

Fall Festivals at Arai Jinja Shrine and Komatsubara Sanja Shrine

According to ancient manuscripts, Arai Jinja Shrine was built in 629 and set in its present location around the middle of the Kamakura period (1185–1333). Among the deities enshrined are two gods of wealth known as Daikoku and Ebisu.

The main shrine structure now standing at Arai Shrine was built in 1943. One attraction in the garden is the *musubi-no-matsu* (literally, matrimony pine), a tree believed to confer special blessings for successful marriage; another is a monument engraved with a poem by popular novelist, playwright, poet, artist, and philosopher Mushanokoji Saneatsu (1885–1976).

Komatsubara Sanja Shrine, which was built in the seventeenth century, is situated on the site of Komatsubara Castle, which dates from the Medieval period (1185–1568).

During the annual fall festival held at each shrine in October, a portable shrine (*mikoshi*) is on display along with colorful festival floats (*danjiri*). The biggest annual attraction is the Niwaka drum (*taiko*) performance, which focuses on dancing and has been held since the Edo period (1603–1867).

Every year, two drummers parade through the town, each performing in a different style, while dancers perform skits to the accompaniment of shamisen. The festival is said to date back to the early to mid-Edo period, the earliest evidence being a taiko drum box on which is inscribed the year 1849. The Niwaka *taiko* drum performance is designated a cultural property by Takasago City.