

## Sone Tenmangu Shrine Fall Festival

Each year over October 13–14, eleven colorful floats (*yatai*) weighing more than 2,000 kilograms pass through Sone Tenmangu Shrine and are paraded through the city's streets. After sunset, they are illuminated with lights.

Sone is regarded as the pioneer of its characteristic *futon yatai*, which feature a futon mattress on the roof of each float. This form of float is thought to date from the era of Bunka-Bunsei culture (1804–1830). A votive tablet (*ema*) from 1861 depicts a Sone-style float, but it was not until the turn of the twentieth century that the floats began to be decorated as flamboyantly as they are today.

The various festival rituals include *takewari*, in which men slam bamboo sticks adorned with streamers on the ground to indicate their position for viewers some distance away, and *hitotsumono*, which involves drawing characters on the foreheads of young children who are then dressed in hats and hunting costumes before entering the shrine on horseback. *Hitosumono* is carried out because young children are believed to be more likely than adults to attract divine beings.