

Tsumago Secondary Inn (*Waki-Honjin*)

Lodgings for the Lesser Folk

The Tsumago secondary inn (*waki-honjin*) has been open to the public since 1967. The current venue dates from 1877, when it was rebuilt for the last time. While people of the highest ranks—feudal lords, court nobles, and high-level officials—stayed in the primary inn (*honjin*), the secondary inn was like a modern hotel annex. It hosted guests who were of slightly lower rank; it also served as alternative accommodation when the primary inn was unusable due to some inauspicious event like disease or a death in the family.

The families who operated the primary inns received a salary from the shogunate. That was not the case, however, for the families who ran the less-prestigious secondary inns. In order to secure a steadier source of income than lodging fees, the Hayashi family, managers of the Tsumago secondary inn, brewed a brand of sake known as Sagi Musume (“heron girl”). They also shared in the responsibilities of the *jimbakaisho*, or the provision of horses and porters to travelers. It was the money from the sake-brewing business that enabled the Hayashi family to rebuild their secondary inn during the early years of the Meiji era, even though the number of travelers using the Nakasendo was already declining at the time.