

## **Koka Medicine Museum**

Utilizing medicinal herbs has a long history in the Koka area in present-day Shiga Prefecture. Knowledge of these plants was important for the ninja, who combined them to create various medicines. Visit the Koka Medicine Museum to learn about the use of herbs by the ninja and the history of Koka's connection with medicinal lore.

The museum's permanent exhibition showcases tools for making medicines and advertisements for medicines from the Edo period (1603–1867) to the Showa era (1926–1989), tracing the history of medicine production and sales in Koka. Interactive displays explore medicinal herbs and offer a comprehensive look at the development of Koka's medicine-related industry, which continues today.

The ninja made *shinobi-gusuri* (lit., “ninja medicine”) from herbs, drawing on their accumulated knowledge. In 1676, a member of the Fujibayashi ninja family created the *Bansenshukai*, a compilation of knowledge about *ninjutsu* (ninja arts) from both Koka and Iga (in adjacent

Mie Prefecture). The volume mentions various ninja medicines, some of which were used to ease common ailments ninja might suffer when traveling on missions. They also made substances to sicken or weaken enemies, or silence dogs whose barking might reveal their presence.

For a small fee, visitors to the Koka Medicine Museum can try their hand at creating a simple dish that is similar to what the ninja might have eaten when they needed to boost their energy. The workshop is suitable for all ages. Advanced bookings are required, so please contact the Tourism Information Center at the Kokaryu Real Ninjakan or the Koka Medicine Museum for more information.