

## **Kumagawa-Juku Post Town: Nakancho 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.

### *Nakancho Area*

The central area of Kumagawa-juku was the heart of the post town where most businesses and administrative buildings were concentrated. The streets were lined with porter stations, shops, lodging facilities, and prosperous wholesalers such as Hishiya and Kuramiya, both of which specialized in the transportation of goods. The architecture of the well-preserved buildings reflects the style favored by affluent merchants who played a major role in the town's trade-centered economy.

Throughout the history of Kumagawa-juku, administrative affairs were primarily conducted from Nakancho. During the Edo period (1603–1867), the magistrate's office that regulated shipping agents and managed the Obama domain's annual taxes was located in this area. In the twentieth century, a Western-style building was constructed near the main road to serve as the Kumagawa Village Office. At present, it houses the Kumagawa-juku Museum (Shukubakan), which exhibits archive documents, panel displays, and various items related to the town's history and its role as a shipping hub.

There are several places of worship in the Nakancho area, such as Kakujoji Temple, Tokuhoji Temple, Matsunoki Jinja Shrine, and Shiraishi Jinja Shrine. Matsunoki Shrine occupies the plot of land where twelve storehouses for holding rice collected by the Obama domain as tax payments once stood. A path leading from the main road, known as the Okuramichi, was used to carry shipments of rice from the nearby Kita River to the storehouses.