

## **Ofunae Dry Dock Site**

The economy of Tsushima flourished in the seventeenth century, when the So family that governed the island held a monopoly on trade between Japan and Joseon Korea. The So procured tropical products such as spices and sappanwood in Nagasaki for export to Korea, where they bought mainly silk thread, cotton, and medicinal roots to be sold in Kyoto and Osaka.

Profits earned from this exchange were used by the So to build, among other things, the Ofunae dry dock on the mouth of the Kuta River, south of the castle town of Izuhara. Set in an artificial cove and completed in 1663, Ofunae encompassed five docks that were used for the repair and maintenance of the trading vessels that ferried goods between Tsushima and the So settlement in the city of Busan. Ships used by So officials to travel to Edo (now Tokyo) and Osaka were also kept at Ofunae. Vessels could be moved in and out of the docks at high tide, while repairs were conducted mainly at low tide.

The stone embankments of four of the five docks remain at the Ofunae site.