

Kangetsu-sai (Moon Viewing Festival)

Moon-viewing parties are a tradition going back to ancient times in both China and Japan. The Kangetsu-sai, or “moon-viewing festival,” at Sumiyoshi Taisha takes place under a full moon in autumn, usually in mid- to late September. The central attraction, aside from the glowing moon itself, is poetry: the festival celebrates Japanese verse and its historic connections to the shrine.

During the Kangetsu-sai, priests read traditional poems aloud from the top of Sorihashi, the shrine’s famous arched bridge. The works are mostly haiku and longer poems called *tanka*, which follow a pattern of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables.