

## **Triple Moon Festival**

Akiba Jinja Shrine in Kashihara hosts the Triple Moon Festival in September. Legend says that the moon that rises late at night on the 26th day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar (September in the current solar calendar) appears to be divided into three. The phenomenon is known as a “mock moon” and is caused by atmospheric refraction of moonlight.

In ancient times, this phenomenon was likened to the Amida triad (Amida Buddha flanked by attendant bodhisattvas Kannon and Seishi) and was considered sacred. It only appears under specific conditions, and only a few people claim to have seen it, and only many years ago. Local residents gather over food and drinks at Akiba Jinja on this day, hoping to witness the three moons. This festival can now be found only in Kashihara, although originally it was not unique to the region.