

## **Kumagawa-Juku Post Town: Kamincho Area**

Kumagawa-juku was a prosperous post town that facilitated the transport of goods along the Wakasa Kaido road, a major trade route that connected the Wakasa region with the capital in Kyoto. The historic town is divided into three areas: Kamincho, Nakancho, and Shimoncho.

### *Kamincho Area*

This is the area of Kumagawa-juku nearest to Kyoto. It was the entrance to the post town for travelers heading toward the port town of Obama and the exit for those journeying to the capital. An old expression in Wakasa states, “The far-off capital is only 18 *ri* away,” and experienced porters could cover the distance (about 72 kilometers) in just one day.

The Kumagawa Guardhouse was established at the entrance to the post town to monitor the road. Domain officials stationed there inspected travel permits and levied taxes on transported goods. Near the guardhouse is the original location of Gongen Jinja Shrine, where a deity said to protect against fire and floods was worshipped.

The main road beyond the guardhouse used to be lined with shipping agencies, porter stations, various shops, and lodging facilities. The Maegawa channel flowing by the storefronts along the road served as a source of water for residents and travelers alike. The historic townscape has many traditional buildings with tiled roofs and slatted windows, preserving the atmosphere of Kumagawa-juku from the time when it was a thriving post town.