

Honjo Castle Town Explanation board 9

Furuyuki Minato (harbor) and Furuyuki Okura (Storehouse)

The corner to the south-west of the current Honjokou (harbor) is the site of the “Furuyuki Okura”, an imperial storehouse under the Honjo Castle Town during the Edo period. The harbor here was known as “Furuyuki Minato” and was a river port where sea vessels navigating the Sea of Japan anchored and riverboats travel back and forth the Koyoshi River and Imogawa River.

Furuyuki Okura was filled by officials of the Rokugo clan of the Honjo domain and played an important role in the accumulation and management of the rice in the domain. It existed until the domain was abolished in the 4th year of Meiji period (1871). A “shipyard” with front and back gates was attached and assumed to have controlled the entry and exit of vessels.

The area around Furuyuki Okura was also an important transport hub, which can be found in the documents from the Bunroku period (1592~1596). It was called “Furuki” instead of “Furuyuki” in the past. As Ishiwaki Minato was in the Kameda domain on the opposite bank of the Furuyuki Minato, disputes between the shipping agents of both sides over the Kitamaebune (merchant ship) entering the port happened sometimes.

Kitamaebune (merchant ship) brought Japanese writing papers, wax, sugar, salt, cotton, Japanese iron, etc. to Furuyuki Minato, and rice, rape seed, soybeans, etc. from Yuri County were carried across the whole country. This trade by Kitamaebune (merchant ship) brought not only goods but also cultures, such as the folk song “Honjo Oiwake”, which originated from Oiwake-bushi in Oiwake Shuku, Shinano Province (current Nagano Prefecture) and Kamigata words such as “Okini” and “Nanbo”. Besides, Syakudani Stone, a specialty of Echizen Province, was also brought to the region and can still be seen on the doorstep of old houses in Furuyukimachi. Around 10 Honjo clan-authorized shipping wholesalers dealing in goods from Kitamaebune (merchant ship) set up shop in the street from Furuyukimachi to Nakamachi, and were known as “Kaisendonya Jyunin Nakama”. Besides, the area was also very busy where restaurants and Japanese hotels where the crews of the Kitamaebune (merchant ship) enter and exit.

This explanation board is was founded by the East Japan Railway Culture Foundation for local cultural activities.