



Hiruga and Hayase Fishing Villages

Hiruga/Hayase, Mihama-cho

The spirited tug-of-war in the waters of Wakasa Bay, the kabuki performances of children...various vestiges of the past are still alive and well in these fishing villages, and recall their halcyon days.



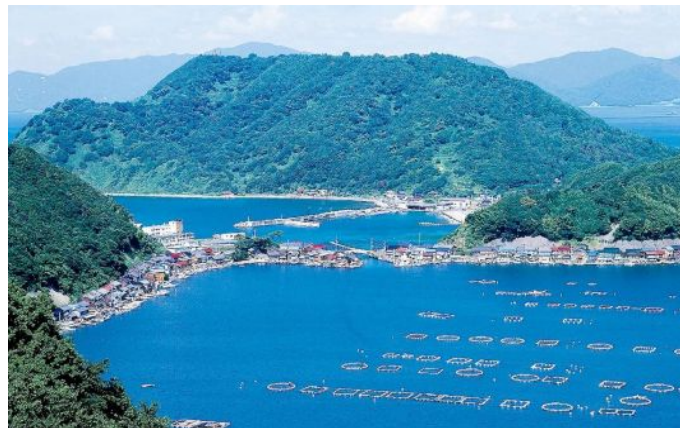
Mid-water Tug-of-War (Nationally Designated Intangible Folk Cultural Property)

Situated on the shores of Lake Hiruga, which connects to the Japan Sea, the Hiruga district is a true fishing village bathed in the lake's rough waves and ocean breeze. Every January villagers gather under fishermen's banners to watch the mid-water tug-of-war, a local tradition which has lasted 360 years. In this event, young men of the village divide into teams East and West, dipping into the frigid winter waters of the canal linking Lake Hiruga to Wakasa Bay.



Hiruga fishing port

Bay. This competition is seen as a rite of passage for young men and proof that they are ready to become "men of the sea."



Lake Hiruga, view from (Mt.) Baijōdake^①



The village of Hayase, viewed from Mt. Dake^②

Wedged between Lake Kuguji and Wakasa Bay, the fishing settlement of Hayase that sits at the foot of Mt. Dake flourished as a port of call for *kitabune* boats and major fishery. Every May 5th, local Hiyoshi Shrine serves as the locus of a large-scale annual festival in which floats are paraded through the city and children's *kabuki* plays performed. These plays contributed to the village's development as a resort and commerce town, and continue to do so to this day.



Children's kabuki (Town Folk Cultural Property)^③



Photos ①~③ courtesy of Mihama-cho