

## **Kumagawa Guardhouse**

The Kumagawa Guardhouse was built during the Kan'ei era (1624–1644) by Sakai Tadakatsu (1587–1662), the lord of the Obama domain, to monitor travelers passing through Kumagawa-juku post town. A historical map of the Wakasa and Tsuruga regions created in 1645 depicts the guardhouse as standing at the center of Kumagawa-juku, but a late eighteenth-century map places it at the current location in the Kamincho area, indicating that it was moved at some point in the late seventeenth or eighteenth century.

### *Guardhouse Operations*

The guardhouse was manned by two officials whose job was to inspect and interrogate travelers, check travel permits, and levy taxes on goods transported along the Wakasa Kaido road. Because the Wakasa Kaido was the most well-traveled road in the network of trade routes connecting Obama and the Sea of Japan to Kyoto (the capital at the time), these taxes were a major source of income for the domain. In the Edo period (1603–1867), guardhouses such as this were used by the Tokugawa shogunate to maintain control over domains throughout the country. In particular, taxation of goods, weapons transportation, and women's travel were strictly regulated. After the fall of the shogunate in 1867, the guardhouse became defunct in 1870. The building was later remodeled and used as a private residence.

### *Restoration and Exhibits*

In 2002, the former guardhouse was purchased by the town of Wakasa and then restored to its original appearance. Inside, two life-sized figures represent officials in charge of checking travel documents and collecting taxes on goods transported through the post town. Displayed against the back wall are bows, arrows, rifles, and a set of three weapons used for making arrests. These include a *sasumata* (a pole with a U-shaped fork used to pin suspects in place), a *tsukubo* (a pole with a T-shaped end used to trip, push, or pull), and a *sodegarami* (a pole with iron spikes on the end to snag clothing).