

## 『Miyazaki Winter Traditions』

### 宮崎の冬の風物詩

As we draw near to the end of November, the first signs of winter can be felt in the gradually dropping temperature outside. So today, I'd like to introduce you to some wintertime traditions that are deeply connected to Miyazaki's culture and natural surroundings.

#### Daikon Yagura

Miyazaki boasts the highest production of pickled daikon in Japan. When the cold winds start to blow, in areas such as Tano and Kiyotake you'll find gigantic "Daikon Yagura (Daikon Drying Towers)". These are great bamboo scaffolding around 6 meters tall and 20 to 150 meters long, inside which daikon are strung up in rows. The sight of them glinting in the cold sunlight is a classic Miyazaki winter scene. The farmers take extra care in drying the daikon, on top of the natural benefits of cold wind from the mountains and abundant sunshine, resulting in local specialties such as dried daikon slices and pickled daikon.

#### Takachiho no Yokagura

Yokagura (Night kagura) is a traditional Shinto ritual performed in Takachiho from mid-November all the way to February. 33 dances are performed throughout the night to entertain the gods, praying for a fruitful harvest and wellbeing in the household. Unfolding on a stage lit by braziers and telling stories from myth and legend, this kagura is recognized as one of the Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties of Japan.



#### Aoshima no Hadaka Mairi

Aoshima is home to the old Miyazaki legend of Yama- sachihiko and Umi- sachihiko, inspiring a yearly custom. Every January, people dressed in white clothing or *fundoshi* loin cloths brave the freezing air to purify their bodies in the Aoshima sea, where they pray for good health and longevity.

#### The Misaki Horses' Winter Coats

Toi Misaki is home to Japanese breed of wild horses designated as a National Natural Monument. In winter, you can see the Misaki horses walking across the vast grasslands, all wrapped up warm in their fluffy winter coats.



These sights and customs allow you to experience the delights of winter found only in Miyazaki.

※ The original Japanese version of this article will be uploaded onto the website of the Miyazaki International Foundation soon.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions regarding this column, please contact the Miyazaki International Foundation (MIF):

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Also, if you ever have any questions or concerns about daily life in Miyazaki, please feel free to get in touch with the Miyazaki Support Center for Foreign Residents:

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