

Sugaura -The Village Where People Living in Harmony with Lake Biwa

YOSHIMURA Toshiaki

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Summary :

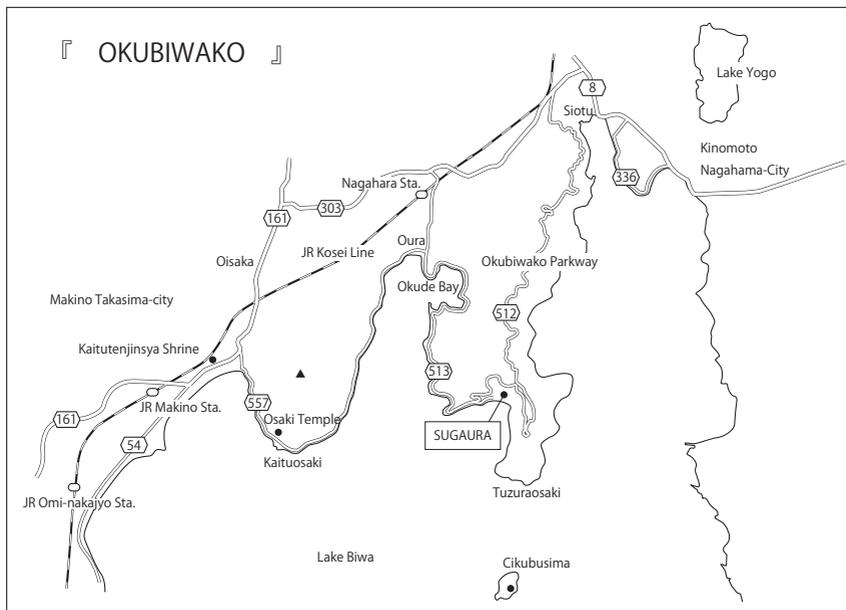
Lake Biwa encompasses one sixth of the area of Shiga Prefecture and has played a vital part in the lives of people of Shiga since ancient times. Lake Biwa is well known as an important tourism resource. However, the people who live by the lake and depend on it for their livelihoods are given little mention. Okubiwako, the northernmost area of Lake Biwa, is a breathtakingly beautiful area, with a very long, very rich culture but public transportation to the area is limited and access is inconvenient, making it even more remote. In this paper I will present a survey of Sugaura, a village in Okubiwako. This village, which was mentioned in poems of Man'yōshū centuries ago, has its own unique customs and culture that have been preserved to the present. In this survey I examine the lifestyle of the people of Sugaura, whose existence is intricately interwoven with Lake Biwa, examining the period of the recent past to the present day.

1、 Introduction

The northern end of Lake Biwa area called Okubiwako has a fjord-like landscape -limited flat lands and steep mountains reaching right up to the lakeshore. Sugaura is located around the center of Okubiwako, on the west side of Tsuzurao-saki Point jetting out into the lake. This village is known for the "*Sugaura Monjo*" (Sugaura Documents -Historical record of the Middle Ages). This place was selected as the Important Cultural Landscape in 2016 for its "Sugaura Landscape of the Lakefront Settlement". By visiting there, I wanted to know the lifestyle of Sugaura -once considered totally isolated from the other world-, where people have been living in harmony with Lake Biwa.

2、 Scenery of Sugaura from Oura

Starting the journey from Kaizu -located at the northern end of



Kosei (the west of lake), which is known for its beautiful cherry blossoms, you pass Oura as traveling along the lakeside heading to Sugaura. Travelers can enjoy the wonderful scenery of Okubiwako while journeying this route. Unfortunately, this road was closed to traffic due to landslide caused by the recent heavy rain, so I took another route from Ossa Pass heading to JR Nagahara Station and then to Oura. After passing Oura fishing port, you will enter the administrative territory of Sugaura. The view of Lake Biwa in this area is quite unique -its calm water surface with complicated coastline reflects the surrounding mountains- and gives us a totally different impression from the other parts of the lake. There is about 19 kilometer road starting from the boundaries between Oura and Sugaura. This is Okubiwako Parkway which had a huge impact on the tourism of Sugaura. As you go along the curved coastline of Akasaki, a rice field appears on the left side along the valley. This is a farmland called Moroko for which they often fought with Oura during the Middle Ages. In Okutehama, there is another farmland called Hisashi, which also caused the dispute over the land ownership. Today, we can see a well-developed rice field spreading over the valley. Soon after you pass the pond that is being used as a port of refuge, a clear view opens up and the familiar scenery of Lake Biwa re-

turns. Once Chikubu-jima Island comes into sight, you are very close to the settlement of Sugaura.

Although Sugaura was once known as a hidden village, you feel like you are in a tourist spot when you are welcomed by a restaurant as well as the accommodation facility *-kokumin shukusha* "Tsuzurao". Coming to the fork, the road leading up to Sugaura is parting from Okubiwako Parkway and you keep going along the coastal road. Right after passing one of the Yanmar Home Factories, which brought additional income to people of Sugaura, the Great ginkgo tree of Suga Shrine will attract your attention. Now you have reached the settlement of Sugaura. At the time when I visited the village, the members of the elderly club were cleaning the visitor parking. There is a reed roofed *Nishi-no-Shisokumon* (the Western Four-columned Gate) on the left of *gokusho* (hall of offering) beside the path of Suga Shrine. And the *Higashi-no-Shisokumon* (the Eastern Four-columned Gate) is standing at the other end of the settlement looking across the bay. The area that is sandwiched between the Eastern and the Western gates is the village of Sugaura. At the center of the settlement, there is a harbor surrounded by concrete structure which does not really match the atmosphere of this village. This harbor was constructed in 1979 as a part of the New Inshore Fishery Structure Improvement Project by Shiga Prefecture. This led to the reclamation of both Eastern and Western old harbors called *funairi*, which was a part of traditional landscape of Sugaura for a long time. In front of the harbor, there is a tiny bit of shingles and three pieces of 3-meter-long planks are stretching out to the lake separately. The local people call the plank *uma* and it is used for washing and drawing water. When I was there, two young children and an elderly man -seemed to be their grandfather- were playing with water. And a woman -probably their mother- was sitting on *uma* while watching them play. It gave me a glimpse of what their daily life is like.



The village of Sugaura. The village is located on a small section of land between the mountains and the lake.

3、Sugaura Village

First, I visited Suga Shrine. The path runs along Koidegawa River which flows straight down to Lake Biwa after its rerouting in 1952. At the end of beautifully built stone path, there is *chozuya* (purification fountain), and the mossy stone staircase further leads to *haiden* (hall of worship). Shrine parishioners need to be barefoot beyond this point in order to show their piety. In the past, people of Sugaura would get on the boat barefoot to prevent slipping on the wet floor. Boat was an important means of transportation for the local people back then. And that said to be the reason of having the custom to become barefoot as the entire shrine was likened to a boat including the boat-shaped kofun (tumulus), which might be the imperial mausoleum of Emperor Junnin according to local legend. There is a sign board saying that the public visitors also need to change their footwear into slippers. Free rental slippers are available for the visitors.

Suga Shrine is the result of merging three shrines in 1909 -Kobayashi Shrine, Akasaki Shrine and Hora Shrine- following the Shrine Merger Order issued by the government in 1906. Facing the shelter of the main sanctuary, there are Hora Shrine -enshrines Emperor Junnin- in the eastern sanctuary located on the right side, and Kobayashi Shrine and Akasaki Shrine in the western sanctuary on the left side. In conjunction with the 1,250th anniversary festival held in 2013, the precincts are well-maintained. The whole experience of visiting there made me aware of the strong connection between Suga Shrine and people of Sugaura. Next, I went to the Sugaura Local Museum located beside the path -just about halfway to the shrine.

The museum is operated by the local people of Sugaura and opens only on Sundays. By contacting them in advance, they kindly opened the facility for me even though it was on a weekday. In one of the rooms, the visitors can see Suga Shrine related *munefuda* (ridge plaques), *ema* (votive horse tablets), and the resources regarding *So* village existed in the Middle Ages. And some folkcraft articles are on display at the inner room. I had Mr. Senzo Fujii, who is in charge of the management, as a guide and also interviewed him about the life of Sugaura from the Showa to the Heisei Period. After the interview, Mr. Fujii recommended the chief priest Tomio Akiyama of Amida-ji Temple, for his extensive knowledge about the history

of Sugaura. So I decided to meet him another day.

Mr. Fujii told me that the population of Sugaura has decreased and is also aging. When I visited there in July, the settlement was really quiet and I didn't see anyone outside on the day time. From a *dousojin* (travelers' guardian deity) found at the western end of the settlement, I headed down to the center of the village, where the remains of *Higashi-no-funairi* (the Eastern Old Harbor) is. I walked along the breakwater stone walls called *namiyoke ishigaki*, which is one of the landmarks of Sugaura. Among the tasteful old houses, there are also some newly built modern houses and Yanmar Home Factories. If there were salt scent of the sea, you would feel as if you were, not in the settlement by Lake Biwa, but in a beautiful fishing village facing the Sea of Japan. It's about 300 meters distant to Amida-ji Temple. Looking at wonderfully constructed *Ano* style stone walls, there is a big weeping cherry tree and *hondo* (main hall) on top of it. Walking along the road for another 200 meters, I came to *Higashi-no-funairi* (the Eastern Old Harbor). *Higashi-no-Shisokumon* (the Eastern Four-columned Gate) is another 300 meters away. From there, I returned to *Nishi-no-Shisokumon* (the Western Four-columned Gate) through the lakeside street called *Hama-dori*.

I visited Sugaura again on another day to interview the chief priest Tomio Akiyama of Amida-ji Temple. I supposed to first interview Mr. Tatsumi Iwasa, the owner of *kappo ryokan* (Traditional Japanese inn serving Japanese cuisine) Sakichi, about the local food culture. But due to miscommunication, I made the chief priest wait for some time and I really regretted it happening. Despite all that, he kindly



West Shisokumon Gate. This is a gate at the boundary of one of the original four villages. [OR: This is a gate at the boundary of one of the original four village sites.] Only the east and west gates remain today.



Stone steps leading to Suga Shrine. The area beyond this point is sacred ground, and villagers coming to pray at the shrine proceed from here in bare feet.

explained to me -for more than two hours- the details about the history of Sugaura and the life of the local people. On another day, I managed to listen to Mr. Iwasa of Sakichi for a couple of hours about Lake Biwa and its food culture and the festivals of Suga.

The stories I've got from the three interviews -Mr. Senzo Fujii from the Local museum, the chief priest Tomio Akiyama of Amida-ji Temple, and Mr. Tatsumi Iwasa from *kappo ryokan* Sakichi- cover such a wide variety of topics, showing their in-depth knowledge. It was a rich experience as if I were traveling through the past to see the history of Sugaura over a thousand years.

4、Sugaura Today ---

There are about 120 over houses in Sugaura, but only around 50 of them are occupied with the total of 120 people. Local industry is limited and a number of people are working outside Sugaura. For the sake of convenience, some are living near the town even though they have their houses in Sugaura. As a result, the settlement of Sugaura has a serious issue of aging. Route bus -an important means of transportation for the local community- runs only three times a day. At Sugaura, people used to heavily rely on boat as the main transportation in the past, but now it has been replaced by cars. Until last year, there was a small shop in Sugaura but they couldn't survive as now the young ones buy household items outside the village. Although a mobile store vehicle comes to the village once a week, it is getting more challenging for the elderly ones to live. I didn't really see any children in Sugaura, but they told me that there are two in the village -one in nursery, another in kindergarten. Talking about fishery, there are two to three full-time fishermen and five to six people doing it as a part-time job addition to their office work. Yanmar Home Factories have been a part of the industry of Sugaura since 1960s, and about ten of them are still in operation.

●Agriculture in Sugaura

Today, farmland in the village is extremely limited. According to Mr. Fujii, they used to sell firewood and tung tree as the source of income, but it was replaced with mulberry as its cultivation became popular because it was more convenient to ship by boat. Today it's hard to imagine but he said that the settlement was sur-

rounded by mulberry fields from the late Meiji period to the early Showa period. Regarding the rice crop, Sugaura -which does not have flat land- has been making every effort to secure rice field as it can be seen from the land dispute with Oura, the neighbor village, since the Middle Ages. Both Hisashi and Moroko at Okudewan bay produce rice. Until the early Showa period, they dried rice on *hasa-kui* (a wooden drying stand) at a sunny beach because those rice fields were not ideal for drying rice due to its terrain with poor airflow. It was also convenient to do so at a beach since they had to ship the products by boat. Lake Biwa has had a huge influence on the local agriculture. Chestnut trees and bamboo used for making *hasa-kui* were one of the important local products. *Madake* (Japanese bamboo) was commercialized such as bamboo-ware, and kendo equipment -protective gears and bamboo sword. But bamboo products are not being made in the recent years and the bamboo grove is wasted. Sugaura is facing the south and it is warmer than the other part of *Kohoku* (the north of lake). This climate allows them to grow fruit trees like mandarin oranges and loquat, but they say that feeding damage by wild boars, deer and monkeys is serious in these days.

●Fishery in Sugaura

Until the Meiji period, fishery was not something that people can make enough money to survive and the fishermen had lived in poverty. It was only after the Taisho period that fishery became a profitable business. As the new road to access Sugaura opened up in the Showa period, there were number of trucks to come and go transporting "*chi-ayu*" (young sweetfish). There were so much *ayu* (sweetfish) in those days, the beach was said to be looking all dark around October every year because of dead *ayu* that couldn't manage to go upstream.

The water quality of Lake Biwa had deteriorated during the period of high economic growth in the late Showa period. It seems that the water quality has improved to a certain degree since then, but knowing how clean the water was in the past, Mr. Fujii said that it is still far from that of those days before the lake was polluted. Reflecting the changes of water quality, the total catch of fish has decreased in Lake Biwa. Besides that, there is the increase of imported fish and the consumers eating less fish in the Heisei period. Affected by all these factors, the number of fishery employees in Shiga Prefecture has significantly dropped including Sugaura.

●Fish in Okubiwako

The area around Chikubu-jima Island is particularly good fishing grounds among the northern lake because the water is clean and deep.

Just before noon, I saw a fishing boat left the harbor. After a while, the boat came back from offshore. So I asked if they had any catch, then a short reply says: "*ami-ebi*" (Akiami paste shrimp). Looking at the hold, I saw small shrimps in the water. It was "*suji-ebi*" (lake prawn) taken from the offshore fish preserve. I'm not so sure but perhaps "*ami-ebi*" means "*suji-ebi*" in the local community. It reminded me of some local dishes such as *ebi-mame* (stewed bean with freshwater shrimp) and *kaki-age* (deep-fried vegetable strips and shrimp).

At *kappo ryokan* Sakichi, we enjoyed sashimi, grilled fish, and miso soup using "*Biwa-masu*" (Biwa trout) which is also called "the Gem of *Omi* (Lake Biwa)". Nice fatty and sweet meat of *Biwa-masu* has no peculiar taste -It was superb and delicious. *Biwa-masu* is an endemic species of Lake Biwa and it can grow up to 40 to 50 centimeters in length. In *Kosei* (the west of lake) area, it is called "*amenoio*" whereas Sugaura people call it *masu* (trout). *Biwa-masu* fishing season is between June and September and they use either gill net or pole-and-line fishing on a trawl-boat. There is also *Biwa-masu* farming going on at Samegai Trout Farm in Maibara city, but its availability in the market seems to be still limited at the moment.

In the fish preserve at Sakichi, there were over ten *iwatoko-namazu* (rock catfish) and indigenous koi (carp). It's rare to see natural carp of a local variety. *Iwatoko-namazu* is thinner than regular *namazu* (catfish) and its skin is spotted grayish color. The body size is about 30 to 40 centimeters in length and they prefer clear and deep water with rock beds. Typically, fishermen use gill net and pole-and-line fishing to catch them. During May and June, they come into shallow water to spawn where reed beds grow. I heard that sashimi or broiled *iwatoko-namazu* is delicious, but unfortunately I didn't get the chance to taste that.

People say that there were plenty of catch for "*gigi*" (a kind of catfish) and "*tenaga-ebi*" (freshwater prawn) using traditional fish traps such as *mondori* and *tatsube*, but today fishermen can't catch them anymore. They said that they haven't seen *gigi* for nearly ten years. Talking about "*wakasagi*" (Japanese smelt), Sugaura people has no custom to catch them as *wakasagi* is not the indigenous species in Lake Biwa.

I heard that they have a poor catch of *ayu* this year. The weather may have triggered a bad water circulation at the lower layer of Lake Biwa, causing low oxygen

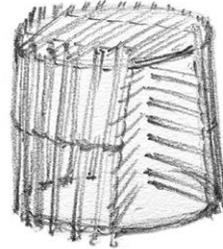
in the water. A lot of effort have been put to restore the environment, such as improving water quality, restoring reed beds, and releasing fish for the recovery of fishery resources. However, we need to admit that the force of nature is more powerful than any human capability.



This fisherman has returned to port at the end of a day of fishing for lake prawns (*kawaebi*), one of the so called "eight rare fishes of Lake Biwa" (*Biwako hacchin*).



A kind of rock catfish (*iwatokonamazu*) and carp (*koi*). *Iwatokonamazu* is indigenous to Lake Biwa. It lives in areas of clear, cold water.



This is a piece of fishing equipment used long ago called *tatsube*. It is about 40 centimeters high and is made of bamboo.

●Lake Biwa and Tourism

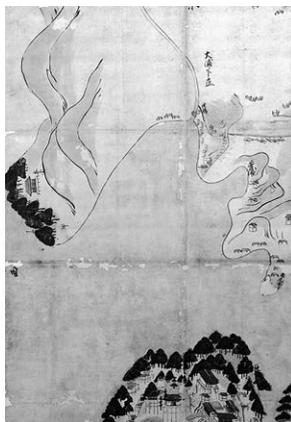
In 1971, "Okubiwako Parkway" newly opened, advertising the great view from hillside of Sugaura all the way to Tsukide. This led many tourists to visit Sugaura and four "*minshuku*" (guest house) started business as the tourism was booming back then. However, the number of visitors has gradually decreased. Now the last remaining *minshuku* has also stopped accommodation service and is just focusing on food catering.

Today, the only available accommodation in Sugaura is the third generation *kappo ryokan* Sakichi. The customers come for the following reasons; Sightseeing -the landscape of the settlement, enjoying seafood of Lake Biwa, and duck cuisine. *Magamo* (mallard) farming has been in operation since 1982 at Okudehama, and about 4,000 mallards are being shipped annually. Now Sugaura is not as crowded as before when Okubiwako Parkway opened. But it has transformed into a new tourist

attraction -the place where the visitors, while walking in a quiet and peaceful fishing village, will reflect on the deep and intriguing local history and enjoy the catch from Lake Biwa and its surrounding areas.

Few years after the opening of *minshuku*, "*kokumin-shukusha* Tsuzurao Inn" started business in 1975. They expected to have a good business because *kokumin-shukusha* (lodge operated by local government) was very popular back then, but the boom ended after a while and Tsuzurao Inn closed down after operating for ten years. Later on, they started the business again as a limited-liability company upon the request from the local community, and it has been known as "*kokumin-shukusha* Tsuzurao" until now. There were some surprising plans for tourism development such as building a ropeway between Sugaura and Chikubu-jima Island, but the villagers have been protecting the local landscape. I hope that there will be more

visitors coming to Sugaura with the added tourist attraction -being designated as the Important Cultural Landscape of Lake Biwa.



An old map of Sugaura. This was designated a national treasure in 2018.



Chikubushima. The goddess Benzaiten is enshrined here. Ferries carry tourists from Omi Imazu and Nagahama to this famous site.

●Landscape with Stone Walls

Stone wall is one of the main features of Sugaura. For example, "*namiyoke-ishigaki*" is the stone wall serves as breakwater, protecting the village from the waves of the Lake Biwa. Some may wonder; "It's not a big deal, just lake water." However, according to Mr. Fujii, the lake water actually went over the stone wall and came into the houses when typhoon hit. Today, high waves no longer affect the village since the bank was built at the harbor. Between the beach and the houses, there is a stone wall called "*mono-oki*" (Lit. "Storage"), which is made of big stones. This was the most important stone wall in the village although now we see some vegetable

farms and barns built on top it. It is about two-meters-thick solid structure. Along the street of the settlement, there is another stone wall surrounding the houses, which is made of smaller stones. It does not have much thickness as the "mono-oki" wall. This wall was built as a double protection in case the waves from the lake go over "mono-oki". There are some cuts in the wall for a walkway, and the water-stop board was inserted to prevent flooding in case of emergency. Another type of stone wall seen in Sugaura is a mound stone wall, which is designed to fully utilize the limited land. The stone wall of Amida-ji Temple is especially a magnificent one, but similar walls can be found in some other temples, shrines, and houses built on a hill.

Since there is a mountain standing right behind Sugaura, any streets going down to the lake becomes a river once water flowing out of the mountain. Apart from the walls to prevent flooding of the lake water, there is another wall designed to stop overflowing river water. But now it is hard to see the trace of this wall as the road has been re-developed.



These stone wall wave breaks form an integral part of the scenery of Sugaura.

● Customs and Manners of Using Water

Today, water supply is available for all houses in Sugaura -distributed from the water source located at the side of Suga Shrine. Until the mid-Showa period, people of Sugaura used to source drinking water from mountain stream, spring water and Lake Biwa. At a place called *ido*, built beside a spring water or waterway, the local community strictly separated the upper water -for Buddhist service, drinking, washing, etc. - from the lower water. Similarly, there were some designated sections at the beach according to the type of water usage at Lake Biwa. The chief priest Akiyama said that, when some people moved in to Sugaura due to wartime evacuation, there was a commotion as they did not know how to properly use the water according the local rule. For drawing water or washing at Lake Biwa, *uma* had

been used. Today *uma* can be found on the beach -the west side of the harbor- as the local community recently revived the use of this traditional item, which hadn't been used for a long time.

It is not wrong to say that the use of water at Sugaura has been established as a part of their lifestyle. Having water supply system to each house was a big change for Sugaura, but the locals say that the most significant change was triggered by Okubiwako Parkway and flood control projects such as building a check dam. It caused the mountain stream and spring water to either decrease or deplete. And the water of Lake Biwa is no longer fit for drinking. Mr. Iwasa uses well water for the fish preserve in his restaurant, and he said that it becomes slightly muddy on a rainy day.



In this scenic photo we can see small wooden jetties called "uma" jutting out into the lake.

● Festivals of Sugaura

When the three shrines were merged and became Suga Shrine, there were number of challenges on the arrangement of parishioner and the customs of both Western and Eastern villages. The annual events such as festivals are carried out by the nine men, three *ujiko-sodai* (parish representatives) and three each from Western and Eastern groups called *kannushi-gumi* (the group of chief priests), on a yearly rotation. The current year's *kannushi-gumi* has three duty periods -*moto*, *naka*, *sue*- and it rotates every four months.

Usually, the Festival of Suga is held on the first Saturday and Sunday of April. At this festival, they pray for good harvest and safety of people, and we can see some unique customs during the festival. The festival is also called *he-matsuri*, and they have unique performances such as *he-mawashi* -they sweep the ground- and *he-ta-oshi*. The carriers of *mikoshi* (portable shrine) wear special sandals, which have only a front half portion of it, called "*ashinaka*". They keep running while carrying *mikoshi* and their heels won't touch the ground, thus they don't need the back portion of their sandals.

There are three *mikoshi* -called Hachioji (of Kobayashi Shrine), Akasaki (of Akasaki Shrine), and Myojin (of Hora Shrine)- and only the first one that is taken out

from *mikoshi-do* (hall of *mikoshi*) will be carried to *otabisho* (place for portable shrines to rest) at *Higashi-no-Shisoku-mon* Gate and going around the village -the performance called "*mura-mawari*" (Lit. "Going around the village"). The rest of *mikoshi* will be carried to the center of the settlement. On both sides of the road that *mikoshi* passes, there are piles of beach sand placed every 30 to 40 centimeters -they just look like piled salt- for purification. According to Mr. Iwasa, they view that the beach sand is being washed and purified by the water of Lake Biwa.

The idea of purification by Lake Biwa can be seen in their year-end event as well. At *toshikoshi-matsuri* (the year-end festival) held on the last day of the year, they visit Suga Shrine and receive the item called "*toshinomi*". This is how *toshinomi* is made; A small flat stone -the size of the little finger's tip- taken from the beach is tied to a rope made of bundled rice stalks. It is first offered to *kamidana* (a home shrine), and then hung from the eaves so that birds can eat them. *Toshinomi* is all handmade by *kannushi-gumi* (the group of chief priests) -each of them makes 150 pairs (300 pieces). It is not an easy role. The flat stone tied to rice stalks is a symbol of purification because it had been washed by the water of Lake Biwa.

● House Swap (Moving House)

Generally speaking, the term *Yamano-te* (uptown or mountain-side) implies that the area is a high-class neighborhood. However, it means the other way round at Sugaura. Land price of Hamade -the lakefront- is higher than the mountain-side area called Kitade. Hamade area is directly affected by Lake Biwa, so the residents must have financial power to maintain the necessary structures such as stone walls. Also, the lakefront Hamade had the advantages in the use of harbor and water, thus Hamade was considered superior to Kitade. If any family from Hamade is having financial difficulties, there was an arrangement to swap their house with the family from Kitade, who now has financial power to live in the lakefront. This was called "*ie-gae*" (House swap). As the community, their lifestyle -closely related to water- and the importance of the lakefront area had more priority than the individual family. Perhaps this may have led them to come up with the House swap system. The picture kept by the chief priest Akiyama of Amida-ji Temple tells us how frequently the house swap used to be done.

● Amida-ji as So Temple

Sugaura was formed by two "So communities" -the Western village and the East-

ern village. Today there are only four temples remaining in Sugaura, but there used to be twelve small temples including *uji-dera* (clan temple) founded by *shido-so* (lay priest). Among those temples, "Jokozan Togakuin Amida-ji Temple" (Founded by Takuga Shonin in 1353) -which is "So Temple"- has played an important role of the village as *dojo* (training place for Buddhism) for a long time. Amida-ji Temple also had a role of *terakoya* (private school) until the educational system was implemented in Meiji era. It had served as a meeting place for the So village community until the modern-day Sugaura Community Center took over the role. The record of *So* village called *Amida-ji komonjo* (the ancient documents of Amida-ji Temple) has survived until today, and it has been deposited with Shiga University.

Reference information

Sugaura: Sugaura, Nishiazai-cho, Nagahama City, Shiga Prefecture / Transportation - Omi Railways Bus ride from Nagahara Station (JR Kosei Line)

Emperor Junnin: He was deposed in 764 due to Fujiwara-no-Nakamaro's Revolt and exiled to Awaji Island. According to "*Shoku-Nihongi*" (The Chronicles of Japan, Second Volume), he died there in 765. In Sugaura, however, it is said that Emperor Junnin did not die in "Awaji (淡路)" as it was written so by mistake, but it supposed to be "Omi (淡海)" -Lake Biwa- and the boat-shaped kofun (tumulus) of Suga Shrine said to be the imperial mausoleum of his.

Yanmar Home Factories: By Mr. Magokichi Yamaoka, the founder of Yanmar, a number of factories were set up in rural areas in the northern part of Shiga Prefecture. Workshops were built on private premises and the local people -mainly housewives- worked on rough machining at those factories. It gave them supplementary income and contributed to improve their living conditions. Home Factories had supported the community of Sugaura during the Showa period, and about ten of them are still in operation.

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