

Shrine Theater

Kamikatsu has a number of small outdoor stages called *noson butai* next to Shinto shrines. Kabuki and puppet plays were performed in the autumn to give thanks to guardian deities for an abundant harvest. The stages are important for understanding the traditional customs of farmers, even though such performances, many dating back to the Edo period (1603–1867), have all but disappeared with the aging of the population.

Each settlement hamlet in Kamikatsu had a *noson butai*. Performances were staged by the settlement hamlet members or by troupes native to Tokushima Prefecture. The stages, though simple, were equipped with varying mechanisms such as trap doors and platforms for musicians and narrators.

Today, portable shrines are paraded past the stages in October or November to show appreciation for a bountiful harvest.

Where

- Ichiu: Hachiman Jinja Shrine
Stage mechanisms: Platform for a narrator
- Kashihara: Akiba Jinja Shrine
Stage mechanisms: Platform for a narrator
- Tanono: Shinmei Jinja Shrine
Stage mechanisms: Platform for a narrator, temporary *hanamachi* passage