

Fushimi Port History

The water transportation system that connected Kyoto to Osaka was essential to Fushimi's growth throughout the Edo period (1603–1867), and key to the development of that system was a successful merchant named Suminokura Ryōi (1554–1614). He persuaded the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) to let him construct canals that would link Fushimi to the Nijō district of central Kyoto and the deep, fast-flowing Ujigawa and Yodogawa rivers that led downriver to Osaka.

Using these waterways, rice could be brought in bulk to the breweries in Fushimi, and the finished sake could be directly distributed to Kyoto, Osaka, and beyond. Businesses sprang up around the major ferry terminals in these cities just as they have in the modern transport hubs of Japan, such as Tokyo's Marunouchi, Shinjuku, and Shibuya districts.

As Fushimi grew to become a thriving inland port, it also became a major overland transportation hub. Fushimi was a key stop on the Tōkaidō Road, the major route between Kyoto and Edo (now Tokyo). Due to its location, Fushimi was often visited by the daimyo of western Japan as they made their way to and from the capital. Under the shogunate's *sankin kōtai* policy, all daimyo were required to spend every other year at the Tokugawa capital in Edo. Fushimi's breweries were frequented by these traveling daimyo and their retinues, and inns and other lodgings emerged around the breweries to cater to them. A red-light district developed on the island of Chūshojima, across the water from the Teradaya Inn. It was only in the Meiji era (1868–1912), with the advent of railroad transportation, that Fushimi's importance as a shipping port declined. But the sake industry expanded, and it was during this time that Fushimi became known as a "sake town."