
Bingo “Kusazu” and the Nagai Family : A Port Town as a Feudal Lord’s Base

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The Kusado Sengen-cho site is the site of a medieval port town located in Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture. The results of the excavations have revealed that the port town was founded in the middle of the 13th century, declined in the middle of the 14th century, was redeveloped in the first half of the 15th century, and survived until the beginning of the 16th century.

In the site, there was an area that is considered to have played a significant role in the management of the settlement, as the quality and quantity of excavated artifacts are outstanding in this area. Many wooden tablets with inscriptions have been unearthed from there, and it is known from the inscriptions that there were people who traded goods with neighboring areas and lent money with interest. Wells with high-class structures were built intensively in the area. In addition, wooden tablets showing that tea ceremonies called “Tocha” were held in the 14th century were unearthed along with the Chinese tea bowls and tea containers used in tea ceremonies.

From these unearthed materials, it can be seen that residents of this area exerted influence on the economic activities of the neighboring area and were able to hold state-of-the-art cultural events at the time. Such a person can be identified as a person related to the Nagai family, who was an immediate vassal of the Kamakura shogunate and was appointed as the Commissioner of Bingo Province.

Key words: Kusado Sengen-cho site, medieval port town, regional economic base, tea ceremony called “Tocha”