

## **Blacksmiths and Merchants in Sanjō**

Iron and steel shipped from Yasugi birthed a secondary industry in the town of Sanjō, in what is now Niigata Prefecture. Beginning around 1650, blacksmiths in the Sanjō area received a rising demand for vast quantities of nails to rebuild homes, shops, and other buildings destroyed by fires and other natural disasters. Sanjō blacksmiths later began selling other equipment, such as sickles, scissors, and carpentry tools, and they gained a reputation for the quality of their products. For example, surviving order forms show how craftsmen adjusted the design of each sickle to fit the specific needs of their clients.

Products made in Sanjō were sold in Edo (now Tokyo) and throughout the country. This was possible partly because of the town's position at the intersection of the Shinano and Ikarashi Rivers, two major waterways that are linked to a broad network of smaller canals. This network delivered products made from Yasugi iron and steel to consumers in distant regions.