



Keshi Jingu (Keshi Shrine)

Akebono-cho/Jōgū-cho, Tsuruga City

Its fall festival welcomes fall to Tsuruga, its ritual grass rings purify visitors...through it all, Keshi Shrine's vermilion gates greet all who journey to it.



Keshi Shrine's grand torii gate (National Cultural Treasure)

Keshi Jingu, affectionately known as "kei-san" by locals, is said to have been built in 702 and is dedicated to the tutelary deity of the Hokuriku Highway as well as protector of what is now the city of Tsuruga.

Along with Kasuga Taisha (Kasuga Shrine) in Nara Prefecture and Miyajima Shrine in Hiroshima Prefecture, Keshi Shrine's grand torii gate is among the three largest wooden shrine gates in Japan. Standing at 11m tall, this impressive structure is a beloved symbol of the city.

Every September, the Keshi Shrine Festival is held with the shrine at its center, bringing the city to life with its six towering floats, parades, and street stalls.



Main precincts of Keshi Shrine²



Pathway leading into the shrine³

The area surrounding the shrine's main gate was once marshland, but in 1301 the Buddhist sect saw the difficulty experienced by faithful visitors to the shrine and undertook the arduous task of transporting sand from the harbor to create pathways that would ease travel to the shrine. This was the origin of *osunamochi*, now an important religious rite of the shrine.

Jingūkōgō, the god enshrined at Jōgū Shrine and known in life as the Chūai emperor, is considered a patron deity of sailors and fishermen in the bay. Each year, the shrine calendar's most important event is the Sōnomai Festival.



Statues of devotees engaging in ritual *osunamochi* (carrying sand)⁴



Jōgū Shrine⁵



Sōnomai Festival⁶



Photos ①~⑥ courtesy of Tsuruga City



Festival floats¹