

## Site of Kumagawa-Juku Magistrate's Office

This site was once occupied by an Edo-period (1603–1867) administrative compound where civil affairs related to governing the Kumagawa area and the Obama domain as a whole were handled by various officials. The most important tasks were the regulation of shipping agents in Kumagawa-juku post town and the management of the domain's annual taxes, which were paid in the form of rice and kept in twelve storehouses located nearby.

### *Construction and Functions of the Administrative Compound*

The first administrative buildings were constructed in the early seventeenth century, during the rule of Kyogoku Takatsugu (1563–1609), the first lord of the Obama domain. At that time, the compound was classified as a *jinya* and encompassed administrative headquarters, storehouses, and the residence of the highest-ranking local government official. After Sakai Tadakatsu (1587–1662) was appointed the lord of the domain in 1634, the *jinya* became a *bugyosho* (magistrate's office) and its authority was expanded to cover a wider scope of civil affairs. The office played an important role as the regulator of the bustling economy of Kumagawa-juku, since the post town was located at a strategic point along the Wakasa Kaido road that connected the ports along the Sea of Japan to Kyoto, which was the capital at the time.

### *Demolition of the Magistrate's Office and Current Use of the Site*

The magistrate's office and the nearby rice storehouses were demolished in 1871, when the domain system was abolished by the Meiji government and replaced with the prefecture system. At present, the site contains a traditional processing plant making high-quality starch from kudzu (Japanese arrowroot; *Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*) and a small water-filled habitat for the rare Genji firefly (*Luciola cruciata*). At the far end is an entrance to a hiking trail that leads past scenic viewing points on the mountainside to the remains of Kumagawa Castle.