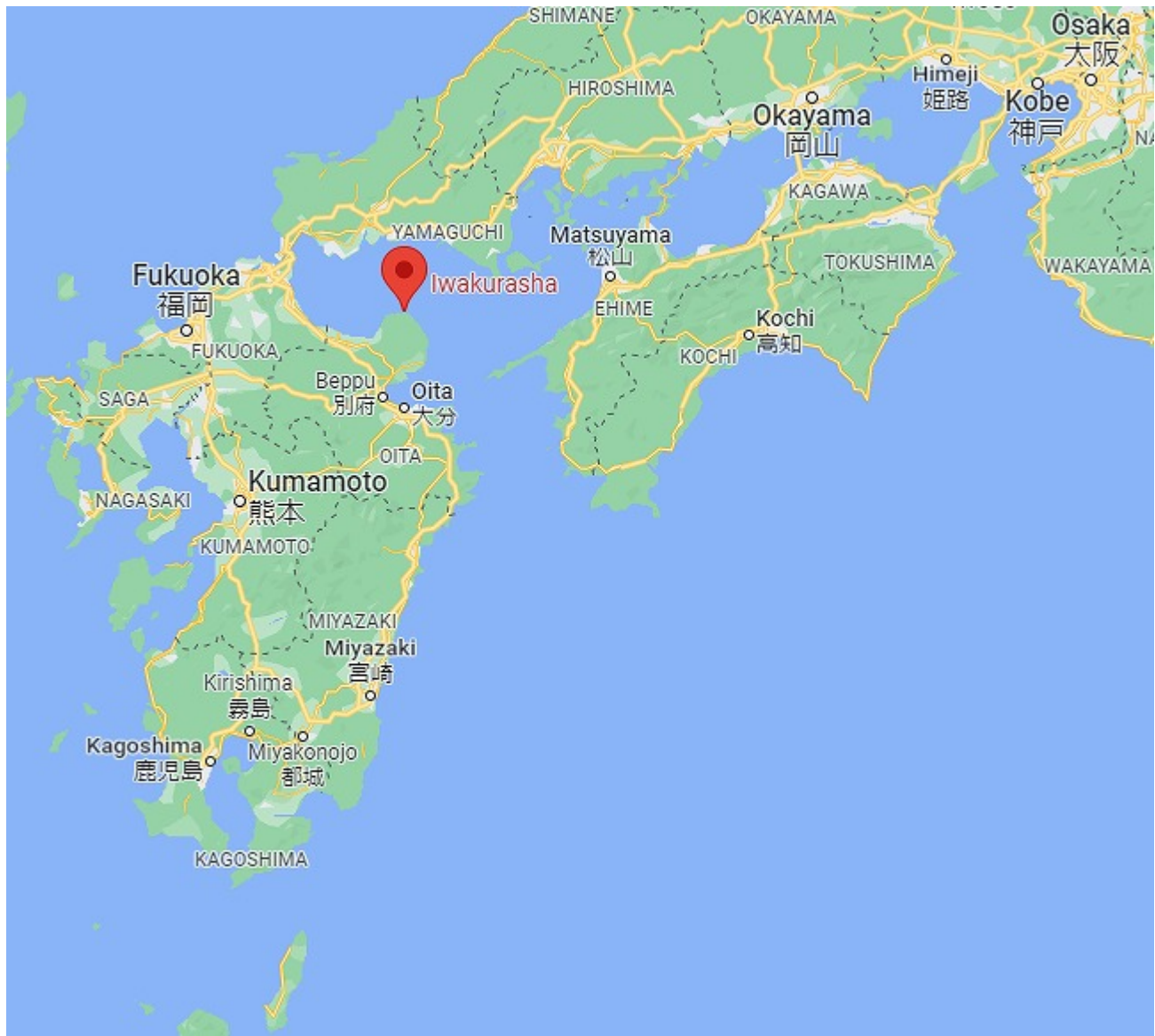
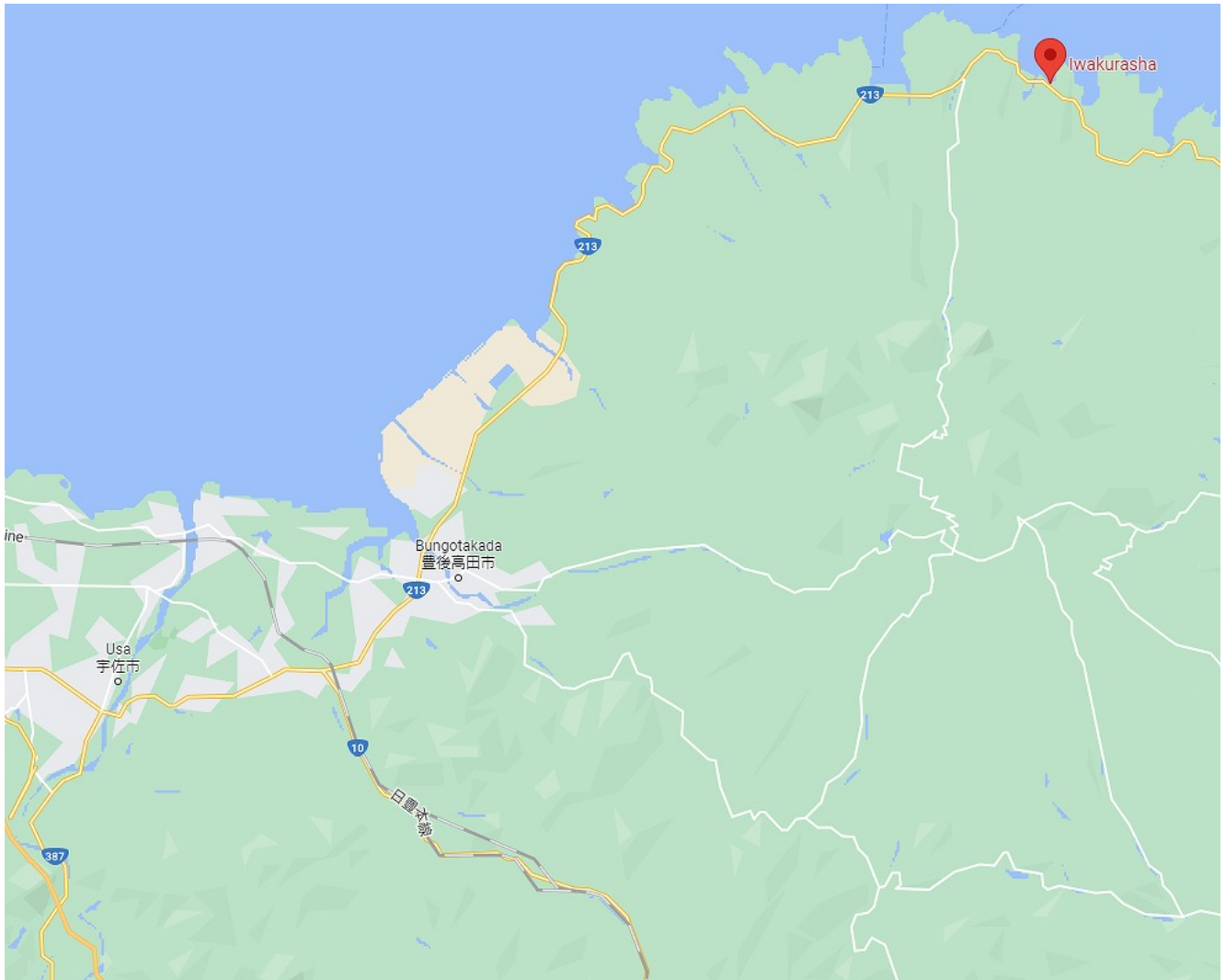


# One of the most strange festival ~Kebesu festival





**Date:** October 14th every year

**Location:** Kusiku Iwakura Hachiman shrine คุしくいわくら

くしきくしき, Kunimi town, Kunisaki city, Oita prefecture

**Access:** Take a bus from Usa to Kunimi Post Office in about one hour. From there, walk 30 minutes. A cab will take about 30 minutes.



<https://www.pref.oita.jp/site/archive/200474.html>

There are some festivals where it is not at all clear now what the purpose of such events is. Among them, the one this site

will introduce here is a festival full of mysteries. There are even questions about the relationship between Greek mythology and Judaism.

As is often the case with such festivals, the traffic is very poor. There is a bus service from the nearby Usa station (1200 yen as of 2022), but it arrives at around 2:00 in the afternoon. You have to walk another 30 minutes. If you take a cab, you can specify the time, but the price will go up to about 10,000 yen.

## **Schedule and outline ~up to the day before**

Simply put, the festival is about a mysterious masked god named Kebesu 𐄂𐄂𐄂, who is rushing towards the fire, but is stopped by a character named Tooba 𐄂𐄂. And finally, Touba joins in and sprinkles the area with fire. It takes about 30 minutes.

Getting to this point was a challenge. The first step is to decide which of the ten districts will be in charge this year on October 7, and then to decide on the roles of each of them, except the role of Kebesu.

On the 8th, we make a place under the eaves of the house of the person on duty to welcome the gods. Then all the people, led by the god's caretaker called Okayo, move the god there. The Okayo purifies himself with sea water every day from this day on, and then makes offerings to the gods. They had to collect ferns for the festival.

The people in charge also go through a one-week purification period. Specifically, they do not eat meat. They do not mix fire with other areas. For this reason, they can only eat food that they have prepared themselves.

13 days. All of them go to the beach to bathe in sea water and



make rice cakes. Finally, the role of Kebesu is decided by lottery.

## On the day



<http://www.suigun.sakura.ne.jp/tokusyu/kunisakinotabi26.html>



<https://kunisaki-tambo.com/kebesu/>

At around 2:00, all staff members carry the gods and offerings to the shrine, the site of the festival.

7:00 p.m. The ritual begins. The person in the role of Kebesu wears a mask, and the priest draws the character for “victory” on his back with his finger. Around 7:30. Kevesu and all the others dressed in white appear at the venue. Already in the center of the room, a pile of ferns is ablaze with flames.

## Highlight



<http://oitaian.com/heritage/%E3%82%B1%E3%83%99%E3%82%B9%E7%A5%AD/> photo by Ishimatsu Takeo

At the venue, drums, flutes, and bells played a four-beat rhythm. The Kebesu and Toubas march in a line. Eventually, Kebesu sees an opening and rushes toward the fire. Tooba rushes to stop him. Both of them have long sticks, which they use to hit and stop each other. This is repeated three times. On the third time, Kevesu reached the fire and stirred it with a stick. But even there, Touba pushes him back again.

These series are repeated three times over, resulting in a total of nine times. Finally, on the ninth time, Kevesu stirs the fire and rolls a burning fern around a stick. However,



even the Tooba, who is supposed to stop him, gather around the fire together. They hold up the lit sticks and face the audience. It is as if the people who tried to stop the zombies have turned into zombies.

And the festival ends in confusion and chaos. This is the sequence of events.

## What is the Kebesu ?



[http://www.shikoku-np.co.jp/national/life\\_topic/photo.aspx?id=20141014000588&no=1](http://www.shikoku-np.co.jp/national/life_topic/photo.aspx?id=20141014000588&no=1)



<http://oitaisan.com/heritage/%E3%82%B1%E3%83%99%E3%82%B9%E7%A5%AD/#:~:text=%E5%8F%A4%E3%81%8F%E3%81%AF%E7%A3%90%E5%80%89%E3%81%A8,%E9%96%A2%E4%BF%82%E3%81%99%E3%82%8B%E3%81%AE%E3%81%AF%E7%A2%BA%E3%81%8B%E3%80%82>

What is Kevesu? No one has any idea what it is. There are many theories about when it started, some say it started a thousand years ago, others say it started around 500 years ago. The records have been destroyed in fire a long time ago, so there are no clues at all.

There are several theories. The first is that it is an abbreviation of the Chinese character for “fire kicker. This word appears in the incantations chanted by the Shinto priests.

The second one is that Ebisu has become bastardized. Ebisu is a familiar god in Japan who brings good fortune. He is always depicted as having caught a sea bream. As you can see, he is a god who originally came from the sea. The theory is that it was originally people who made their living on the sea, and that it represents the conflict between them and land groups.

The third is that this peninsula produces iron sand, and the people who work with it in blacksmithing took fire very



seriously. Furthermore, there is this theory. In Greek mythology, a man named Prometheus stole the fire in God's kingdom and gave it to the people. I can only say that I don't know what's going on here anymore.



<https://4travel.jp/travelogue/11065407>



<https://norbulingka.info/guide>

In any case, it is certainly a festival full of mysteries. One person has this to say about the festival. It is a festival that no amount of words can convey.

You just have to experience it for yourself. However, please be sure to wear clothes that are safe from the fire.