

The Birth of Kumagawa-Juku Post Town

Kumagawa-juku is best known as an important shipping hub that facilitated trade between the ports along the Sea of Japan and the old capitals of Nara and Kyoto. However, its history as a post town (*shukuba*) did not officially begin until the late sixteenth century.

Development under the Rule of Asano Nagamasa

After the daimyo Asano Nagamasa (1546–1611) was appointed to govern Wakasa Province in 1587, he carried out an inspection of the Kumagawa area. Asano recognized the economic potential of the small village due to its proximity to the Wakasa Kaido trade route and the border of Omi Province (present-day Shiga Prefecture). In 1589, he issued an edict that exempted Kumagawa from a number of taxes, which stimulated the development of various businesses such as shipping agencies, porter stations, shops, and lodging facilities.

Further Growth into a Prosperous Post Town

Kumagawa-juku continued to grow under the rule of successive lords from the Kinoshita, Kyogoku, and Sakai families. The Maegawa channel was extended through the town, offices were built for government representatives overseeing the area, and a guardhouse was set up to monitor the flow of people and goods in and out of the post town. As a result of favorable taxation policies and various construction projects, Kumagawa developed from a small village of only 40 households to a thriving post town of over 200 households in the span of just a few decades.