**Statue of Kato Kiyomasa**

This 1979 copper statue is based on portraits of Kato Kiyomasa (1562–1611) that were made during his lifetime. As lord of Higo Province, he oversaw the building of Kumamoto Castle between 1599 and 1607. He is wearing his trademark beard and a *naga-eboshi*—a kind of tall black hat similar to that worn by courtiers—and is holding the tasseled baton that samurai generals used to direct their troops. The statue is slightly larger than life-size. Kiyomasa was a big man in a time when men were generally of smaller stature than today. He first arrived in Higo Province (modern-day Kumamoto Prefecture) in 1588. Initially, he only presided over the northern half of the province, but he was awarded the southern part for his contribution in the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, a victory that put warlord Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) in control of all Japan. Kiyomasa’s numerous flood-control and land-reclamation projects laid the groundwork for modern-day Kumamoto.