

## **Uwakubo Distance Marker**

### **Earthen Distance Markers**

Distances on Japan's old highways were marked not with stones, but with large earthen mounds like this one. They stood at regular intervals of one *ri*, the old Japanese measurement equivalent to just under 4 kilometers. Each of the mounds was 3 meters high on a base 9 meters square, and was topped with a single tree—either a pine or a Japanese hackberry. This provided shade for weary travelers while keeping the mound from blending into the natural landscape and losing its identity as a marker.

The Uwakubo Marker was the 78th mound on the road from Edo, putting it at a distance of around 306 kilometers from the capital. There were four such mounds in Nagiso—at Jyunikane, Kanachiya, here at Uwakubo, and Kudaridani—but this is the only one that has retained its original shape.