

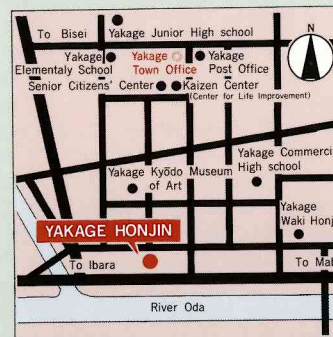
YAKAGE POSTING STATION

In the age of the *Shōgun Iemitsu* Yakage was prosperous as the eighteenth posting station on the *Kyū Sanyō dō* (Old Sanyō Road) that was used by *daimyō* (feudal lords) en route to the *Shōgun's* court in Edo (Tōkyō). The law of *Sankin Kōtai* obliged them to reside alternate years in their domains and in Edo and to leave their wife and children as hostages in that city. The town grew into a center of industry, transport and culture. Yakage boasts the historic houses of *Honjin*, former residence of the *Ishii* family, and *Waki-Honjin*, former residence of the *Takakusa* family, as government-designated Important National Assets. Other houses in Yakage also exemplify architectural features such as *Hira-iri* (entrance below gable) and *Tsuma-iri* (entrance below slope of roof/side entrance), *Shirakabe* (white-plastered wall), *Oni-gawara* (ornamental tile at ridge end of tiled roof, often in form of devil), *Mushigo-mado* (cage-style window) and *Namako-kabe* (tiled plaster wall). All were built between the late Edo and early Meiji periods.



HOW TO GET THERE

JR bus from JR Kurashiki station	45 min.
Ikasa bus from Shin Kurashiki Shinkansen station	30 min.
Ikasa bus from JR Kasaoka station	40 min.
JR bus from JR Hakubi line Kiyone station	30 min.



OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST IN YAKAGE

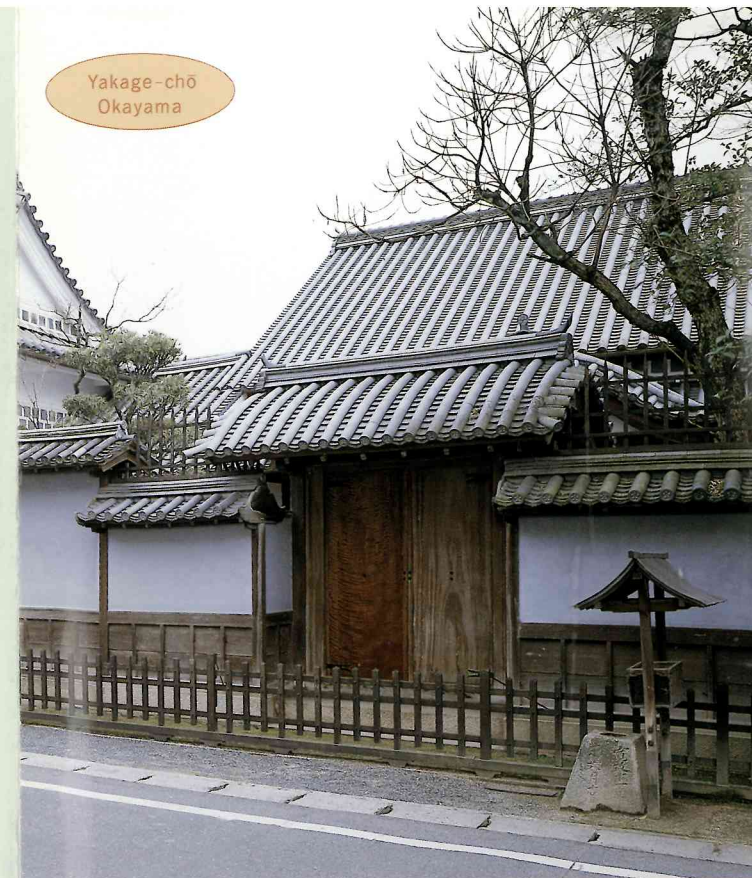
Yakage Kyōdo Bijutsu-kan Provincial Museum of Art
Yakage Waki-Honjin: former residence of the Takakusa family
Koian Bijutsu-kan Museum of Art
Kibi no makibi Kōen Park
Daitō-ji Temple stone-floored Park



INFORMATION

0866-82-2700 Yakage Honjin
0866-82-2110 Yakage Kyōdo Museum of Art

Yakage-chō
Okayama



Declared an Important National Asset
by the Japanese government

YAKAGE HONJIN

Former residence of the Ishii family



OPENING TIMES

April–September 09.00–17.00
October–March 09.00–16.00
Please note that last entrance
is 30 min. before closing time.
Closed on Mondays (Tuesday
if Monday is a national holiday).



発行 矢掛町
英訳 株式会社ベル・エアー



Breweries, rice granaries and sake cellars

The *Ishii* family dates back to *Hidemasa Kabezaemon Ishii* who was a vassal of *Motokiyo Mori*. It is thought that it was his third son *Nobumoto* who moved the house here from *Furuichi* in *Genwa* 6 (1620). In 1687 the master of the house, *Jirōemon Ishii*, was a sake brewer and *Yakage's* leading merchant in the early *Edo* period. He called his business *Sadoya* and the family lived on the same site. The family was asked by the local magistrate to build the *Honjin* onto their residence for the use of travelling *daimyō* (feudal lords). Visiting *daimyō* came from the western part of the *Chūgoku* region (*Hagi*, *Iwami*, *Aki*) and *Kyūshū* island. Their processions numbered several hundred people, dependent on the *daimyō's* rank: *samurai*, foot-soldiers, porters and servants, these latter going ahead to prepare the *daimyō's* accommodation. About 200 inns once lined both sides of the 4.5m wide route and in these the *daimyō's* people were accommodated.

Honjin's facade is approximately 36m long and the area of the interior approximately 3,164m², which makes it *Yakage's* largest building; it faces north. There is an *Onarimon* (gate of honor) leading to the main door, both of which were for the use of the *daimyō*. Note nearby the *Yadofuda* (wooden board bearing the resident *daimyō's* name, which used to hang by the *Onarimon*). Above the door the center decorative tile bears on its reverse side the legend: This house was built in the year of the monkey (*Saru*), of the *Genwa* period. The *Karahafu* style was adopted in the year *Genroku* 15'. It also notes that the house was partially rebuilt in the *Shōtoku* period (1711-1715).

Omoya (the main house) was the *Ishii* family residence; a descendant of the family still resides here, although the house is now the property of the *Yakage* municipality. It is constructed in the *Irimoya* style (curved-sloping roof on two levels) with authentic tiles from the period. Behind the rope curtain in the entrance is a large earth-floored room; *Honjin*, the *daimyō's* residence, is off to the right. Behind *Honjin's* main entrance is the *Chōba* (reception area where visitors would await admission to the *daimyō*). Note also the hall, *Sannoma* (third room), *Ninoma/Shoin* (second room/study) and *Tsuginoma/Gojiseki* (next room). The floor of the *Jōdan* room is slightly higher than that of the other rooms, to reflect the *daimyō's* rank. Here they and the *kuge* (court nobles) lodged. Its floor area is equivalent to 8 *tatami* mats and it is decorated in *Chanoyu* (tea ceremony) style, with its special floor and *Chigaidana* (staggered shelves in alcove). It was built in the *Shoin* manner, which derived from Zen Buddhist temple dwellings in the *Kamakura* period, and has a restful atmosphere. A 'Squirrel and Grapes' design is carved on the *ranma* (decorative panel above sliding screens) which was made in the later *Momoyama* period. The *shōji* (sliding paper screens) are composed of reciprocal lattices, an indication of the *daimyō's* rank, and have painted panels. The corridor outside is floored with *tatami* mats to minimize disturbance from servants bringing food from the kitchen. From the courtyard guests could enjoy the view of 'Borrowed *Arashiyama*' (the real *Arashiyama* landscape is near *Kyōto*).

Beyond the first, earth-floored room of *Omoya* is the *nakadoma* (earth-floored area between entrance-room and kitchen) with, on the left, its *Rokkū-sama* (god of rice stoves) shrine above the rice stove. The impressive timberwork of the attic and walls is typical. The low ceiling above the kitchen is an addition.

Behind *Omoya* is a row of outbuildings comprising a brewery, a rice granary, a *sake* cellar, a *shiboriba* (*sake*-brewing room) which now contains exhibits including the *sake* press and a *kago* (feudal basketwork palanquin), and the historic *Kōji* storehouses. These were brought from the *Nishiebara* residence in *Sakushu* (a district in the *Mimasaka/Ibara* area of *Okayama*) during the *Hōei* period (1706). The storehouses were dismantled and restored in the *Shōwa* period 47 to comply with fire prevention regulations. Note the tall tiled building on the right behind the kitchen where valuables were protected from fire and theft, behind this the well for *sake* brewing, also the large iron cauldron for heating the rice mixture.



Ranma (decorative panel)
'Squirrel and Grapes'



Japanese landscape garden seen from the Jōdan room



The Jōdan room



Main entrance
(for daimyō)



Sake-brewing
equipment: press



Shōji (sliding paper doors)
with painted panels



Nakadoma (cooking area with earth floor)



Sake-brewing equipment:
Kamaba (recess for heating
iron pot)

