

## **Horenji Temple Gate**

The wooden gate of Horenji Temple is thought to be the oldest extant structure in the municipality of Shirakawa. It originally stood in front of the priests' residence (*kuri*) at Shorenji Temple in the village of Nakano, in southern Shirakawa. A sanctuary of the Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land) school of Buddhism, Shorenji was established in the late 1400s and was long considered the most important temple in the area; its head priests were descended from Kanenbo Zenshun, the figure believed to have introduced Jodo Shinshu to the Sho River valley in the thirteenth century. The main hall of Shorenji was built in 1504, and the gate of the priests' residence is thought to date from the same period.

Shorenji and its historic structures were moved from Nakano during the construction of the Miboro Dam, which upon its completion in 1960 created Lake Miboro, flooding Nakano and the other villages upstream. The main hall was relocated to the city of Takayama, but the gate was moved to Horenji in the village of Hatogaya, since that is where Kanenbo Zenshun lived and practiced and where he is buried.