

Rankanbashi Bridge

A Bridge Fit for a Princess

In the old days of the Nakasendo, a stream such as this would typically be bridged by a simple structure made of logs lashed together. Given the frequency with which bridges were swept away by floods and landslides, this level of simplicity made perfect sense. The bridge that once stood here, however, had railings (*rankan*), a feature so remarkable that the surrounding area, Rankan, was named for it.

This relatively sturdy bridge was constructed specifically for the crossing by Princess Naminomiya, who made the long journey from Kyoto in 1731 to get married in the capital of Edo. According to contemporaneous records, 5,302 local people were mobilized to make improvements to the Yogawa-michi route between Midonojuku and Nojiri in her honor.