

Noboritate-jaya Teahouse Remains

This was the location of Noboritate-jaya, the last teahouse on the Ogumotori-goe route before Nachi, or the first after leaving it. Noboritate-jaya was a marketplace as well as a teahouse, where people from the fishing village of Nachi and merchants from the inland town of Tanabe met to trade their respective wares. The teahouse was so integrated into the daily life of local residents that they simply called it *uma-tsunagi* (hitching post).

The Ogumotori-goe Route and Kumano Kodo Teahouses

The Ogumotori-goe route is part of the Kumotori-goe overland passage connecting the Kumano Nachi Taisha and Kumano Hongu Taisha grand shrines, and once featured many teahouses. *Kumotori* (cloud-catching) refers to the route's high elevation.

Teahouses, or *chaya* (also pronounced *jaya*), were found in many places along the Kumano Kodo, and offered rest, refreshment, and—sometimes—accommodation. Unlike the *oji* (subsidiary shrines), teahouses were purely secular. They flourished during the Edo period (1603–1867), but most closed their doors in the late nineteenth century as pilgrim numbers dwindled.