

Former Aoki Shūsuke Residence

Aoki Shūsuke (1803–1863) was a distinguished physician during the later years of the Edo period (1603–1867). Born the son of a village doctor on the island of Ōshima, in the Inland Sea, he was a practitioner of both Western and traditional Chinese medicine.

Shūsuke's studies began under the Chōshū domain doctor, Nōmi Tōan (1794–1872), who taught him *kanpōyaku*, traditional Chinese medicine. At the age of 30, Aoki moved to Edo (now Tokyo) to study Dutch medicine and language in Fukagawa under the physician Tsuboi Shindō (1795–1848). In 1839, Aoki left Edo and moved to Nagasaki to continue his studies, and in 1851, he was appointed doctor to Mōri Takachika (1819–1871), the lord of Chōshū domain. His brother, Aoki Kenzō (1815–1870), was also a noted physician, and together they led a vaccination program against smallpox and cholera in Chōshū.

In 1859, Shūsuke was involved in the translation of a Chinese text on the history of England, written by the missionary William Muirhead (1822–1900), for Chōshū domain. The same year, Shūsuke rebuilt his family home in Hagi to receive medical students from all across Japan. Today, the house has been preserved by the city of Hagi because of its value to the city's heritage. Memorabilia donated by the Aoki family is displayed in the home, including some silver coins (*ichibu-gin*) discovered in a warehouse and inscribed with the letters “Ao Ken,” for Aoki Kenzō. Kenzō served in the prestigious role of attendant physician to Emperor Meiji from 1869 until 1870, when he was killed in an accident in Fukagawa, Tokyo.

The life of Kenzō's adopted son, Aoki Shūzō (1844–1914) is also on display in the residence. Known as Viscount Aoki after the creation of the peerage system in the Meiji era (1868–1912), Aoki Shūzō served as Japan's third foreign minister under Yamagata Aritomo (1838–1922) from September 1889 to December 1891, and again seven years later under Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909). Aoki Shūzō later became minister to Austria, Holland, Britain, and finally ambassador to the United States (1906–1908). He is regarded as one of the first truly internationalized diplomats and scholars of his age. In 1877, he married German aristocrat Elisabeth von Rhade (1849–1931), with whom he had a daughter, Hanna (1879–1953). Photographs of their family are exhibited inside the residence.

Address: 2-37 Gofukumachi, Hagi, Yamaguchi

Telephone: 0838-25-3139 (Hagi Tourist Information)

Open: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (daily)

Admission fee: ¥100

Access: 2-minute walk west of Hagi Central Park

Google Maps link: [here](#)