



The 33rd Meeting to Think About  
the Folk Entertainment and Rural Life

Niigata

# Ayako-mai Folk Performance

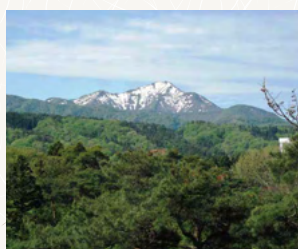
— a folk Entertainment of Kashiwazaki City, Niigata Prefecture —

This year marks the 33rd folk performance of the festival, which provides urban residents with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of folk entertainment, people's lives, traditional culture, and history through the introduction of traditional folk entertainment in rural areas throughout Japan, with the aim of promoting exchanges between urban and rural areas to help revitalize their communities. In this year's performance, which will be held in Tokyo for the first time in three years, we would like to introduce "Ayako-mai Folk Performance," a classical performing art that has been handed down in Kashiwazaki City, Niigata Prefecture since the Muromachi Period of about 500 years ago and is designated as a nationally-designated important intangible cultural property, and discuss folk entertainment and local life with participants.

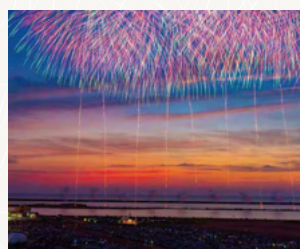
## Kashiwazaki City, Niigata Prefecture

Kashiwazaki City, the town blessed with nature and the birthplace of Ayako-mai Folk Performance, is located almost in the center of Niigata Prefecture, nestled in the bosom of Kariwa's Three Mountains, consisting of Mt. Yoneyama, Mt. Kurohime, and Mt. Hachikokusan, and has a long coastline of 42 km. The city flourished culturally in the old days through the trades of Kitamae-bune cargo vessels dealing with chijimi textiles, and it has many proud traditional events such as the "Enma Ichji Market", which has a history of over 200 years, and the "Gion Kashiwazaki Festival Sea Fireworks", known as one of the three major fireworks festivals of Echigo. The "Ayako-mai Folk Performance", in particular, has been handed down for about 500 years and is the city's representative cultural heritage.

The city is located almost in the center of Niigata Prefecture facing the Sea of Japan and is the center of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa area. The prefectural capital, Niigata City, is 84 km away and takes 1 hour and 30 minutes by Hokuriku Expressway (1 hour and 15 minutes by JR Shinetsu Line limited express), while the metropolitan area of Tokyo is about 300 km away and takes about 3 hours by Hokuriku-Kanetsu Expressway and about 2 hours by JR Joetsu Shinkansen. Osaka in the Kansai region is about 520 km away and takes about 5 hours and 10 minutes by Hokuriku Expressway. The city covers an area of 442.03 km<sup>2</sup> and has a coastline extending about 42 km.



Mt. Yoneyama



Kashiwazaki Fireworks Festival

