

Omura Ofunagura Dock Site

Few docks from the Edo period (1603–1867) have been preserved in their original form. The Omura Ofunagura Dock was first built in 1571 when the Omura family opened a port at Nagasaki to Portuguese traders in 1571. The port gave the family access to valuable imports from China, including saltpeter and silk. The sheltered location of the Omura Ofunagura Dock Site has likely been a contributing factor in its preservation. It is designated a historic site of Nagasaki Prefecture. A rice storehouse and a facility for preparing saltpeter for gunpowder stood on an elevated plateau behind the docks.

The land controlled by the Omura family in the sixteenth century was separated by Omura Bay and included the seaport of Nagasaki until the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1867) took control of the port in the early seventeenth century. The Ofunagura docks were vital for transport, maritime trade, and defense.

The docks were commissioned in the late seventeenth century by Omura Suminaga (1636–1706), the fourth lord of Omura, and were constructed on the southwest side of Kushima Castle, sheltered by the nearby peninsula. The three berths at the Ofunagura docks are each about eight meters wide, with channels dug out of the shallow bay. The berths are separated by stone wharves, the longest of which extends 31 meters from the shore. Post holes along the tops of the wharves on either side of the middle berth suggest that it was covered by a roof to offer protection from the elements. This covered berth would likely have been used to store a small barge that served as the lord's personal transportation.