

# ●Shinagawa Historical Museum Explanatory Sheet

## The Miso Factory Discovered on a *Daimyo* Estate

### The Sendai-zaka Archaeological Site

The Sendai-zaka archaeological site in Higashi-Oi, Shinagawa City, Tokyo was excavated from 1987 to 1988 as part of the construction of a tunnel being carried out for a transit project.

Sendai-zaka derives its name from the *shimo-yashiki* lower estate built in the area by the Date family of the Sendai Domain (present-day Sendai City in Miyagi Prefecture) in 1658. The Sendai-zaka archaeological site is on the northeast corner of the estate, and many artifacts from the *daimyo*'s estate were discovered. A large number of artifacts related to the miso production carried out on the estate were also excavated.

### Life on the *Daimyo*'s Estate as seen from the Artifacts

During the excavation of the Sendai-zaka archaeological site, a moat was discovered surrounding the estate. The moat had a breadth of five meters and a depth of approximately two meters. It was believed that the moat was filled in relatively soon after the completion of the estate. Many roof tiles bearing the *kamon* family crest of the Date family were also discovered.

A wide variety of dishes were found such as bowls, dishes, sake bottles, and pots, from those used for everyday meals to luxurious pieces. Clay toys were also found. The remains of five dogs that appear to have been buried were also discovered. These dogs were believed to have been kept as pets, and carefully buried after their deaths. One of the dogs was particularly large, and is believed to be a foreign breed, or a descendant of one. All of these artifacts provide priceless hints to what life was like on the estate.

In 1660, Date Tsunamune, the third *daimyo* of the Sendai Domain, was forced to retire by the shogunate government due to poor conduct. The discoveries of the Sendai-zaka archaeological site, including fragments of high-grade pottery, provide a glimpse into the life Date Tsunamune led for fifty years at the *shimo-yashiki* lower estate until his death in 1711.

### Miso Production

At the Sendai-zaka site the remains of five stone-cooking furnaces believed to have been used for fermenting miso were discovered. Among them, the oldest is from the middle of the 18th century.

The miso production started at a small scale mainly for his retainers in Edo, but eventually grew to a large scale



▲ Artifacts from the Sendai-zaka archaeological site

for commercial production. A map in 1855 records the estate as the “Sendai Miso Estate.”

The Sendai Domain held a detached territory in Ryugasaki in the Hitachi Province (present-day Ryugasaki City, Ibaraki Prefecture), and the high-quality soybeans produced in the region were used to make the miso. With the start of the Meiji Period (1868–1911), the miso factory was converted into a brick factory. The boiler, smokestack, flue and furnace made with bricks were discovered on the site, revealing that it was a rather modern factory.

In 1902, the management rights to the miso company were passed from the Date family to the Yagi family, and it became Yagi Sendai Miso Factory. These ruins are believed to have been built around that time.

Ruins Predating the Edo Period found at the Sendai-zaka site

Trenches dug around *kofun* ancient burial mounds have been found at two locations at the Sendai-zaka archeological site. The *kofun* mounds are believed to have been built from the early to middle sixth century. While the *kofun* of the Sendai-zaka site no longer exist, many other *kofun* were discovered nearby, suggesting that the entire area was a *kofun* burial district long ago.

While it no longer exists, a shell mound believed to be from the late Jomon Period of 2,000 to 1,000 BC was also found. This tells us that people lived in the area since the Jomon Period.



▲ Foundations of the modern miso factory