

Site of the Midonojuku *Honjin* (Primary Inn)

The Emperor Stayed Here

Three main families acted as officials in Midonojuku. The Aizawa family ran the primary inn (*honjin*) for daimyo lords, nobles, and shogunal officials, which stood on this site. The Miyagawa family managed the secondary inn diagonally opposite, while the Katsuno family was responsible for providing porters and arranging the shipment of baggage and goods.

On July 10, 1881, a huge fire swept through Midonojuku, destroying 74 houses and eight storehouses, including the *honjin*. Prior to that, the inn had enjoyed a very distinguished history. In 1880, the Meiji emperor had spent a night there; Princess Kazu-no-miya, the wife of Tokugawa Iemochi, the penultimate shogun, also spent the night here in 1861.

Nothing of the original building remains, but an old weeping plum tree from the garden is still intact. The water that Emperor Meiji drank on his visit was drawn from the well on the far edge of the side road, which has been restored. The present building on the site is a storehouse belonging to the local town hall.