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# TEACHING TUESDAY

## CHICHIBU YOMATSURI

DECEMBER 6, 2016

Newly inducted to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Chichibu Yomatsuri is held every year on December 2nd and 3rd and welcomes the coming of winter in Japan. The festival is considered one of Japan's top three festivals to feature floats, with ancient floats ornately decorated with lanterns, tapestries and gilded wood carvings and accompanied by drum and flute music.

The main activities occur mainly on December 3rd. Two kasaboko, large parasol-like objects decorated on top with weapons and flowers, parade through the street alongside six massive yatai floats. In the late afternoon, the floats are transformed into stages by pulling out wings on either side, where Kabuki plays are performed.

But the real adventure is in the evening, when the kasaboko and yatai floats, weighing 10-20 tons each and lit up with countless lanterns, climb up a steep slope on nothing but sheer manpower. Those who are pulling the floats are cheered on by drums and the shouts of 'Ho-ryai! Ho-ryai!'. The festival is topped off with a massive fireworks display.