

## Site of Kumagawa Castle

Kumagawa-juku is known primarily as a post town that was once used for shipping various foodstuffs and other goods along the Wakasa Kaido road, but for a short period of time it was guarded by Kumagawa Castle. The castle was situated on a mountaintop and overlooked the travel route and the village below. Some of the castle's defensive features still remain in Kumagawa-juku, such as an L-shaped bend in the road (known as the Magari), intended to impede the advance of potential attackers.

### *Kumagawa Castle and the Numata Family*

Kumagawa Castle was built sometime in the sixteenth century by the Numata family, but the exact dates of construction are unknown. In 1569, when Numata Mitsukane was the lord of Kumagawa Castle, it was attacked and captured by Matsumiya Kiyonaga, the lord of a neighboring castle. The Numata family is said to have fled to Omi Province (present-day Shiga Prefecture), where Mitsukane served as a military commander for the Hosokawa family. His daughter Jako (1544–1618) would later marry Hosokawa Fujitaka (also known as Hosokawa Yusai, 1534–1610), a prominent general and an accomplished writer. Jako herself became a well-known figure as one of the defenders of Tanabe Castle during a siege in 1600.

### *Brief Rule of the Matsumiya Family and Abandonment of the Castle*

For several years, Kumagawa Castle was occupied by the Matsumiya family, but was abandoned once the powerful warlord Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) conquered the Wakasa region and appointed his subordinate Niwa Nagahide (1535–1585) to govern it in 1573. Now only vaguely defined shapes in the earth that remain from a moat and defensive trenches show where the castle once stood. The observation points along the short trail that runs behind the former site of the Kumagawa-juku magistrate's office and Shiraishi Jinja Shrine provide an idea of what the view from Kumagawa Castle may have been like.