

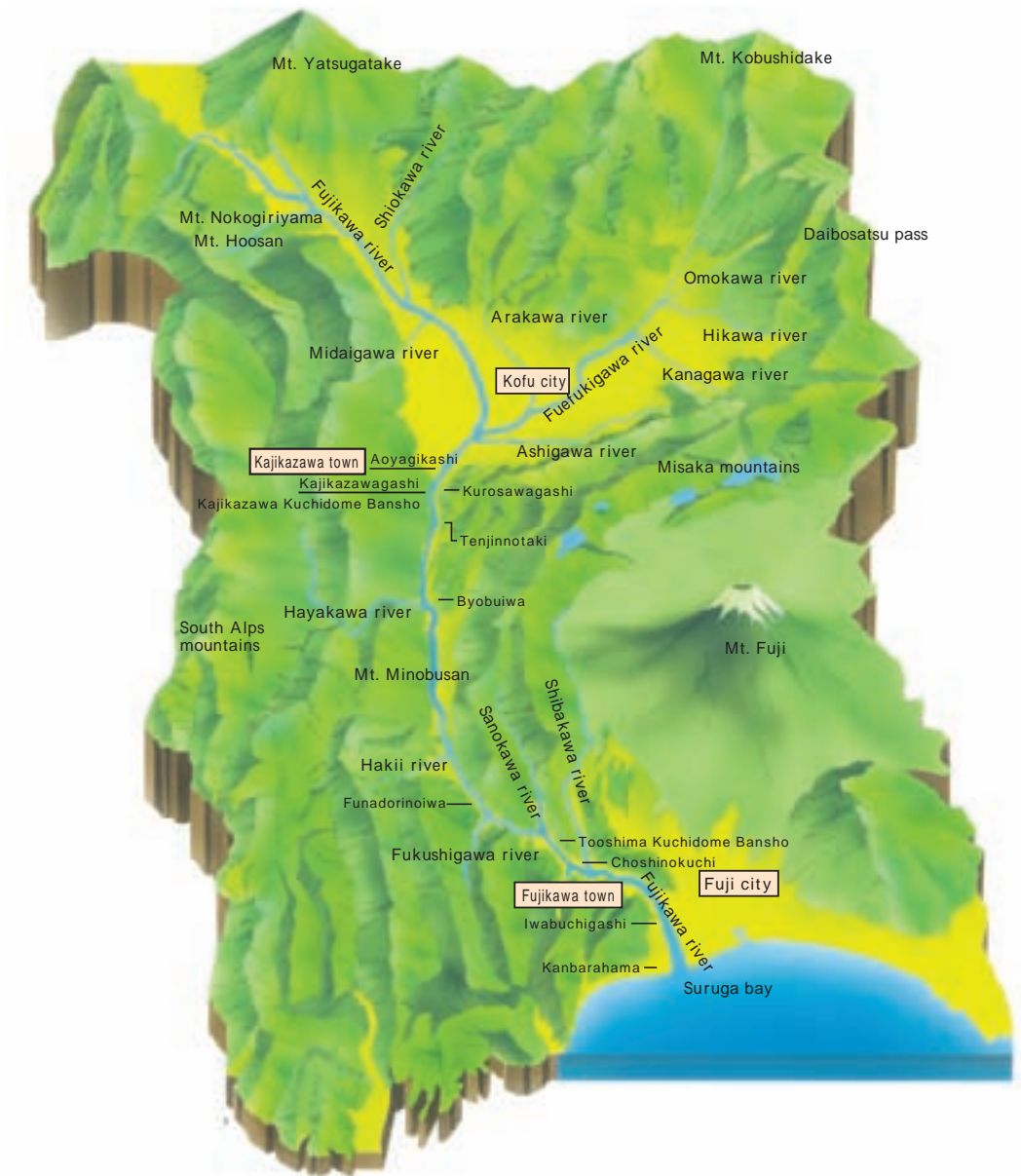
Culture and transport route where dedicated with hard efforts of the past people.

# *Along the history of Fujikawa river ship transport*



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The past people made impossible tasks possible by their blood, a tear, and sweat!

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.

There was an era of Fujikawa river ship transportation for more than 300 years from the early Edo period to early Showa period when ships, called Takasebune (Sasabune), were used for transportation of mainly rice collected as land tax, salt, and people. So far horses and manpower were only the mean of transportation, but use of ship made time reduction and a mass transportation possible. These ships were largely expanded and became so essential for people's lives. Exchange of people

became popular and reached to its peak in the middle of Meiji period as the route of culture and transport. As the road and railway were developed, its task ended in the early Showa period. We can imagine that there were lots of hard efforts dedicated by the people who developed and maintained this route and also people who engaged in ship transportation, challenging against Fujikawa river, which is one of fastest flow rivers in Japan. This booklet flows the footsteps in the past.

# One of Three Japanese Fastest Flow Rivers! Fujikawa river

## From Southern Alps to Suruga Bay

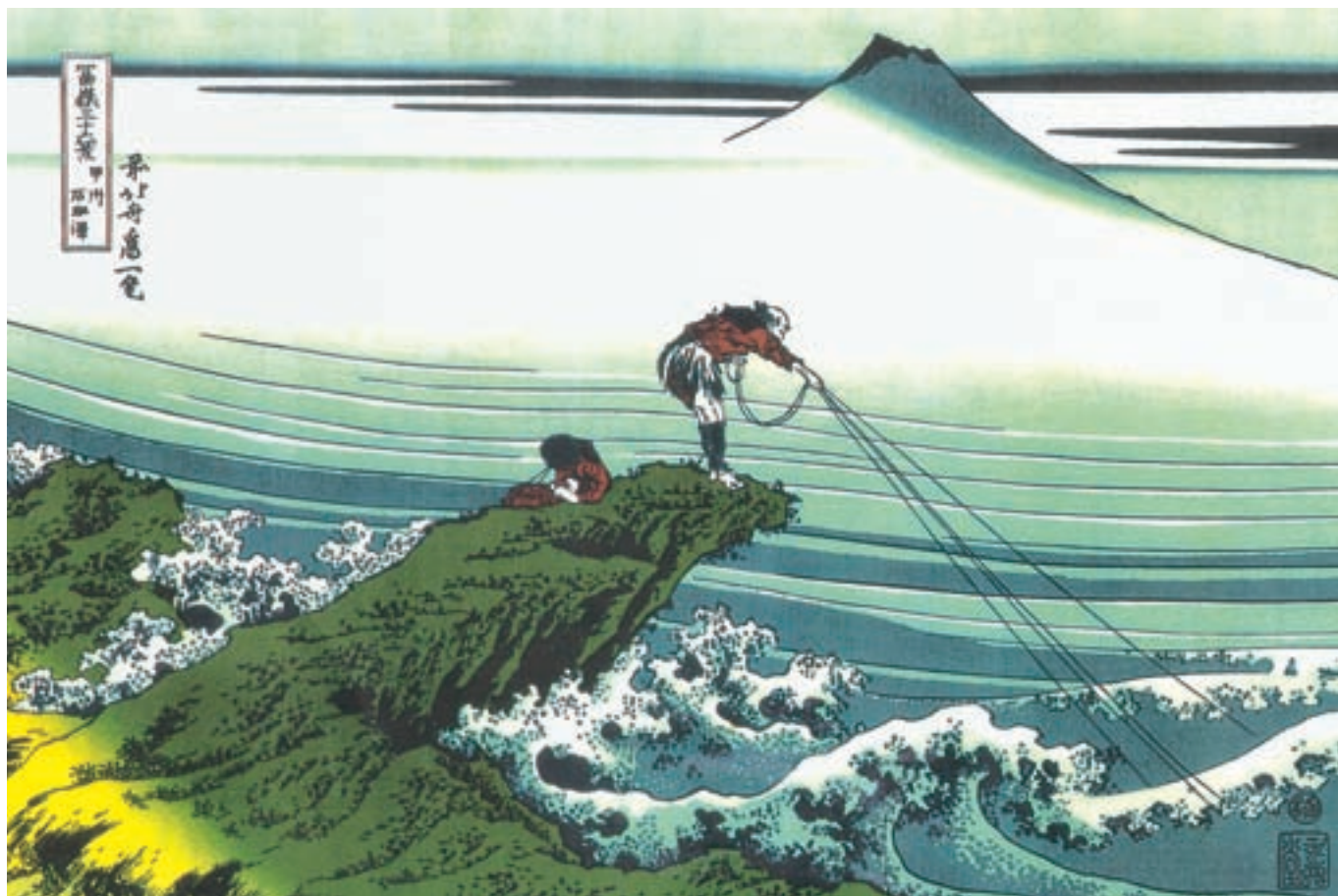
Fujikawa river originates from Mt. Nokogiri yama in the southern Alps located between Nagano and Yamanashi prefectures, flows into the west area of Yamanashi prefecture and the east area of Shizuoka prefecture, and reaches to Suruga bay. The river area, located in the "Fossa Magna" (\*), which separates 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 km<sup>2</sup> - 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 which

becomes the base figure for repair construction.) is 16,600 m<sup>3</sup>/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.



One of 36 paintings of Mt. Fuji scenes by Hokusai Katsushika, "Kajikasawa"

# Background of ship transportation

## Why at the fast flowing Fujikawa river?

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), Ryoji 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.

\* Ryoji Suminokura (1554 - 1614): Made success with overseas trading, later directed ship transport at domestic rivers.



Ryoji Suminokura monument  
for his dedication  
(Kajikazawagashi site)



Ryoji Suminokura wood statue  
(Stored at Daihikaku, Kyoto)

# Iwabuchi and Koshu Sangashi

## Exchange base of people and goods

"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



Ruins of Kajikazawa Kuchidome Bansho (Nikenya, Kajikazawa town)



Picture of those days at Kajikazawagashi (Water gauge can be seen at both sides of ships)



Ruins of Tooshima Kuchidome Bansho (Tooshima, Nanbu town)



Overnight lantern at Iwabuchigashi (Funayama, Fujikawa town) 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.

\*1 Salt: mostly produced at Hashihama, Ehime or Toyohama, Hiroshima.

\*2 Kajikazawa: A human-nature story by 1st Encho Sanyutei. A comic story about losing its way back from Komuroyama, numbness medicine, detoxification tag, and Daimoku (Zaimoku: lamber).

\*3 Kuchidome Bansho: A lookout located at major area in Edo period. The purpose was to control illegal shipment to other area. (According from Daijirin dictionary)

# Dangerous location and river accidents

## Down along torrent flow between the mountains

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.**

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." Thenjinnotaki is located at lower stream of



Sail ship in front of Byobuiwa (Miyagi, Nakatomi town)

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.

\*1 Nishigoori: Fujikawa river right bank in Nakakoma-gun. \*2 Kawauchi: Mountain area between Minamikoma-gun and Nishiyatsushiro-gun.



Tenjinnotaki construction votive picture (Shichimendo, Myojin, Kajikazawa town)



Present scene at Tenjinnotaki (Hajikajima, Kajikazawa town)



Present scene at Choshinokuchi (Setojima, Shibakawa town)

# Crossing boat, boat base

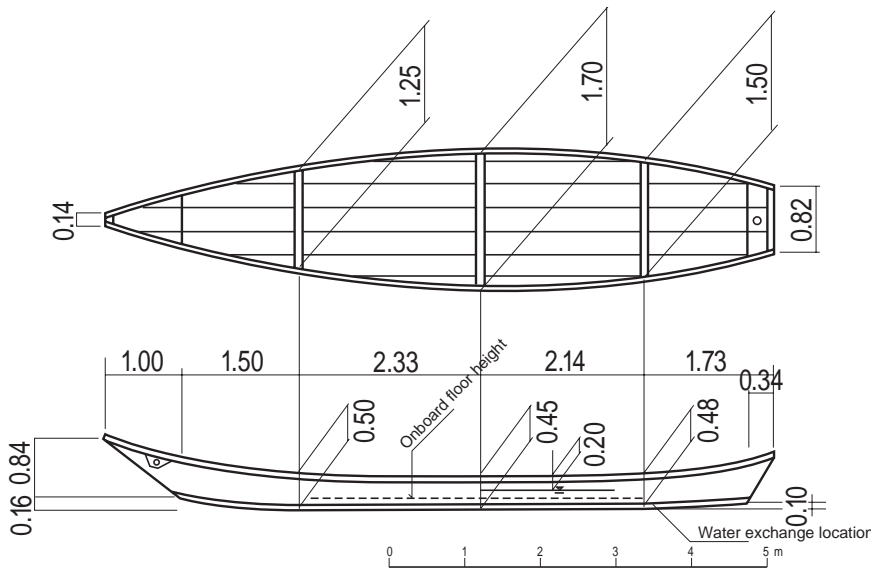
## A bridge function for local area

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.



Boat style used between Hakobara and Hijikajima.



Boat between Shimoyama and Hadakajima.

# Life of ship captain and cargo worker

## Risking their lives with a piece of wood board

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 Kosu 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.

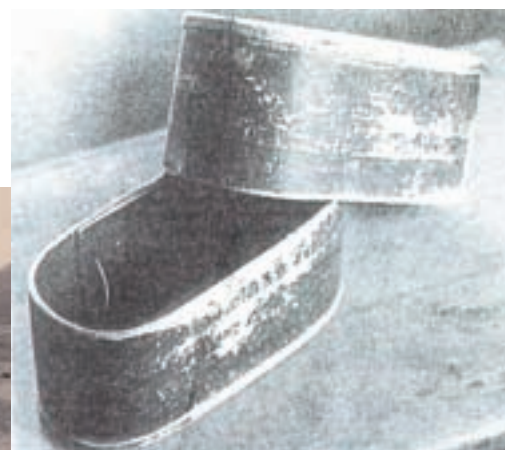
"Looking at the upstream ship is not fun, looking again at the downstream ship is attractive."

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.

\*1 Fujikawa river ship captain song: part of songs which were verbally inherited by people around Fujikawa river from the past.



Menba (Lunch box)

Nanbu Tsudashiba  
(Nanbu, Nanbu town)



# The end of Fujikawa river ship transport

## From Takasebune to train

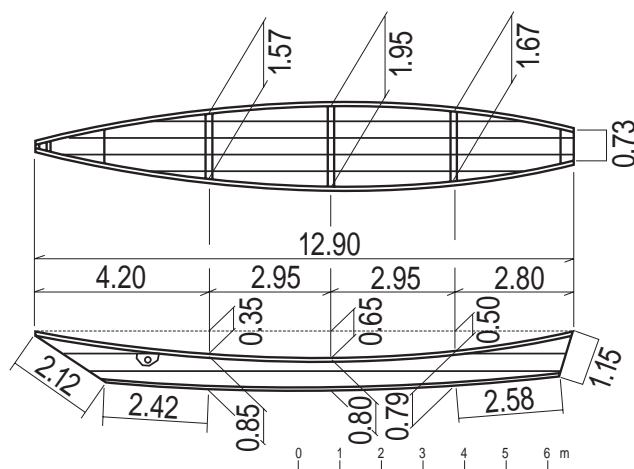
Since the initial construction of ship route by Ryoji Suminokura in Keicho 12 (1607), Fujikawa river ship transport with Takasebune started after 5 years of work. It became an essential means of transportation for not only the goods such as rice collected as land tax and salt but also for people. In 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.



Takasebune reconstructed in Kajikazawa town (Kajikazawa Sport Park)



Standard drawing of Takasebune (Standard model until Meiji 18)



Sail boat



Plane ship (Propeller boat)

# Historic sites of Fujikawa river ship transport

## Historic sites which remind about the old time

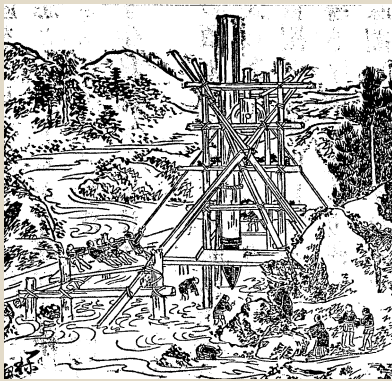
There are many sites, which remind us relationship with a long history from the early Edo to the beginning of Showa period for 316 years at various locations.

There is a stone monument "Fujisuihi" of Ryo 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.

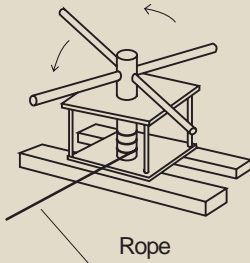
Down along from Kajikazawa, there is another steep cliff called Byobuiwa, which was also known as one of three dangerous locations, stands out at the merge point of a branch river Hayakawa. Reaching to Nanbu town, there are "Funadorinoiwa" which was thought to take a life of ship and "Oiseiwa," still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



Fujisuihi monument (Kajikazawagashi site)



Wheel



Used machine

Rope

Drill tower

### 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 Ryo 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 Ryo, continued to repair the route. Ryo Suminokura also completed Kamogawa, Oigawa, 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 re-constructed 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.



Memorial monument at Choshinokuchi (Kamaguchi)



Kajikazawa Shichimendo shirine which worshiped by ship crew people



Anchor stone which was taken out at the end of ship transport age

Editorial supervisor / Haruo Ueno

Cover photo / Koyo Okada



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