



Ikeda's Nō Plays

Mizuumi, Ikeda-cho

An unbroken tradition of Nō Theater is at the core of Ikeda-cho's heritage. Though many Nō centers have disappeared in recent decades, this essential part of Kamakura and Muromachi Period culture is carefully preserved and alive in this Fukui village.



The Mizuumi no Den Nō Stage (Nationally Registered Tangible Folk Cultural Property)



Nō accompanied by traditional music

Every February 15th, the Nō stage at Ukan Shrine comes alive with Ikeda-cho's annual *Mizuumi no Dengaku Nōmai*, a performance tradition that has continued for 750 years and been designated a National Intangible Folk Cultural Property. Its origins lie in the Kamakura Period, when the shogun's regent Hōjō Tokiyori was snowed in at Ikeda-cho while touring the regions. It is said that after the locals performed music to welcome Tokiyori, he taught them the art of Nō out of gratitude.



Suwa Azuki Shrine (Nat. Cult. Treasure) (Inari, Ikeda-cho)



Hakusan Shrine's Omensan Festival (Shidsuhara, Ikeda-cho)

It is believed that centuries ago Nō was performed at five shrines in the area to celebrate the lunar new year. At Inari's Suwa Azuki Shrine Nō performances continued to be held until the mid-Taisho Period, and now every February 6th masks carefully guarded within the shrine are displayed to the public. These performances are also held at Shidsuhara's Hakusan Shrine on February 17th. Though the times have changed, its original intent of praying for bumper crops and the health and long life of town residents remains.

Ikeda-cho's Nō Mask Museum houses over 70 masks, new and old, each of which tells its own story and embodies one of a broad pantheon of Nō characters and archetypes as well as the work and tender care given it by its maker. Additionally, every year the town holds and exhibition for new Nō masks, and entrants from across Japan display their works.



Ikeda-cho Nō Mask Museum (Shidsuhara, Ikeda-cho)



Displaying newly made Nō masks

