

## Bustle of Shinagawa from the End of 12th Century to the Late 16th Century

### The Oi Clan

The Oi Clan set down its roots and assumed lordship over what is now known as the Oi region of Shinagawa at the end of the 12th century, named after this former ruling clan. The samurai coalition led by Oi Saneharu, a vassal of the Kamakura shogunate government, was granted domain over the Oi hamlet in the Ebara district (present day Oi area of Shinagawa City, Tokyo) during the Kamakura Period\*.

Together with its subsidiary Shinagawa Clan, the Oi Clan served as vassals of the Kamakura shogunate government. After the Jokyu Disturbance in 1221\*, the Oi Clan was granted further domains including the Satsuma Province (present day Kagoshima Prefecture), and shifted the focus of its activities to the western reaches of Japan.

\* The Kamakura Period: The period from the end of the 12th century until the beginning of the 14th century. A samurai coalition, which were originally serving the aristocracies, took power in this period. The shogunate government was located in Kamakura (present-day Kamakura City, Kanagawa Prefecture), which is the origin of the period's name.

\* The Jokyu Disturbance: A war that occurred between a faction led by the retired Emperor Go-Toba and the shogunate government. It ended in victory for the shogunate.

### Ports and Merchants of Shinagawa

During the Muromachi Period\*, the town of Shinagawa developed as an important port town on par with Mutsura and Kanagawa (present-day Yokohama City, Kanagawa Prefecture). It received goods crossing the Pacific Ocean from the western provinces of Japan and delivered them throughout the Kanto region.

The population and trading with other regions, as well as intra-region trading of Edo Bay, grew. Shinagawa was thriving. During the middle of the 15th century, merchants from the Kumano region (the present-day southern region of Wakayama Prefecture and Mie Prefecture) such as Suzuki Doin and Enomoto Dorin grew wealthy through the sea trade business.

\* The Muromachi Period: The period from the start of the 14th century until the latter half of the 16th century. The Muromachi shogunate government during this period was formed around a samurai coalition led by the Ashikaga Clan. The shogunate government was located in Muromachi (present-day Kyoto City, Kyoto Prefecture), which is the origin of the period's name.

### Temples in Shinagawa

Numerous temples were constructed in Shinagawa from the end of the 12th century until the latter half of the 16th century thanks to the donations of samurai and merchants, such as the temples: Seitoku-ji, Kaian-ji, Hozen-ji, Gangyo-ji, Kaizo-ji, Honko-ji, and the Myokoku-ji (also known as Tenmyo-ji).

### Gotenyama – A Sacred Ground in Shinagawa

Gotenyama (the present-day area near Kitashinagawa 4-chome, Shinagawa City, Tokyo), was previously a small hill that offered views of the sea.

When the Odaiba artificial battery islands were constructed in Shinagawa Bay from the end of the Edo Period through the first half of the 19th century, Gotenyama was excavated to provide landfill rubble to build up the islands. During the excavation, a vast number of *itabi* stone monuments\*, *gorinto* stone pagodas\*, and *hokyointo* stone pagodas\* were found together with human bones dating to the period from the beginning of the 14th century to the end of the 15th century.

It is believed that Gotenyama was considered as a holy place during this time, where sacrifices and funeral rites were performed praying for the souls of the deceased. It also served as a landmark for ships leaving and arriving in Shinagawa Bay.

\* *Itabi* stone monument: A stone monument engraved with calligraphy representing the Buddha, and the name and date of the person memorialized there.

\* *Gorinto* stone pagoda: A pagoda made from five slabs of different shaped stones representing the five universal elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and sky or heaven.

\* *Hokyointo* stone pagoda: Originally a pagoda storing a sutra inscription, but later examples only mimicked the appearance.

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Illustration of Myokoku-ji Temple  
(Reproduction)

Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century (Surmised)

Original: Tenmyokoku-ji Temple Collection,  
Deposited at Shinagawa Historical Museum

Tokyo Designated Cultural Property

An illustration of the period when the Myokoku-ji Temple had large grounds and many buildings. The buildings are said to be constructed through the donations by Suzuki Doin from Kumano (today, the southern region of Wakayama Prefecture and Mie Prefecture) in the middle of 15<sup>th</sup> century (Muromachi period). The five-story pagoda were destroyed on August 28, 1614, but reconstructed 20 years later by Tokugawa Iemitsu, the third shogun of the Edo shogunate government.

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Wooden Tablet Enclosed within the *Kongo* Warrior Guardian Statue of Enyu-ji Temple (Reproduction)

July 1559

Original: Enyu-ji Temple collection

Enyu-ji Temple is a temple of the Tendai sect located in Himonya, Meguro City in Tokyo. Reading the inscription on the back tells us that at the time, the Himonya area (currently the area near Oi, Shinagawa City, Tokyo) belonged to the Oi hamlet.

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### Hozen-ji Temple *Itabi* Stone Monument

Early 14<sup>th</sup> century to late 15<sup>th</sup> century

Hozen-ji Temple Collection, Deposited at  
Shinagawa Historical Museum

Shinagawa City Designated Cultural  
Property

A commemorative monument built in large numbers from the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. The *itabi* stone from the Chichibu region of Japan was used because it was relatively soft and easy to carve, and could be split into thin slabs. Today, over 40,000 of these stone monuments still remain in the Kanto region. 116 *itabi* stone monuments, including those originally carved between 1308 and 1490, were found on the Gotenyama.

*Tokoname-okame* Urns Excavated from the Tama River Basin

*Tokoname* ware urns were discovered in the cities of basin of the Tama River and its tributaries (present-day Fuchu, Koganei, Musashimurayama, Tama, and Hachioji). It is believed these urns were transported from the port town of Shinagawa along the Tama River.

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*Tokoname* Ware Urns

The urns discovered on Gotenyama are believed to be produced in the first half of the 15th century in the Tokoname area in Aichi Prefecture. They were made by winding a long piece of clay. During the 15th century, *Tokoname ware* were traded nationwide, including Shinagawa, by Pacific coast-liners.

Similar urns were excavated in Fuchu City where the government of the Musashino Province was previously located and other areas in the Tama River region.