

## **Ushimi Ward**

Protected by massive ramparts, the Ushimi Ward is the largest of the inner wards of the castle, and the closest to the Heiro-mon gate. Oral tradition suggests that it was a training area for fighting on horseback, and bones of horses have been unearthed here. In actuality, it is not large enough for this kind of training, which was likely to have been carried out in another, more spacious location. Future excavations will shed more light on how it was used. The Ushimi Ward and the pathway alongside it were planted with Hikan cherry trees in the 1950s and 1960s. Every year, the trees are the first to flower in Japan, blooming between mid-January and early February.