

## **Saihonji Temple**

Saihonji Temple is closely associated with the Kumagai family, which for centuries was the richest and most influential in the town of Omori. They made their fortune in mining but also provided financial, contracting, and administrative services for the magistrate's office, which represented the central government in the Iwami Ginzan region. The Kumagai began expanding their authority in the early 1600s, and a few decades later moved a Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land) Buddhist sanctuary from the neighboring province of Izumo to this site, renaming the temple Saihonbo and later Saihonji. Its main hall, rebuilt in 1867, was the Kumagai family's last major contribution to the temple, which is now better known for its wooden main gate. That structure dates to the first years of the 1600s, making it one of the oldest surviving buildings in the region. It was originally located on the grounds of Ryushoji, another Buddhist temple that was one of the most influential religious sites at Iwami Ginzan throughout the Edo period (1603–1867). Ryushoji's fortunes declined after the silver mine closed in 1923 and the region became less populated. The temple was abandoned in 1961 and its historically valuable gate was moved to Saihonji, where it stands as a quiet reminder of the mine's former prosperity.