

## Miyake House

In the Edo period (1603–1867), the Miyake House was the home of the Tanabe samurai family, which held a number of key administrative posts at Iwami Ginzan beginning in 1601. In that year, Tanabe Hikoemon was hired by Okubo Nagayasu (1545–1613), the first government-appointed magistrate overseeing the silver mine, to work for the magistrate's office as a mine official. Hikoemon was part of the first cohort of expert officials hired to manage the mine after it was taken over by the Tokugawa clan, which in 1603 established a samurai-led government that was to rule Japan until 1867. Like many of his new colleagues, Hikoemon was not from Iwami—he had been based in the province of Kai (present-day Yamanashi Prefecture)—but his family settled in the area and became specialists in mine management. The Tanabe eventually came to administer the seals with which Iwami silver was stamped before it was sent to the government in Edo (present-day Tokyo), a position of considerable prestige.

The Tanabe family home burned down in a fire that destroyed much of Omori in 1800, but was soon rebuilt. This structure survives as the Miyake House, named after its owner when the house was designated a historic site in 1974. The building has been extensively renovated but retains many characteristics of an early-1800s samurai residence, including a garden between the house and the street, an imposing fence around the garden, and end-cap roof tiles decorated with the *mitsudomoe* symbol, a swirling pattern made up of three comma-like shapes that signifies water and was believed to offer protection against fires. The Miyake House is not presently open to visitors.