

The Kamo Estate

The buildings of the Kamo estate were built in 1773 on the eastern side of the Japanese iris pond, and have been the property of the Kamo family for over sixteen generations. Much of the timber used in the construction of the buildings was cut in the mountains surrounding the estate.

The grounds and buildings have been meticulously maintained, retaining details such as the raised tatami mat floor above the pounded-earth entranceway of the main building. There, people would pay their taxes to the village chief and his administrators. This administrative space looks out onto a traditional garden to the rear, replete with an ornamental pond with delicate moss-covered features. The entrance area also houses old clay ovens that are still in use today, along with large earthenware pots for making miso, a fermented soybean paste. The layout of the building and garden ensured the rooms stayed cool in summer.

In the smaller courtyard at the rear of the main building is a large, flat stone where palanquins would be placed to await their passengers. Nearby is a special entranceway that was used only by high-ranking visitors.

At the rear of the complex is a large room with sliding wall panels that open to the outdoors. Originally a place where miso was made, it has since been converted into a tea house. Green tea can be enjoyed there while looking out onto the moss garden. The estate is open to visitors year-round.