



Yoshie, Home of Chikamatsu Monzaemon

Yoshie-cho/Yoneoka-cho and Elsewhere, Sabae City

Local groups in the Yoshie and Tachimachi districts, home to Chikamatsu Monzaemon, still offer performances of his popular *Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, a seminal work of Japanese puppet theater. Those who bear witness to it leave profoundly affected by the tragic fates of its protagonists, lovers to the end.



Nanamagari, Yoshie



Shunkei-ji Temple's large cedar (City Natural Monument) and stone

Buddha statues (City Cultural Property)

Sabae City's Yoshie-cho was the castle town of Yoshie-han, a subsidiary domain of Fukui, and this aspect of its heritage remains today. Its Yoshie Nanamagari, as the meaning of its name implies, was designed to obstruct the advance of any potential invaders through its twisting, hook-like shape. In years past it was the sight of warrior households, and its stone fences remain today.

The district was also the childhood home of playwright Chikamatsu Monzaemon, whose *jaruri* puppet plays played a pivotal role in shaping Edo Period *Genroku* culture.



Enoki Oshōzu

Yoshie's spring, Enoki Oshōzu, located at the foot of the mountain where Shunkei-ji Temple sits, was reputed to be where Chikamatsu would play with his friends during his childhood. Now, a park modeled after Chikamatsu's puppet theater sits before it.

Shunkei-ji Temple was formerly known as Shinkei-ji Temple, and was founded by the Buddhist priest Taichō. Its name was changed during its period as a center of Buddhist practice in Yoshie.

Nearby Saikō-ji Temple's main gate was relocated from the lord of Yoshie's residence in Edo after the domain's abolition and absorption into Fukui. It is one of the oldest and few remaining relics from this local domain.

Local theater group *Chikamatsuza* keeps the tradition of Chikamatsu's *jaruri* alive, with performances accompanied by *taiko* drums, *shamisen*, and puppeteers, all drawn from the community.



Saikō-ji Temple's main gate (National Cultural Property)



Chikamatsuza performing jaruri puppet theater

