

### **Okidomari Port**

In the history of Iwami Ginzan, Okidomari was the second port used to ship silver from the mine to markets both in Japan and overseas. When the Mohri family assumed total control over this area in 1562, they established a new road from the mine to the Sea of Japan. At the end of this path was Okidomari, which performed the dual functions of commercial port and naval base. A fortress built by the Mohri at the mouth of the port in 1570 protected both the silver shipments from Okidomari and the supply route to the nearby harbor of Yunotsu. A village with distinctive, rectangular plots of land was established along the road near the harbor.

In the early seventeenth century, Iwami Ginzan fell under the control of the new central government based in Edo (present-day Tokyo), and the flow of silver was directed away from the coast, carried instead over land to the port of Onomichi on the Seto Inland Sea and from there to Osaka and on to Edo. Okidomari quietly transformed into a fishing village, but the sixteenth-century plots remain intact, and its Shinto shrine, where people would pray for safety on the sea, was recently rebuilt. You can also walk to the edge of the port to look out over the once fortified islands and spot the 60-odd protruding rock formations, which were carved out of the soft stone to function as mooring devices for ships transporting silver.