

Abe House

The Abe House is one of the largest samurai residences in Omori and among the very few to survive the fire that destroyed much of the town in 1800. It was built in 1789 for the wealthy and influential Abe family, which had been closely involved with the management of the silver mine since 1601. In that year, Okubo Nagayasu (1545–1613), the first government-appointed magistrate to supervise the mine, invited Abe Seibei from the province of Kai (present-day Yamanashi Prefecture, west of Tokyo) to join his team of bureaucrats who administered Iwami Ginzan from the Omori magistrate's office. Seibei's descendants continued to serve in official positions, handling tasks from accounting to the management of the Shinkiri mine tunnel, dug in the 1720s to solve the problem of groundwater flooding existing tunnels and shafts.

The Abe House has all the typical features of a home fit for a high-ranking samurai official, including a front garden, gray roof tiles (favored by the warrior class as a symbol of authority), and two entrances. The smaller entrance on the left was for residents, while the large doors on the right, which lead up to three tatami-mat rooms, were opened only for important guests. The original gate, along with a structure that stood behind it that was rented out for additional income, was removed in 1950. The Abe House is now used as a hotel, operated by the Gungendo shop, cafe, and gallery that is housed in a renovated Edo-period (1603–1867) farmhouse nearby.