Along the history of Fujikawa river ship transport
Fujikawa river with familiarity and reverence as a local symbol, which hiding a violent nature but providing a large benefits to the valley! People were facing against Fujikawa river with various thoughts.
Fujikawa river originates from Mt. Nokogiri yama in the southern Alps located between Nagano and Yamanashi prefectures, flows into the west area of Yamanashi prefecture and the east area of Shizuoka prefecture, and reaches to Suruga bay. The river area, located in the "Fossa Magna" (*), which separates the Japanese Islands into the east and west, is surrounded by the 2,000〜3,000 meter high peaks such as the southern Alps, Mt. Yatsugatake, Kanto mountains, and Misaka mountains. The riverbed slope is very steep (The slope between the direct management area, which is 85 km, is 1/240) and the amount of soil and sand carried out by the river is large because the river area has steep geographical feature and fragile geological structure.

Regarding the statistics of Fujikawa river, among 109 of first class rivers in the nation, the river area is approx. 3,990 km² - 15th largest, the river flow distance is approx. 128 km - 32nd longest, The planned highest flow amount at lower stream area in Shizuoka, "Kitamatsuno",(The flow amount witch becomes the base figure for repair construction.) is 16,600 m³/s - 3rd largest flowing from Yoshinogawa river in Tokushima and Shingugawa river in Wakayama.

Moreover, Fujikawa river is called "the Japanese 3 fastest flow rivers" as well as Mogamigawa river in Yamagata and Kumagawa river in Kumamoto. Although these three river natures are not suitable for ship cruise, they were also known as the rivers with good ship transportation. Originally, the ships carried rice collected as land tax and salt, then carried people who visit to Mt. Minobusan (Nichiren sect head temple), The ships at Mogamigawa river carried the local product, "Safflower," and the ships at Kumagawa river used for liquor made in Hitoyoshi. At same time, many ships were used for transportation of people. These three river flow were especially faster than others, giving a strong impact to people. This seems to explain that these rivers are called "the three fastest flow rivers."

* Fossa Magna: A large dislocation runs from south to north in the middle of Honshu island.
The ship transportation along rivers in Japan originated in fairly old ages. One evidence says that "the rules of port" was mentioned in "Engishiki" (Rule enforcement details 905 - 927). Yamatogawa and Yodogawa river transportation in Kinai area (present Kinki area), which was the capital at that time, was fairly developed and many ships were used to bring tributes to Nara, Asuka, and Kyoto from the local countries. However, development along the local river transportation was delayed until Edo period, there were several reasons to explain. One was that there was no political organization which governed the entire area and river. Another reason was that ship construction and ship navigation techniques were under strict control. So, those techniques were not transmitted to other area.

It was in the early Edo period when the ship transportation at Fujikawa river was developed. Although, there is no specific years known when the actual ship transport started, we can assume that it was around Keicho 17 (1612) because of the date listed in a paint called "Tenjingazo" stored at Enryu temple, Ichikawa-daimon town, Yamanashi. In the previous years, Keicho 12 (1607), Ryoi Suminokura (*) was assigned by the order of Ieyasu Tokugawa for ship route development, it took 5 years to complete. We can imagine that the construction work was very difficult because of the poor engineering technology then.

The question is, why they thought about ship transportation and actually developed? Explanation will be Ieyasu Tokugawa, who unified the nation, originated the Edo Bakufu Government in Keicho 8 (1603), the politically stable condition was established. Next, it was necessary to carry rice collected as land tax to Edo and Sunpu. Also another necessity was to take salt, which was very essential for our life, to Kai country. The ship could carry a large volume with less cost and cut time if compared to overland route. As the time passed, the exchange trade became large and took a position as the essential transport method, and developed even more.
"Iwabuchigashi" was at the lower stream of Fujikawa river ship transport, and "Koshu three port" were the major ports at the upper stream. Iwabuchigashi is located in current Fujikawa town, Shizuoka, and Koshu Sangashi referred to Kajikazawa, Kurosawa, and Aoyagigashi. Kajikazawa and Kurosawagashi are located in current Kajikazawa town, and Aoyagigashi is located in current Masuho town. As the main reason to open the ship transport by Ieyasu Tokugawa was to carry rice collected as land tax, Down stream ships from Kai to Suruga mainly carried "rice," on the other hand, up stream ships from Suruga to inland Kai region mainly carried "salt." (*1) The rice arrived to Iwabuchigashi then carried by horses or large wagons along approx. 4 km to Kanbarahama (current Kanbara town), then carried by another ships to Shimizu port (Shimizu city), again changed into large size ships to transport to warehouses at Kuramae, Edo. Also, salt arrived to Kajikazawagashi was landed then again carried to Ina or Saku area in Shinshu as well as Kai region.

The ships were used not only for the goods but also for people, and the number of people used ship transport was increased. Especially, people, who visited to Mt. Minobusan, took the ship. We can imagine the condition according to a comic story, "Kajikazawa." (*2) It said the number of ships was approx. 100 in Edo period, then increased over 500 ships in Meiji period.

The management of cruising ships was assigned by Kuchidome Bansho (*3), located at Kajikazawa and Tooshima (current Nanbu town, Yamanashi), we can look the site even at present time.
This song tells that after departure from Kajikazawagashi, the ship reached to a dangerous location called "Tenjinngataki." There was a sad accident about two sisters from a rich family sank with the ship into water. Fujikawa river with fast flow has large stones at bottom and these condition was not good for ship transportation. There were dangerous locations against ship safety. In case of Fujikawa river, the whole area between Iwabuchigashi and Koshu Sangashi was dangerous. Among these locations, there were many accidents happened at "Tenjinnotaki," "Byobuiwa," and "Choshinokuchi." The ship captains were afraid of these locations, by calling "the three dangers." Tenjinnotaki is located at lower stream of Kajikazawagashi. A large rock stands out from water and the lower stream flows like waterfalls. Byobuiwa is a cliff, where located at one of mid stream branch, Hayakawa river, merges into. The flow was colliding against the rock. Choshinokuchi is located in Shibakawa town, Shizuoka. The river flow was separated into two by corroded lava from Mt. Fuji. The river width gets narrow, like sake bottle, and it is a very fast flow section. Though the ship transport started, some improvement at dangerous locations, the accidents were never stopped. In the present days, people offer flowers at the cenotaph for victims of accidents. Also the soul of people who killed at these area is comforted during Obon season.

According to the local children's song between Nishigoori (*1) and Kawauchi (*2) in Yamanashi,

At Barazawa town, Koshu, there were two sisters in a well-famous Minatoya family. They left home when birds started to sing. Around noon, they arrived to Kajikazawa town.

(Middle section skipped)

Moving about 6 km with slow pace, then asked the captain where it is? He said here is the dangerous, Tenjinngataki. Soon, the ship broke apart. The older sister washed away by the flow, the younger sister sank into water.
The Fujikawa river ship transport became a main route of social, economic, and cultural communication to Edo or Setonaikai area, by connecting Koshu and Shinshu area. On the other hand, there was another type of ships used in Fujikawa river. This was ship, called "Yokowatashi," used to cross the river. Because technology of bridge construction was not well established and economic strength was not strong. The boats acted as a bridge, later called "Watashibune." As the Fujikawa river ship transport connected vertically from Iwabuchigashi to Koshu Sangashi, it sometimes called "Tatenagashi." It is estimated that many number of boat bases, if bases at branch rivers included. The number is approx. 50 locations.

The boat structure for Yokowatashi was designed to consider the amount which was carried at each location. Some of boats were still used until Showa 40th to act as transportation for the local community.
The ship crews who needed energy ate a lot. They carried a large size lunch box, some of them were told that they ate Issho (1.8 litter) amount of rice at once. Because they had to pull the ropes for upstream, they usually had three thick humps at neck, side, and back. These were sign as the ship captain. Because their dangerous job they had strong faith and were very superstitious. Regarding faith, people at Kurosawagashi worshiped Mt. Shichimensan which was the God of water and river. They dedicated a ship to a pond in a temple, Keishinnin, in the mountains of Hayakawa town. Also, people at Aoyagigashi dedicated a lanyard at the large stone called "Yogoishi," stored at Okunoin in Mt. Shichimensan. They didn't like the words, "sink" or "break," so they hated to use or even listen.

People who involved with this job had occupation of yearning because Fujikawa river ship transport was a major mean to support the local economy. Ship captains were very proud in the town. However, they were always close to dangers.

There were four ship crews, a ship captain, assistant, sub-captain, and cargo worker. The down stream ships from Koshu Sangashi to Iwabuchigashi were upto the captain's techniques, and passengers' lives and fate of cargo depended on the captain's control pole. The ship with water splash running down to stream was very stylish and attractive toward the girls who lived along the river. However, to move against the stream was not easy. They had to pull the ship by the ropes against fast flow. Physical strength was necessary and the job required a good healthy body. The Fujikawa river ship captain song (*1) says about the stylish downstream ship and effortful upstream ship as follows.

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Since the initial construction of ship route by Ryoi Suminokura in Keicho 12 (1607), Fujikawa river ship transport with Takasebune started after 5 years of work. It became an essential mean of transportation for not only the goods such as rice collected as land tax and salt but also for people. In Meiji period, a large social structure change happened and the goods also varied into many kinds. Also the number of people who used ship transportation increased, so ship route was improved and ship size became larger.

Sailing boat and propeller boat appeared in the route. This industry reached to its peak in the middle of Meiji period.

However, due to import of advanced technology from overseas, Tokaido train line was opened in Meiji 22 and Chuo line opened in Meiji 36. The ship transport had to decline. Finally, because of Minobu line open in Showa 3, it ended the 316 years of history with joy and pain of victims.
There are many sites, which remind us relationship with a long history from the early Edo to the beginning of Showa period for 316 years at various locations.

There is a stone monument "Fujisuihi" of Ryoi Suminokura, whose achievement of the river route improvement was awarded, at the old Kajikazawagashi, present Myojin area, Kajikazawa town. Moreover, there is an old site of "Kuchidome Bansho" which observed the ship traffic near there. Also, an anchor stone (to tie a ship) was left in a family who was related to the ship transport. On the mountain slope above the river, there is a small shrine of Shichimendo which used to pray for safety of crew members. A votive picture, which celebrate a completion of one of three dangerous locations, "Tenjinnotaki" improvement work, was stored inside. (Presently, the picture is stored at town office due to the superannuation of shrine structure.) We can observe the workers were making hard efforts to remove a giant stone which had been obstructed ship traffic.

Down along from Kajikazawa, there is another steep cliff called Byobuiwa, which was also known as one of three dangerous locations, stands out at the merge point of a branch river Hayakawa. Reaching to Nanbu town, there are "Funadorinoiwa" which was thought to take a life of ship and "Oiseiwa," still exist at

**Summary of Fujisuihi monument**

This monument has constructed after 190 years after the route open, dated in December, Kansei 9. Fujikawa river was used be a very fast flow river where even a small wood canoe could not pass. Ieyasu Tokugawa concerned about the people in Shinshu and Kai area, who were making difficult efforts to transport the goods, and ordered Ryoi Suminokura in Kyoto to improve the river. He had completed his work with thoughts and machines. Because of the improvement, it took one day along downstream, and three or four days against the stream. Soon after the ship route open, a flood destroyed the route, then Tsunenobu, who was a son of Ryoi, continued to repair the route. Ryoi Suminokura also completed Kamogawa, Ooigawa, and Tenryugawa rivers. To express our thank to his great works, a monument was constructed to pass along our generation at ship port, Kajikazawa.
present time. A cenotaph was built near to calm down the spirits of victims, flowers continues to be offered here. There is another monument for "Kuchidome Bansho" site facing toward the river.

Along down to the river, there is "Choshinokuchi," which was one of three dangerous locations, at Shibakawa town, Shizuoka. Also, there is only one middle island called "Setojima." The river flow is separated into two, and the east portion flows between steep cliffs made of corroded lava from Mt. Fuji. The river width is so narrow and flow is so fast and rage, giving fears to people. There is a monument for victims who lost their lives here. Finally, there is no historic ruin of Iwabuchigashi, at Iwabuchi area, Fujikawa town, some houses remind us about the time of memory. There is a big tree stands at the old Iwabuchigashi location. We can observe the reconstructed overnight lantern near river bank. In Meiji period, water canal was made from Iwabuchigashi to Kanbarahama. The canal was used for a short period until Tokaido train line opened, and there are some sites of the canal between Fujikawa town and Kanbara town.