

## **Former Aoi Family Residence**

Fifty-eight generations of the Aoi family served as head priests of Aoi Aso Jinja and lived within its precincts between the early ninth and late nineteenth centuries. The Former Aoi Family Residence dates from the Edo period (1603–1867) and complements the shrine's halls and other structures that date from the same era.

Several scholars and other notable guests have stayed at the residence, including Takayama Hikokuro (1747–1793), a samurai and historian influential in political theory of the late Edo period. In 1877, the residence served as a base for Hitoyoshi troops supporting samurai Saigo Takamori (1828–1877) in his unsuccessful uprising against the Meiji government, known as the Satsuma Rebellion. A sword mark on a wooden pillar in the home's tea room is believed to date from this time.

Guests were accommodated in the *keishoden*, a formal tatami room with views of the garden on two sides. An illustrated four-panel set of sliding doors depicts wild geese flying against a backdrop of the moon and ducks sheltering among reeds, imagery popular in Japanese art and literature. The grounds of the residence include storehouses with displays of artifacts connected with the shrine and its festivals, an ancient well, and a traditional garden with evergreen shrubs, plum trees, and rock arrangements.