

Stone Marker Post

A Fork in the Road

Until a new road, the Shizumo Shindo, opened in 1892, the Nakasendo was the main road connecting the towns of Magome, Tsumago, and Midono. There was a fork in the road here at Hashiba, and the area flourished as an important crossroads. This extravagantly large stone pillar, erected in June 1881 by the towns of Omi and Iida and a group of local merchants, gives a sense of just how prosperous the area was at the time.

Inscribed on the pillar are the names of the roads and the distances to important places. Via the Nakasendo, we are told, it is 78.5 *ri* to Tokyo and 54.5 *ri* to Kyoto. (One *ri* is equal to just under 4 kilometers; it is therefore about 308 kilometers to Tokyo and 214 kilometers to Kyoto.) The other face of the pillar tells us that it is 8 *ri* (31.5 km) to Osahime Ishibashi Chuo and 8.5 *ri* to Motozenkoji Kyuseki (33.5 km) via the Iida Road.

Take a moment to have a look at the stone pilings of the old Edo-period bridge just beside the modern-day bridge.