

THEATER

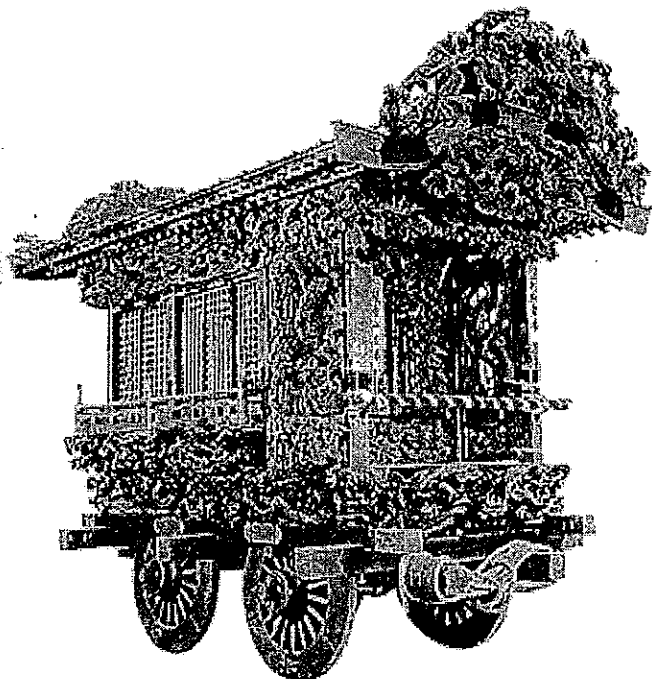
Behind the center's carved column is a mini-theater where visitors can watch video footage of the Annual Kanuma Fall Festival. Two shows are available (1) Kanuma Fall Festival & (2) The Festival, Carvings and People. Along

the right wall are photos and descriptions of various types of floats throughout Japan and a selection of photos of the more elaborately and culturally significant floats of Kanuma. Along the other wall is a display describing the Fall Festival's main events: Meeting at Imamiya Shrine, Float team members receiving a blessing from the head priest, a flute player, girls in traditional dress, lifting a float up so it can be turned, night competition.

YATAI FLOAT VIEWING HALL

Adjacent to the mini-theater is the Viewing Hall. In this room are three Yatai floats on display and many hands-on interactive displays explaining the numerous processes that go into the making of a Yatai float.

DISPLAY FLOATS



GINZA 1 CHOME FLOAT

The float closest to the entrance is the Ginza 1 Chome Float. Made around 1814 this float is unique in that it is a mixture of different float styles. This black-lacquered float was originally decorated with colored carvings but they were subsequently replaced in 1855 by unvarnished woodcarvings.

The headboard of this float is decorated with an unvarnished carved panel depicting three dragons that have red flames

streaming from their sides. The lintel below this headboard carving is richly decorated with intricate carvings of squirrels playing, if examined closely there is also a baby squirrel with its mother hidden amongst the grape vines. The beam above the front door has a pair of Chinese lions with three cubs playing in peony flowers carved on it. Within the front mini-stage/porch there are chrysanthemums carved around front door frame and below the stage are two carvings of winged-water dragons.

The sidewalls of the stage have three carved panels. The small upper panel has more squirrels and grape vines on it, the large middle panel depicts the drama of an eagle perched upon a plum tree, hunting a monkey. The monkey is hiding in the bottom panel, hidden from the eagle by a waterfall. Along the side of the float is a small carving of a dragon that fills the space between the stage and the back chamber where the musicians play. A pair of Chinese lions decorates the beam over the side windows. The lion with its mouth open is saying "Ah" and lion on the right with its mouth closed is saying "Un". "Ah" is the first letter of the Japanese alphabet and "Un" is the last, but this "Ah/Un" pairing in Buddhism is also representative of the beginning of the world and life while "Un" is symbolic of the end of the world and death. Along the bottom of the float below the red lacquer railing are large unvarnished carvings of three dragons swimming in a churning ocean of waves. The back of this float has similar ornamentation to that of its front, the only differences are golden pheasant carvings on both sides of its doorway and turtles carved into the lower baseboard. Turtles are considered to be symbolic of longevity because of their long lifespan and are often depicted with cranes.

KUBO-CHO FLOAT

This float was made in two phases, the first between 1812 and 1814 and then again in 1848. One of the oldest among the existing Kanuma floats, this particular float belonged to Kobu District, where many rich merchants resided during the Edo era. Its extravagance with even its interior elaborately decorated reflects the district's affluence.

Both headboards of this float have a pair of dragons facing each other. They are elaborately gilded gold scales and horns with red flames that dance and stream from their sides.

The panel behind the headboard has a painted carving of a golden pheasant pair sitting in a pine tree with a few peony flowers as accents. The beam over the stage is decorated with a pair of magpie jays flying through the branches of a plum tree in full bloom. Other birds like red-throated grosbeaks, sparrows and shrikes are also carved amongst the tangled branches. On the stage's baseboard is carved a third dragon that looks up at

