

Kurume History Walks

No.31 Cultural Properties in Jojima Town * 城島町の文化財

*Jojima Town, which had been an independent municipality, merged with Kurume City in 2005.

History

Jojima Town is located in the lower Chikugo River. This area was originally swampy lowland, which has been formed by the alluvium of the Chikugo and the tide of the Ariake Sea. Then, there are the place-names that include the word concerning the waterfront such as Egami (upstream), Ukishima (floating isle), and Naratsu (oak wharf).

- 4th century BCE – 4th century CE (the Yayoi period): People came to live in the area around today’s Jojima Town. Major Remains: Kubo remains (the remains of a village), Kitadaimon Remains, and some shell mounds.
- 4th century – 7th century: The remains of that time were discovered also at the above-mentioned Kubo remains.
- Late 7th century –10th century: The area of today’s Jojima Town had belonged to the Mizuma District. There are not any remains today because of the repeated floods and the change of the flow. We presume that the place-names "Ichi-no-Tsubo (first part)", "Hachi-no-Tsubo (eighth part)" came from the allotment system of those days.
- Late 12th century: The Mizuma Manor was established. It consisted of the southeast part of Kurume, the whole Oki, and Okawa, the part of Yanagawa and Chikugo.
- 13th century – 17th century: Kamakura shogunate had given the official approval of the ownership of the feudal tenure to the samurais. Since around the 14th century, the local feudal lords expanded their power and caused conflicts in each region. The Jojimajo castle and the Shimodajo castle were established in that circumstance.
- 17th century – the late 19 century: Jojima and Okawa became the battlefield of Yanagawa Domain and Nabeshima Domain. There are some cenotaphs and mounds around Egami. After becoming the lord of Chikugo Province in 1601, Tanaka Yoshimasa started to renovate and to reinforce main castles, including the Jojimajo Castle. Surrounding towns had developed. There had been a market at regular intervals. But in 1615, the Jojimajo was abolished with the implementation of the law of “One Castle per Province”. The residents in Jojima Town undertook hard labor for controlling and taking the water of the Chikugo River. The creek had been constructed since the medieval Japan (12th -16th



Jojima roof tiles (Gargoyle tile)

century). It had been much improved during the Edo period (17th -19th century). Today that forms the unique scenery of the region.

- The late 19th century – the early 20th century: Jojima Town became famous for the sake brewing industry with the water of the Chikugo River and the water transport. And the Jojima roof tile and the Japanese umbrella also became the characteristic products of the region.

Cultural Properties of Jojima Town



Habitat of *Kasasagi*, Eurasian magpies – A National Nature Monument* designated on March 7th, 1923

* “Monument” is a collective term to refer to cultural properties, designated by the government, of a high historic (castle towns, forts, old houses), scientific (animals, plants, minerals), or aesthetic (bridges, mountains, gardens) value.

The Eurasian magpies are part of the Corvidae family. This bird is distributed in the southern part of Fukuoka, including Kurume, Saga, and Nagasaki. Originally it came from Eurasia.

The reason why it came to Japan is said that when Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who is regarded as the second “Great Unifier of Japan”, went to Korea for the campaign against that country, he found a bird which chattered “kachi, kachi”. He thought that its chattering should bring *kachi* (victory) and brought it back to Japan. So, it also called kachi bird or kachi crow.

It is a black and white bird, smaller than a crow, and has a longer tail. It hops with both legs and with its tail held up when going forward. It also jumps laterally when getting surprised.

In early spring, a pair builds together a nest out of branches and mud on a tall tree. In town, it also makes a nest on a utility pole. It lays five or six pale green eggs which hatch in about twenty days and of which the youngsters leave the nest three or four weeks later.

Hokyointo pagoda of Horin-ji Temple – A Prefectural Tangible Cultural Property designated on April 9th, 1977

A hokyointo pagoda is a kind of Buddhist tomb and cenotaph. The one standing in the precinct of the Horin-ji temple was located at the Shimobayashi Tenman-gu Shrine. However, under the Shinto and Buddhism Separation Order pursued by the Meiji government in 1868, it was moved to the current site. It is almost two meters in height.

The creation year is not known, but we presume it to be erected during the Muromachi period (1336-1573) because there is a pagoda of the Fuko-ji temple (Omuta city; erected in 1404) which is very similar to it.



▲ The Torii gate of the Jojima Tenman-gu Shrine

◀ The hokoyinto pagoda of the Horin-ji Temple

Torii gate of Jojima Tenman-gu Shrine – A Municipal Tangible Cultural Property designated on October 1st, 1997

It was donated by a village headman, his son and his grandson in 1697, according to the inscription written by Ando Seian, a renowned Confucian scholar of Yanagawa Domain.

Guardian Dog Statues of Hama Tenman-gu Shrine – A Municipal Tangible Cultural Property designated on October 1st, 1997

This pair is located at both sides of the main gate of the Hama Tenman-gu Shrine. The manufacturer and the donator are not known. We presume them to be created in the mid-Edo period (18th century) and to be made of the andesite in the Hizen style (Hizen is a province which is today's Saga and Nagasaki Prefecture.) Then, it could be a representative stone artifact of the cultural exchange between Chikugo and Hizen.





Six jizos stone monument of Ushiki-jinja Shrine – A Municipal Tangible Folk Cultural Property designated on October 1st, 1997

These six jizos (guardian deities of children) stone monument is believed to be created during the Tensho era (1573-1592) and to be made of the andesite. The faces of jizos were abraded by the winds and rains of many years, although it is a precious case that this keeps its whole shape.

That kind of monument exists in various areas and measures about two meters in height. However, in Chikugo Province, they removed the base. It allowed them to stoop down to pray for the jizos.

Stone sitting statue of Amida Nyorai of Ashizuka– Municipal Tangible Folk Cultural Property designated on August 9th, 2004



This statue measures 35 centimeters high and bears inscriptions dating from 1558, naming of Amida Nyorai (Amidhaba), and praying for the repose of the soul of the donator him/herself.

Its head is very large, and it is out of proportion with the rest of the body. Its face was abraded, while the trace of its clothes remains clear.



- 1 Hokyointo pagoda of Horin-ji Temple
- 2 Torii gate of Jojima Tenman-gu Shrine
- 3 Guardian Dog Statues of Hama Tenman-gu Shrine
- 4 Six jizos stone monument of Ushiki-jinja Shrine
- 5 Stone sitting statue of Amida Nyorai of Ashizuka

Photo credit (Gargoyle tile and Eurasian magpies):
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