

The Midonojuku *Waki-Honjin* (Secondary Inn)

An Annex to House an Increasing Number of Travelers

All 11 of the post towns in Kiso had both a primary inn (*honjin*) for feudal lords, court nobles, and shogunate officials and a secondary inn (*waki-honjin*). The secondary inn was essentially a sort of hotel annex: it served the overflow from the primary inn as well as travelers of slightly lower rank. It was also used when visitors could not stay at the primary inn due to an inauspicious event, such as a death in the family.

The primary inns were constructed early in the Edo period (1603–1868), while the secondary inns, like the one that stood here, were only added later as foot traffic on the Nakasendo increased. This particular secondary inn was built and managed by the Miyagawa family, who also served as local headmen. A huge fire in 1881 destroyed the *waki-honjin*, and it was never rebuilt. The inn would have extended to the edge of this plot of land, but the building that stands here now was built as a family house, so is more modest in size.