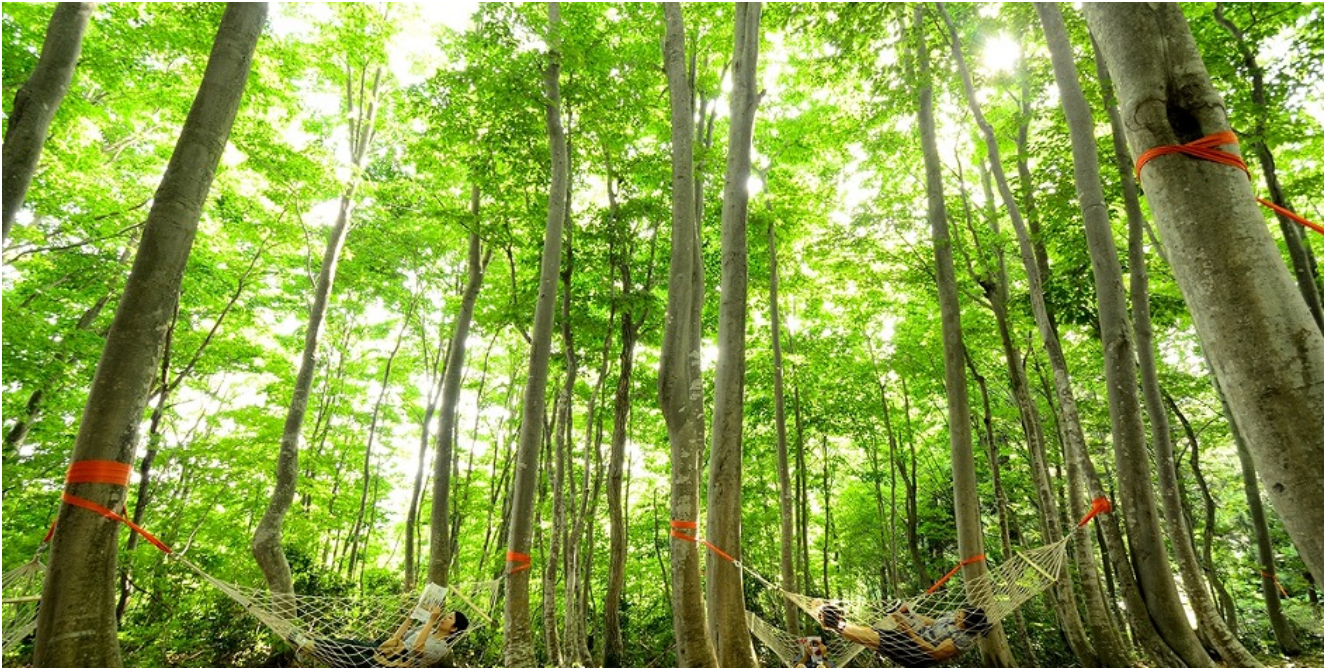


Iiyama Snow festival

https://www.go-nagano.net/topics_detail11/id=17568

Iiyama is not preserved under the Important Preservation District for Collective Traditional Buildings, but it still retains its old-fashioned townscape. There is also no shortage of cycling and hiking trails in the area. There are also hot springs nearby.





<https://www.iiyama-ouendan.net/en/>



It is also close to the famous Jigokudani Wild Monkey Park, which has been gaining popularity in recent years, even among tourists from overseas. This place has been attracting a lot of attention because in winter, wild monkeys can be seen

soaking in the hot springs.

Watching monkeys, soaking in hot springs, and spending quiet time in the rich nature. And at night, you get ecstatic joining the heat of the festival. Such is the Japan that awaits you in Iiyama.

Preffer: <https://www.iiyama-ouendan.net/en/>

<https://en.jigokudani-yaenkoen.co.jp/>