

## Rokusho Shrine

Rokusho Shrine is a Shinto sanctuary that traces its history back to Matsudaira Chikauji (d. 1394?), the founder of the Matsudaira samurai family that ruled the lands around the village of Matsudaira from the late 1300s onward. According to legend, Chikauji established the shrine on the summit of Mt. Rokusho so that the enshrined deities would watch over his family who lived in the valley below. However, the mountain itself is thought to have been worshiped as the abode of the divine since distant antiquity, and when a formal shrine was first built on it is unknown. Rokusho Shrine's upper shrine (*kaminomiya*) still stands on the mountain, whereas the lower shrine (*shimonomiya*) is located in a valley to the northwest.

Like many of the other shrines and temples associated with the Matsudaira, Rokusho Shrine enjoyed the protection of the numerous branches of the family. It held significant lands throughout the Edo period (1603–1867) when Japan was ruled by the Tokugawa shogunate, founded by Matsudaira Chikauji's descendant Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616). The buildings of the lower shrine have elements of Edo-period architecture. These include an imposing worship hall (*haiden*) and behind it a smaller main sanctuary (*honden*) whose roof is covered with thin wooden shingles. Across the road from these structures is a thatched stage built for folk kabuki and other performing arts that were popular in the region from the late Edo period until the early 1900s.