



Remnants of Old Katsuyama

Honmachi/Motomachi, Katsuyama City

It's February, yet the day of the Sagichō Festival doesn't feel cold. Laughing at the satire-laden lanterns strung throughout the streets, listening to the taiko drums, and drinking sake, festivalgoers forget about the winter chill.



Katsuyama Sagichō Festival, held on the streets of Honmachi (Prefectural Folk Cultural Property)

Since its days as the central district of Katsuyama's castle town, February has welcomed the Sagichō Festival to Katsuyama City's Hon-machi, a celebration meant to ensure a good harvest. Boasting a 300 year history from the feudal period until now, this festival is the largest event in Katsuyama,

Music accompanies a flurry of colorful streamers floating through the streets, and the on the second day of the festival ritual pyres are burned by the Kuzuryū River. The streets where the festival takes place contain many traditional homes once used as shops and residences for kimono fabric, soy sauce, and other merchants, and remain as fine examples of traditional architecture.



Honmachi Dori



Dondo yaki, the pinnacle of the festival



Honmachi Dori's *Toshi no Ichi*

Katsuyama's *Toshi no Ichi* has long been a fixture of the city's winter season. Held in January every year, during the areas time as Ogasawara domain the market brought farmers who sold hand-made products to supplement their incomes. The amateur merchants who flocked to this marketplace linked the castle town with outlying settlements.

In Honmachi, visitors can find *Shichiri-kabe*, a wall along the bank of the Kuzuryū River. The wall separated the castle and its attendant samurai houses from the temples, shrines, and commoner dwellings below them.



Shichiri-kabe

Kawara Dori, which flourished as a red light district in the old castle town, is still a lively part of town owing to its festivals, colorful architecture, and people, then as it is now.



Kawara Dori

