

## **Aburahi Shrine**

Surrounded by cypress and cedar trees, this shrine at the foot of Mt. Aburahi was once a gathering place for the Koka samurai (who later became ninja) to exchange information and discuss tactics. The buildings include a roofed corridor, which was used for meetings. The shrine was also a center of prayer and ritual for the people of Koka.

The shrine is dedicated to Aburahi Daimyōjin, the deity believed to dwell on Mt. Aburahi. Aburahi means “lamp” or “light.” According to local legend, the deity emitted a great light when descending from the heavens to the top of the mountain. It is also said that Aburahi Shrine was founded by Prince Shotoku (574–622), an influential figure celebrated for his many contributions to Japanese culture. In later centuries, Shotoku was worshipped as a deity.

Official records mention Aburahi Shrine as early as 877. The current buildings, however, were constructed in 1493 and were funded by contributions from local samurai. In addition to the corridor, the shrine

buildings include a main hall, a hall of worship, and a tower gate, all of which are designated Important Cultural Properties. Anyone is welcome to look around the shrine, but visitors are asked to remove their shoes before entering the buildings, including the corridor. Pets, with the exception of service dogs, are not permitted on the premises.