

Shukubo

The inns of these villages were large, thatch-roofed buildings. Many of them even combined a temple and inn under one roof. The inns along the approach to Okusha no longer remain, but many of the ones built in the villages around Chusha and Hokosha are not only still standing but still in service. Some of them date to the Edo period (1603–1867). The Gokui inn has been in business for 400 years, and its traditional-style roof is a designated Japanese cultural asset.

The *monzen-machi* villages of Chusha and Hokosha are the largest of their kind, with more *shukubo* inns together in one place than anywhere else in Japan. These two historical areas have been designated by Japan's Ministry of Culture as Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings.

It is worth noting that while *shukubo* opened around Okusha, Chusha, and Hokosha, no such village developed around Hinomikosha. This is because, unlike the others, Hinomikosha was always a Shinto shrine, and was thus not a part of a Buddhist pilgrimage.