

Omori: Kigami Shrine

Kigami Shrine can be considered the spiritual anchor of Omori. Located at the eastern end of the settlement only a few steps from the old magistrate's office, the shrine was established in its current location in 1577, when the ruling Mohri family had it built to protect the town and its residents from misfortune. The sanctuary, along with much of the rest of Omori, was destroyed in a great fire in 1800 and then rebuilt 12 years later. The current buildings date back to this reconstruction and include an imposing two-story worship hall (*haiden*) with a distinctive hip-and-gable roof. Part of the hall is decorated with the family emblems of samurai who made donations to the shrine, but the most impressive feature of its interior is arguably the *nakiryu* ("roaring dragon"). This ceiling mural from 1818 represents a dragon in flight and, thanks to some ingenious acoustics, "roars" if you clap your hands while standing directly underneath it.