

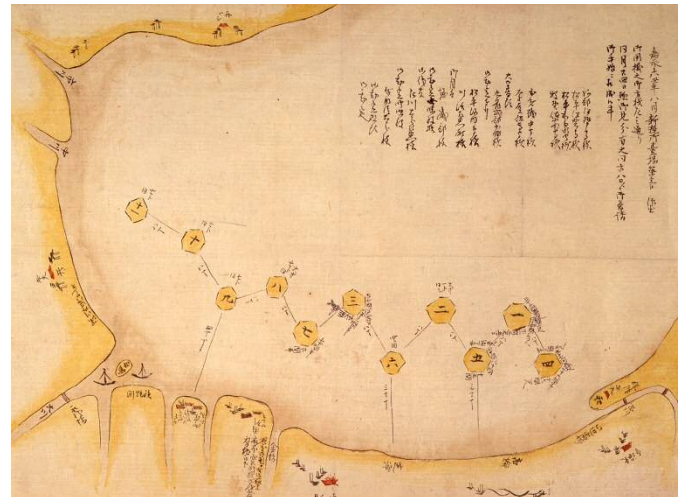
●Shinagawa Historical Museum Explanatory Sheet

The Shinagawa Batteries

The Arrival of Commodore Perry and the Construction of the Shinagawa Battery Islands

Commodore Matthew C. Perry of the U.S. Navy arrived on June 3, 1853, seeking to force the Edo shogunate government to change its long-standing policy of limiting oversea trade. As soon as Perry left, the shogunate government set about strengthening the defenses of Edo Bay. Based on a survey carried out by Honda Tadanori and Egawa Hidetatsu, it was decided to build a series of man-made battery islands off the coast of Shinagawa.

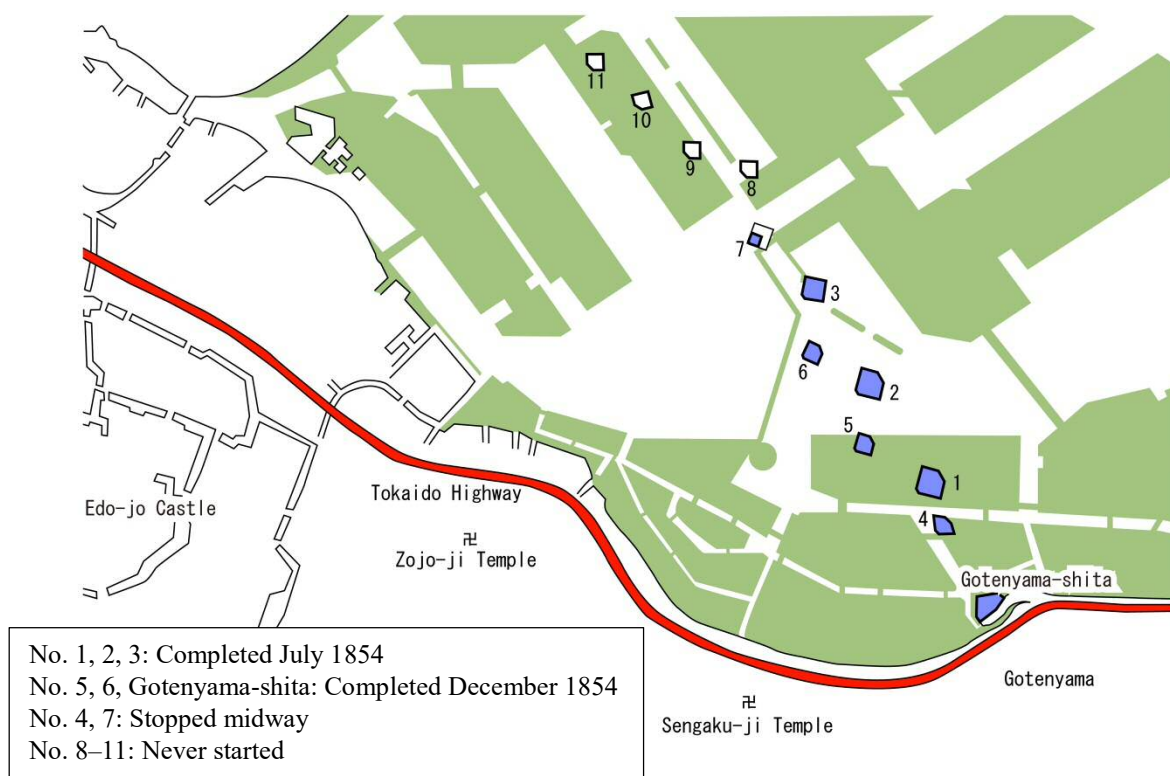
The design for the batteries was based on Western documents, and called for 11 artificial islands to be built from Minami Shinagawa Ryoshimachi to Fukagawa (present-day Koto City, Tokyo). Construction of the islands was launched in August, 1853. The batteries required a massive amount of construction materials, and the wooden piles such as pines and cedars, were harvested from forests managed directly by the shogunate throughout the Kanto region, and rocks were transported by ships from Sagami (present day Kanagawa Prefecture), Izu and Suruga (both Shizuoka



▲ Design plans for the Shinagawa batteries, 1853 ("Illustrated Scrolls of the Arrival of Commodore Perry", Yokohama Archives of History)

Prefecture, today).

The rubble for the landfill construction was obtained by excavating Gotenyama, the estate in Edo of the Imabari Domain (currently, the area around Imabari City, Ehime Prefecture), and the hills around Sengaku-ji Temple. On some days, over 2,000 ships were needed to transport the enormous amounts of rubble. As many as 5,000 field workers were also required a day. The construction cost an astonishing sum of 750,000 *ryo*.





▲ Testing the Cannons at the Batteries (EGAWA-Bunko collection)

The Number One to Three batteries were completed in July, 1854, and the Number Five, Six, and Gotenyama-shita battery, which was added to the design later, were completed in December 1854. Construction on the Number Four and Seven batteries was started, but cancelled mid-way, and the batteries Number Eight to Number Eleven were never started.

Egawa Tarozaemon Hidetatsu (Tan-an)

Egawa Tarozaemon Hidetatsu (Tan-an. 1801–1855) was born in Nirayama in the Izu Province (present-day Izunokuni City, Shizuoka Prefecture). Egawa learned about Western affairs from Hatasaki Kanae and Watanabe Kazan, studied Western artillery under Takashima Shuhan, and opened an artillery school in Nirayama. Based on Izu's critical location for maritime trade, Egawa advocated for the establishment of a navy, the building of a reverberating furnace, and the conscription of civilians during emergency situations.

The first line of defense in Egawa's Edo Bay Defense Plan was the Uruga Sea Lane, and the coastal waters of Shinagawa were considered a defensive stronghold. While the number of batteries in the initial plan were reduced, Egawa personally saw to the completion of six naval battery islands. Egawa passed away in January, 1855, before seeing the completion of the Nirayama reverberating furnace, which was constructed in parallel with the batteries.

The Shinagawa Battery Garrisons

The six Shinagawa battery islands that served as



▲ Egawa Tan-an
(EGAWA-bunko Collection)

bastions of defense for Edo Bay were defended by *daimyo* lords, who were close to the Tokugawa shogunate clan or its equivalent. The full-fledged garrisoning of the islands started from 1855, and they were soon strengthened through joint exercises. Though responsibility rotated through different *daimyo* lords, the garrisons remained in place up until the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate government in 1868.

The Epilogue of the Shinagawa Batteries

After the Meiji Revolution, the Shinagawa Batteries were managed by the Army Ministry of Japan up through 1914. During that time, the Shinagawa Lighthouse was built on the western edge of the Number Two Battery in 1870. The Shinagawa Lighthouse was later transferred to the Museum Meiji-mura (Inuyama City, Aichi Prefecture), and is today a Designated Important Cultural Property.



A foundation stone from the Mt. Gotenyama-shita ruins
(Beside the museum entrance) ►



▲ The Number Three Battery (Photo, August 2007)

Oaki Kikuzaburo rented the Number Four Battery from the Army Ministry of Japan, and in 1883 built a Western-style ship foundry on the island. The Number Three and Six batteries were sold to Tokyo City in 1915. In 1924, the governor of Tokyo-fu provisionally designated the islands historical landmarks before they received the national designation in 1926.

Thereafter, with the exception of the Number Three and Six batteries, four of the six naval batteries disappeared due to landfill and other activities. Today, the Number Three Battery remains in its original form is loved by people as the municipal Daiba Park and Odaiba Marine Park.