Free Market Boards Possessed by Entokuji Temple, Gifu

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The Entokuji Temple in Gifu city possesses four boards, each containing free market permission issued to a market named Kanoh. Last year, replicas of these boards were made, and this paper takes this opportunity to introduce the characteristics of these materials as objects, and also examines the significance of board issuance based on these characteristics.

Of these four boards, the most remarkable one is that first issued in the 10th year of Eiroku (1567) by ODA Nobunaga. Judging from the traces of the pole and the roof attached, and from its weathered and discolored condition, it is clear that the board was actually put up outside for a long time. The remaining three boards, however, have no such traces, and are gradually changing into a mere shell, which means that they can be regarded as confirmation of the first board.

When considering the contents of the boards together, their meaning can be interpreted as follows. At the very time when Nobunaga entered the market, driving the Saitoh family away, this market was empty. The feudal lord unilaterally put up the board to privilege the market, and because of this, people gradually came to settle down and a community came to be formed. After that, the boards were given to the town community in confirmation of the first board. The significance of these boards lies in the fact that a city was formed by a feudal lord by attracting commercial and industrial people to his castle town.