

# Sagimai~ Everything is worth a photo chance



<http://tsmoyo.jp/sagimai>

**Date:** 20th and 27th of July every year

**Location:** Yasaka shrine and Tsuwano town, Tsuwano town, Katari district, Shimane prefecture

**Access:** By air, you can go from Hagi/Iwami 萩/出雲 Airport to Tsuwano via JR Shin-Yamaguchi 新山陽. By Shinkansen: JR Shin-Yamaguchi. Or, if you want to use Sunrise Izumo 出雲, take the night train from Tokyo to Izumo via Osaka. From there, you can take the JR conventional line to Tsuwano via Masuda 真砂.

## Area



A small town in Shimane Prefecture had handed over from

generation to generation one of the most beautiful performing arts in Japan. The place is Tsuwano 津和野. Together with Hagi 萩 to the west, it is a castle town that is popular among female tourists. Shimane Prefecture, to which Tsuwano belongs, is largely referred to as the Chugoku region. It belongs to the northern part of the region. The Shinkansen runs through the southern part (which includes Hiroshima Prefecture), but not the northern part. Therefore, transportation is not very convenient, and it is one of the least populated areas in Japan. It is about one-tenth the size of the neighboring domain centered in Hagi (the former domain's area of control). The remains of samurai residences line the town and people call it the Little Kyoto of the region.

## History





In 1542, the lord of the time learned the dance from the neighboring prefecture of present-day Yamaguchi. However, it was originally from Kyoto. It was once discontinued, but in 1643, the lord sent his vassal directly to Kyoto to learn it again. Although the practice has died out in Kyoto and Yamaguchi, it has continued here to this day. People in other areas perform the so-called “Sagimai” (the heron dance) , but this is the only one where it has been passed down correctly and is considered to be the oldest.

## Features



<http://tsmoyo.jp/sagimai>



[https://www.all-iwami.com/feature/detail\\_41.html](https://www.all-iwami.com/feature/detail_41.html)

Two people perform the role of the heron. Both wear white

clothes and scarlet hakama (an old Japanese costume, similar to pants). On their heads are imitations of herons, and on their backs are feathers. The dance looks very graceful, but the feathers they wear are made of 39 layers of Japanese cypress and weigh about 15 kilograms. We can see that the old people devised a way to make the wings look most beautiful when they are open. In addition, there are two “stick-wielders,” drums, flutes, and singers. Each of them wears a traditional formal dress and accompanies the group.

## On the way





[https://www.all-iwami.com/feature/detail\\_41.html](https://www.all-iwami.com/feature/detail_41.html)



<https://www.kankou-shimane.com/destination/21279>



First of all, the Little Sagimai Dance, performed by an elementary school girl, precedes it. After that, the group departs, led by Sarutahiko wearing a nose-high mask. Then, from the Yasaka Shrine, the group dances for two hours at 11 locations in the town. Seven days later, the dance is performed at nine locations, following the reverse course.